

Section IV. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A. Application Development/Availability of Forms

To be considered for a grant under this program announcement, an application must conform to the specific OCS Grant Program Requirements set out in Section II and be prepared in accordance with the guidelines set out in each program area. It must be submitted on the forms supplied in the attachments to this Announcement and in the manner prescribed below. Attachments A through P contain all standard forms necessary to apply for awards under this OCS program. These attachments and Sections V and VI of the Announcement contain all the general instructions required for submitting applications.

Additional copies may be obtained by writing or telephoning the office listed under the section entitled **For Further Information Contact:** at the beginning of this announcement. In addition, this Announcement is accessible on the Internet through the OCS Website for reading or down loading at:

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ocs/kits1.htm> under "Funding Opportunities."

The applicant must be aware that in signing and submitting the application for this award, it is certifying that it will comply with the Federal requirements concerning the drug-free workplace, the Certification Regarding environmental tobacco smoke and debarment regulations set forth in Attachments E, I and F.

Section III contains instructions for the substance and development of the project narrative. Section V contains instructions for completing application forms. Section VI describes the contents of the application as a whole.

B. Application Submission

1. Number of Copies Required. One signed original application and two copies must be submitted at the time of initial submission. (OMB 0970-0139.) Two additional optional copies would be appreciated to facilitate the processing of applications.

2. Closing Date. The closing date for receiving applications is indicated in each OCS Grant Program Description as provided in Section II of this program announcement. Applications received after the closing date will be classified as late and will not be reviewed during the FY 2003 competition.

Hand delivered applications are accepted during the normal working hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST at the Office of Community Services' Operations Center: 1815 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22209 between Monday and Friday (excluding Federal holidays). (Applicants are cautioned that express/overnight mail services do not always deliver as agreed.)

Mailing Address: Applications must be mailed to Office of Community Services' Operations Center, 1815 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22209; Attention: Application for (insert name of grant program).

ACF cannot accommodate transmission of applications by fax or through other electronic media. Therefore, applications transmitted to ACF electronically will not be accepted regardless of date or time of submission and time of receipt.

3. Late Applications. Applications that do not meet the criteria above are considered late applications. ACF shall notify each late applicant that its application will not be considered in the current competition.

4. Extension of Deadlines. ACF may extend application deadlines for applicants when circumstances such as acts of God (floods, hurricanes, etc) occur or when there is widespread disruption of the mail service, or in other rare cases. A determination to extend or waive deadline requirements rest with ACF's Chief Grants Management Officer.

C. Intergovernmental Review

This program is covered under Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Program and activities." Under the Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

All States and Territories except Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming and Palau have elected to participate in the Executive Order process and have established Single Points of Contact (SPOCs). Applicants from these twenty-seven jurisdictions need take no action regarding E.O. 12372. Applicants for projects to be administered by Federally-recognized Indian Tribes are also exempt from the requirements of E.O. 12372. Otherwise, applicants should contact their SPOCs as soon as possible to alert them of the prospective applications and receive any necessary instructions. Applicants must submit any required material to the SPOCs as soon as possible so that the program office can obtain and review SPOC comments as part of the award process. It

is imperative that the applicant submits all required materials, if any, to the SPOC and indicate the date of this submittal (or indicate “not applicable” if no submittal is required) on the Standard Form 424, item 16a.

Under 45 CFR 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application deadline to comment on proposed new or competing continuation awards.

SPOCs are encouraged to eliminate the submission of routine endorsements as official recommendations.

Additionally, SPOCs are requested to clearly differentiate between mere advisory comments and those official State process recommendations that may trigger the “accommodate or explain” rule.

When comments are submitted directly to ACF, they should be addressed to: Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management/OA, 370 L’Enfant Promenade, S.W., 4th floor East, Washington, D.C. 20447.

A list of the Single Points of Contact for each State and Territory is included as Attachment G to this Announcement. You may also find this list at the following web address: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

D. Initial OCS Screening

Each application submitted under this program announcement will undergo a pre-review to determine that the application was received by the closing date and time and submitted in accordance with the instructions in this Announcement.

All applications that meet the published deadline requirements as provided in this Program Announcement will be screened for completeness and conformity with the

following requirements. Only complete applications that meet the requirements listed below will be reviewed and evaluated competitively. Other applications will be returned to the applicants with a notation that they were unacceptable and will not be reviewed.

The following requirements must be met by all Applicants except as noted:

(1) The application must contain a signed Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), Attachment B, a budget (SF-424A), Attachment C, and signed "Assurances" (SF-424B), Attachment D, completed according to instructions published in Section V and Attachments A, B and C of this Program Announcement. The SF-424 and the SF-424B must be signed by an official of the organization applying for the grant who has authority to obligate the organization legally. Applicant must also be aware that the applicant's legal name as required on the SF-424 (Item 5) must match that listed as corresponding to the Employer Identification Number (Item 6).

(2) A project narrative must also accompany the standard forms. OCS requires that the narrative portion of the application meet the requirements set forth in Section II, under each individual grant program description. Applications that do not meet these requirements will be disqualified from the FY 2003 competition.

The budget narrative, charts, exhibits, resumes, position descriptions, letters of support or commitments are not counted against this page limit and should be in the Appendix. It is strongly recommended that applicants adopt for their program project narratives the sequence and content described in Section III.

(3) Application must contain documentation of the applicant's tax exempt status as required under Eligible Applicants in Section II.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to mobilize additional resources, which may be cash or in-kind contributions, Federal or non-Federal.

E. Consideration of Applications

Applications which pass the initial OCS screening will be reviewed and rated by an independent review panel on the basis of the program elements and review criteria set forth in Section II, A through F and Section III. These review criteria were designed to assess the quality of a proposed project and determine the likelihood of its success. The review criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive to the program elements and review criteria within the context of this program announcement.

Reviewer's scores will assist the Director and OCS program staff in considering competing applications. Reviewer's scores will weigh heavily in funding decisions, but will not be the only factors considered.

Applications generally will be considered in order of the average scores assigned by reviewers. However, highly ranked applications are not guaranteed funding because other factors are taken into consideration. These include, but are not limited to: the timely and proper completion by applicant of projects funded with OCS funds granted in the last five (5) years; comments of reviewers and government officials; staff evaluation and input; amount and duration of the grant requested and the proposed project's consistency and harmony with OCS goals and policy; geographic distribution of applications; previous program performance of applicants; compliance with grant terms under previous HHS grants, including the actual dedication to program of mobilized

resources as set forth in project applications; audit reports; investigative reports; and applicant's progress in resolving any final audit disallowance on previous OCS or other Federal agency grants.

Several OCS grant programs have other funding limitations that may be found in Section II, A through F.

Applicants may omit from the application the specific salary rates or amounts for individuals identified in the application budget. Rather, only summary information is required. OCS reserves the right to discuss applications with other Federal or non-Federal funding sources to verify the applicant's performance record and the documents submitted.