

18a. Early Reading First

Statutory Requirement: Section 1221 and 1222

Overview

Early Reading First is designed to transform existing early education programs into centers of excellence that provide high-quality, early education to young children, especially those from low-income families. The overall purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to prepare young children to enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills to prevent reading difficulties and ensure school success.

This grant should be submitted electronically through the federal e-GRANTS system. Materials may be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Purpose

Early Reading First is a bold initiative to create early childhood centers of excellence that prepare young children to enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills for learning success.

Federal funds are awarded competitively to local programs that show they will enhance young children's language and cognitive development by providing high-quality instruction and ongoing professional development based on scientifically based research.

Early Reading First Program Goals

- To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research
- To provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments so that the children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond
- To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that support the age-appropriate development of
 - Oral language (vocabulary, expressive language, listening comprehension)
 - Phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting)
 - Print awareness
 - Alphabetic knowledge
- To use screening assessments to effectively identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure

Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for an Early Reading First Grant, an applicant must be:

- One or more eligible LEAs
- One or more public or private organizations or agencies, including faith based organizations, located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children.
- One or more of the eligible LEAs applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

More information on eligibility may be found at:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>

Application Materials

Timeline

- The Department of Education will use a two-phase system to select recipients for Early Reading First that will include a pre-application and a full application. All applicants must submit a pre-application that briefly addresses certain key concepts. Applicants that are invited to submit full applications will respond to more specific selection criteria.
- Pre-Application Deadline: Beginning of February
- All pre-applicants will receive written notification, including their reviewer scores and comments
- Full Application Deadline: May (for applicants invited to submit full applications only)

Federal Register Notices

- Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

Tips and Assistance

- For automatic e-mail notification when events, publications, or resources relating to ERF become available, we invite you to join the ERF Infoline Listserv.
- ED-Pubs information (application package)

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