

ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
as amended by
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
[P. L. 107-110, Title II, Part A/Subpart 3]

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

April 5, 2010

Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning
Alabama Commission on Higher Education
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ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PLANNING

CHAPTER 300-2-6
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

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300-2-6-.01 Goal.

- (1) Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (the Act); amended in the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P. L. 100-297) and reauthorized in No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (P. L. 107-110) Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund, Subpart 3) revises several of the provisions of the predecessor statutes (Title II of the Education for Economic Security Act, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act, and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program). The purpose of the program is to (1) increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools; and (2) hold local educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement (107-110, Title II, Part A, Section 2101).

300-2-6-.02 Administration.

- (1) The Commission on Higher Education is designated the State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE) responsible for administering Alabama's higher education programs and activities (P. L. 107-110, Section 2132). The Executive Director of the Commission is designated the certifying representative for these programs and activities. Administration of the higher education programs and activities under the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund program will be in accord with the terms and conditions of federal regulations and an approved plan filed with the U. S. Department of Education.

300-2-6-.03 Appeals.

- (1) Any person or institution aggrieved by the actions of the Commission in its administration of these rules may, by written petition filed with the Commission with thirty (30) days after notice of the action complained of, request a rehearing by the Commission. The Commission shall schedule the requested rehearing to be held no less than twenty (20) days, nor more than thirty (30) days after receipt of the petition. The aggrieved party may present written and oral evidence supporting its petition and may be represented by counsel, if desired. The decision of the Commission following the rehearing shall be final.

Author: Elizabeth French

Statutory Authority: Alabama Code Sections 16-5-1, et. seq.

History: Amended Rule, Submitted as Notice of Intended Action on June 20, 2002.

Amended in accord with No Child Left Behind Act (P. L. 107-110).

LIQUIDATION OF OBLIGATIONS/DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO SUBGRANTEES

Liquidation of obligations: Where a funding period is specified, a grantee may charge to the award only costs resulting from obligations of the funding period unless carryover of unobligated balances is permitted, in which case the carryover balances may be charged for costs resulting from obligations of the subsequent funding period. (EDGAR, Section 80.23(a))

Grantees and subgrantees shall be paid in advance, provided they maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of the funds and their disbursement by the grantee or subgrantee. (EDGAR, Section 80.21(c))

Actual expenditures or outlays must be compared with budgeted amounts for each grant or subgrant. (EDGAR, Section 80.20(b)(4))

Unallowable Costs: Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable. (OMB Circular A-87, Atch A, Section 18)

Costs of alcoholic beverages are unallowable. (OMB Circular A-87, Attachment B.4)

Tuition charges are not eligible for direct funding. No state or subgrantee may count tuition and fees collected from students toward meeting matching, cost sharing, or maintenance of effort requirements of a program. (EDGAR, Section 76.534)

Indirect Costs: Indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant is limited to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. (EDGAR, Section 75.562(c)). Accordingly, the maximum amount allowed for ACHE Title II sub-grant projects is eight percent of the direct costs excluding equipment purchases.

Performance Reports: The grantee may waive any performance report from a subgrantee when not needed. The grantee may extend the due date for any performance report from a subgrantee if the grantee will still be able to meet its performance reporting obligations to the Federal agency. (EDGAR, Section 80.40(f)(2))

Recipient Responsibility: Recipients are responsible for managing and monitoring each project, program, subaward, function or activity supported by the award. (EDGAR Section 74.51(a))

Project Monitoring: To comply with the above requirements, all subgrantee projects are monitored by staff and/or external evaluators. Reports of these evaluations become part of the institutional final report file. Final reports submitted by project directors include expenditure reports that are reviewed in terms of compliance with the approved proposal. In the event that expenditures reported are inconsistent with the budget as approved, a staff member conducts site visits to the institution and meets with the project director and staff in the accounting/grants divisions as well as other appropriate personnel to achieve resolution.

Enforcement: If a grantee or subgrantee materially fails to comply with any term of an award, whether stated in a Federal statute or regulation, an assurance, in a State plan or application, a notice of award, or elsewhere, the awarding agency may take one or more of the following actions, as appropriate in the circumstances:

- (1) Temporarily withhold cash payments pending correction of the deficiency by the grantee or subgrantee or more severe enforcement action by the awarding agency;
- (2) Disallow (that is, deny both use of funds and matching credit for) all or part of the cost of the activity or action not in compliance;
- (3) Wholly or partly suspend or terminate the current award for the grantee's or subgrantee's program;
- (4) Withhold further awards for the program; or
- (5) Take other remedies that may be legally available.

(EDGAR, Section 80.43(a))

Disbursement of Funds to Subgrantees: "Grants are awarded for each project on a cost reimbursement basis. Seventy-five percent of grant award is paid at the beginning of the contract period. When the project is completed in compliance with all requirements of the RFP and contract, any remaining balance of the grant award is available for approved expenses up to the remaining twenty-five percent. Non-compliance with the RFP or contract results in forfeiture of any remaining grant balance. If total approved expenses are less than seventy-five percent of the grant award, the balance is refunded to ACHE.

SUBGRANTEE AUDITS

Recipients and subrecipients that are institutions of higher education or other non-profit organizations shall be subject to the audit requirements contained in the Single Audit Act of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501-7507) and revised OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

(EDGAR, Section 74.26 (a))

To comply with this requirement:

- a. A-133 audit reports are a required component of all applications for competitive grants. The audit reports are reviewed for any citations of non-compliance with respect to expenditures of Federal funds.
- b. An inventory of audit reports for all institutions and organizations participating in the Federal program and to which grants have been awarded is on file and updated on a regular basis.
- c. Should audit exceptions be noted in the A-133 reports, the Commission accepts the recommendation of the auditors and applicant's responsive action stated in the report as meeting the necessary requirements under this section.

ACHE PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF FEDERAL COMPETITIVE GRANT PROPOSALS

Step One: Proposals are recorded and filed. Institutions and organizations are notified of receipt of proposals.

Step Two: A staff preliminary review is conducted for completeness and compliance with Request for Proposal requirements. When appropriate, additional data are requested from the applicant institutions.

Step Three: Proposals are forwarded to members of an external review panel* to read and evaluate the proposals. Panel members are selected from the State Department of education staff, master teachers, other recognized authorities on professional development for K-12 teachers, and faculty from postsecondary institutions. To the greatest extent practical, the panel is selected to represent all regions of Alabama, all grade levels, all core subject areas, and a balance among classroom teachers, administrators, and postsecondary faculty.

Step Four: Staff reviews institutional A-133 Audit Reports for compliance with federal regulations.

Step Five: Each member of the external review panel prepares written comments. Care is taken to avoid conflict of interest by not permitting any panel member to review, or influence the review of, a proposal from an institution in which the panel member is employed. After panel members complete evaluation forms for all proposals, the panel as a whole then rank orders the proposals and lists them in order of recommended funding.

Step Six: ACHE staff prepares an analysis of panel rankings: 1) grant submissions by category and institutions; 2) priority rankings as recommended by the review panel.

Step Seven: Commissioners review evaluations and rankings submitted by the review panel. Commissioners then determine grants to be awarded. Final results are included in the Annual Report on Title II activities presented to the Commission.

Step Eight: Awards are announced. Written comments of external review panel members are available upon request by the Project Director.

Step Nine: Invoices for awards are prepared, sent to the institutions, and processed upon receipt.

* Fees for members of the external review panel will not exceed consultant fees commonly paid by the United States Department of Education (USDE) for readers of grant proposals. In 2006 this amount was equivalent to \$200/day paid to each reader for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) (ref: Sharon Solis, US Department of Education: email to TIF Peer Reviewer, June 5, 2006). In addition to fees, consultants are reimbursed for travel expenses.

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title II
PROPOSAL CHECKLIST (STAFF)**

Institution: _____ Project: _____

Special notes, comments, observations (if any):

General

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
1.					Eligibility: 3 required partners
2.					Includes signed Statement of Assurances
3.					Includes A-133 report
4.					Excludes extraneous material not required by RFP or requested by ACHE

Application and Abstract

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
5.					Forms completed and signed
6.					Abstract: 200-word summary with--
7.					--program objectives consistent with RFP;
8.					--methods to be employed;
9.					--statement of significance and impact on improving teaching and learning

Narrative

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
10.					15 or fewer pages, numbered, double- spaced, at least 10 pitch, double-sided printing, with the points stated in the RFP in the prescribed order, and includes --
11.					--explanation of relevance to the applicable Ala. Course of Study and SBE standards;
12.					--objectives addressed (RFP, p. 1)

13.					-explanation of partnership with IHE, A&S, and high need school district(s);
14.					--plan to provide year-long technical assistance for all teachers;
15.					--evaluation plan described or included in appendix following Appendix D guidelines.

Budget

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
16.					Form completed properly, with --
17.					--external support identified;
18.					--participant costs, tuition, <i>etc.</i> excluded except for independent study;
19.					--no partner w/ more than 50% of grant;
20.					-supplies, materials, equipment budgeted only for workshop/institute training
21.					--indirect costs for LEA(s) excluded.

Attachments/Appendices

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
22.					Budget Summary with breakout for categories
23.					Resumes not exceeding two pages;
24.					Documentation of the partnership showing participation of all partners;
25.					Schedule of activities with timeline;
26.					Written agreements for off-site coordination and copyright/license permission, if applicable;

Action

	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Criteria
27.					Return to applicant to correct/revise any items above checked "no."
28.					Previously requested corrections etc. received on time.
29.					Forward to evaluators for review.
30.					Accept proposal without further review.
31.					Reject proposal without further review.

Staff Reviewer

Date

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT (NCLB)
(P.L. 107-110, Title II, Part A, Subpart 3)
IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY - MASTERY OF CONTENT
PROPOSAL RATING FORM**

PROPOSAL CATEGORY – *check one*: AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative)
 Multi-Year Grant Projects
 New Projects

PROPOSAL TITLE: _____

APPLICANT INSTITUTION: _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE REVIEWER: Please review each proposal carefully against the criteria described here, and provide comments on the strengths and weaknesses related to each criterion. Write specific comments in complete sentences that evaluate rather than describe. Your evaluation with written comments, but without identifying you, will be available upon request to the applicant.

As you review each application, observe that evidence for each of the evaluation criteria may be found in various parts of the proposal. However, specific information should be addressed in the order listed in the RFP under “Application Procedures.” Note that you are not reviewing administrative requirements (*e.g.*, applicant eligibility, amount available for grants, the Statement of Assurances, Audit Report, proposal preparation and form), and you should not be concerned with such matters. For each evaluation criterion, determine a numeric score within the available points allowed, with “0” representing non-existent or poor response and the highest number representing excellent response. **Every section rated lower than the maximum points must have a comment supporting the lower rating.** After rating all categories, record the points on the next page “Proposal Summary,” and complete the recommendation section below. *If you recommend with conditions, you must state the conditions the proposal needs to meet to be considered for a grant.* Then sign and date the form at the bottom of this cover sheet.

Note: The Project Evaluation Plan (see RFP p. 3 and Appendix D) will be scored separately by an independent evaluator, who will provide the score for this part of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a. _____ NOT RECOMMENDED
- b. _____ RECOMMENDED WITH NO CONDITIONS
- c. _____ RECOMMENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

Reviewer: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

PROPOSAL TITLE: _____

APPLICANT INSTITUTION: _____

Criteria	Maximum Points	Assigned Points
1. Project Need and Objectives	25	
2. Project Design: Management, Activities	30	
3. Budget and Cost Effectiveness	15	
4. Quality of Key Personnel	15	
5. Project Evaluation Plan	15	
Total	100	

Summary of Key Strengths and Weaknesses:

- 1. Project Need and Objectives (25 points):** To what extent will project activities meet the objectives of this grant program as stated in the RFP? Specifically –
- a. Will the project provide long-term, sustained professional development?
 - b. Will the project ensure that teachers and highly qualified paraprofessionals and, if appropriate, principals have subject matter knowledge in the academic subjects that the teachers teach, including the use of computer related technology to enhance student learning? If the project includes principals, will it ensure that principals have the instructional leadership skills that will help them work most effectively with teachers to help students master core academic subjects?
 - c. How well will the project increase content knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective teaching strategies for participants statewide?
 - d. How much potential does the project have to impact the participants' students?
 - e. How well will the project support the Alabama State Board of Education (SBE) professional development standards (RFP Appendix A:1 and A:2) and the Alabama Course(s) of Study applicable to the subject area(s)?

Criterion	Maximum Point	Assigned Points
1. Project Need and Objectives	25	

2. Project Design: Management, Activities (30 points): How well will the project management and activities meet the project's objectives? Specifically –

- a. Is there demonstrated relevance and commitment of each partner to the project? Is the role of each partner clearly evident?
- b. Will the workshops/institutes be effectively organized and administered?
- c. How appropriate are the locations for project activities, proposed session dates, and participant requirements?
- d. How adequate is the instructional plan? How appropriate are the methods and materials for the project? If the program is designed to include mentors, is their role clearly identified and will they be properly selected and trained?
- e. Will the project provide continuing support and technical assistance during the school year, including an emphasis on technology to improve student learning?

Criterion	Maximum Point	Assigned Points
2. Project Design: Management, Activities	30	

3. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (15 points):

- a. Is the budget cost-effective?
- b. Are expenses reasonable to support the project's objectives?
- c. Will the project leverage funding from other sources?

Criterion	Maximum Points	Assigned Points
3. Budget and Cost Effectiveness	15	

4. Quality of Key Personnel (15 points): How well are the staff and partners qualified and committed to the project and capable of achieving its objectives? [See résumés attached to the proposal.] Specifically –

- a. Considering training and experience, are the project’s key personnel properly qualified to provide the administrative leadership necessary to carry out the activities of the project?
- b. Are the project’s instructional personnel properly qualified to provide training to meet the project’s objectives?
- c. Are the time commitments of the project director and other key personnel appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the project?

Criterion	Maximum Point	Assigned Points
4. Quality of Key Personnel	15	

5. Project Evaluation Plan (15 points): How adequate is the plan for project evaluation? Specifically –

- a. Are evaluation questions provided? Are evaluation questions related to the planned follow-up included?
- b. Do the evaluation questions adequately assess the project objectives and implementation (formative evaluation)?
- c. Are all project objectives measurable?
 - 1) Have the assessment tools been described with respect to reliability and validity?
 - 2) If assessment tools are to be developed by the project evaluator, what procedures will be used to ensure reliable and valid assessment tools?
- d. Is there a process in place to monitor progress toward meeting project goals?

Criterion	Maximum Point	Assigned Points
5. Project Evaluation Plan	15	

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
 NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: MASTERY OF CONTENT
 (P.L. 107-110, Title II, Part A, Subpart 3)
 CONSOLIDATED RANKING OF PROPOSALS**

- Check:**
- Category A – AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative)**
 - Category B – Continuation of Multi-Year Grant Projects**
 - Category C – New Projects**

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE REVIEW PANEL CHAIR: When all reviewers have completed their individual ratings, convene the panel and complete this consolidated rating form as follows:

1. Determine the average points among all panelists for each proposal (please verify this calculation);
2. List the proposals in order of ranking beginning with the highest average points;
3. Circle “Yes” if a recommendation is conditional and state the condition(s) the proposal is to meet in order to qualify;
4. Have all reviewers sign and date the form.

NOTE: Since the consolidated ranking summarizes the evaluation of all panel members, only one copy of this form should be completed, not one for each panel member. If the panel determines any proposal should not be awarded a grant, clearly state the reasons on separate paper.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Institution and Name of Proposal</u>	<u>Average Points</u>	<u>Conditional Recommendation?</u>
1			Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____		

	_____]		

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Institution and Name of Proposal</u>	<u>Average Points</u>	<u>Conditional Recommendation?</u>
2	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
3	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
4	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
5	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
6	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Institution and Name of Proposal</u>	<u>Average Points</u>	<u>Conditional Recommendation?</u>
7	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
<hr/>			
8	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
<hr/>			
9	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
<hr/>			
10	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		
<hr/>			

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Institution and Name of Proposal</u>	<u>Average Points</u>	<u>Conditional Recommendation?</u>
11	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		

12	_____	_____	Yes* / No
	[*Conditions, if any: _____ _____ _____]		

Chair: _____ Signature: _____

Reviewer: _____ Signature: _____

Reviewer: _____ Signature: _____

Reviewer: _____ Signature: _____

Reviewer: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____