

submittal (or the date of contact 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 date 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 which they intend to 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, Division of Discretionary Grants, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW., 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20447.

A list of the Single Points of Contact for each State and Territory is included as Attachment G of this announcement.

4. Application Consideration

Applications which meet the screening requirements in sections 5 a and b below will be reviewed competitively. Such applications will be referred to reviewers for a numerical score and explanatory comments based solely on responsiveness to program priority area guidelines and evaluation criteria published in this announcement.

Applications submitted under all priority areas will be reviewed by persons outside of the OCS unit which will be directly responsible for programmatic management of the grant. The results of these reviews will assist the Director and OCS program staff in considering competing applications. Reviewers' 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 since the Director may also consider other factors deemed relevant including, but not limited to, the timely and proper completion of projects funded with OCS funds granted in the last five (5) years; comments of reviewers and Government officials; staff evaluation and input; geographic distribution; previous program performance of applicants; compliance with grant terms under previous DHHS grants; audit reports; investigative reports; and applicant's progress in resolving any final audit disallowances on previous OCS or other Federal agency grants. Applicants with

three or more incomplete OCS grants at the time of review may be denied funding. In addition, for applications received under 1.0, OCS will consider the geographic distribution of funds among States and the relative proportion of funding among rural and urban areas in accordance with section 681(b)(1)(D) of the Act.

OCS reserves the right to discuss applications with other Federal or non-Federal funding sources to ascertain the applicant's performance record.

5. Criteria for Screening Applicants

a. Initial Screening

All applications that meet the published deadline for submission will be screened to determine completeness and conformity to the requirements of this announcement. Only those applications meeting the following requirements will be reviewed and evaluated competitively. Others will be returned to the applicants with a notation that they were unacceptable.

(1) The application must contain a Standard Form 424 "Application for Federal Assistance" (SF-424), a budget (SF-424A), and signed "Assurances" (SF 424B) completed according to instructions published in part F and attachments B, C, and D of this Program Announcement.

(2) An Executive Summary and a project abstract must also accompany the standard forms.

(3) 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.

(4) The application must be submitted for consideration under one priority area only.

b. Pre-Rating Review

Applications which pass the initial screening will be forwarded to reviewers and/or OCS staff prior to the programmatic review to verify that the applications comply with this Program Announcement in the following areas:

(1) *Eligibility*: Applicant meets the eligibility requirements for the priority area under which funds are being requested. Proof of non-profit status must be included in the Appendices of the Project Narrative where applicable. Applicants must also be aware that the applicant's legal name as required in SF-424 (Item 5) *must match* that listed as corresponding to the Employer Identification Number (Item 6).

(2) *Number of Projects*: An application may contain only one project (except for Priority Areas 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 3.1 where applicants are

researching various opportunities, providing assistance to current OCS grantees, providing seminars and other activities in assisting Community Development Corporations, or having a multifaceted approach to Migrants' issues) and this project must be identified as responding to one of the program priority areas stated in this Announcement.

Applicants which are not in compliance with this requirement will be ineligible for funding.

(3) *Grant amount*: The amount of funds requested does not exceed the limits indicated in Part C, 2,b for the appropriate priority area.

(4) *Written Agreement When Applicant Proposes to Make Equity Investment, Loan, or Sub-Grant*: (Sub-Priority Areas 1.1, and 1.2); The application contains a written agreement signed by the applicant and the third party which includes all of the elements required in part B.

An application may be disqualified from the competition and returned if it does not conform to one or more of the above requirements.

c. Evaluation Criteria

Applications which pass the pre-rating review will be assessed and scored by reviewers. Each reviewer will give a numerical score for each application reviewed. These numerical scores will be supported by explanatory statements on a formal rating form describing major strengths and weaknesses under each applicable criterion published in the announcement.

The in-depth evaluation and review process will use the following criteria coupled with the specific requirements contained under each program priority area as described in Part B.

(Note: the following review criteria reiterate collection of information requirements contained in Part F of this announcement. These requirements are approved under OMB Control Number 0970-0062.)

6. Criteria for Review and Evaluation of All Applications Except Sub-Priority Areas 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5

(a) Criterion I: Analysis of Need (Maximum: 5 Points)

The application documents that the project addresses a vital need in a distressed community and provides statistics and other data and information in support of its contention.