

FY2016 MAGNET SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CALL FOR PEER REVIEWERS

CONTEXT

The Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) provides grants to eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) and consortia of LEAs to support the development and implementation of magnet schools under an approved desegregation plan—either a required plan or voluntary plan that is adequate under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. By supporting the development and implementation of magnet schools that reduce, eliminate, or prevent minority group isolation and promote socioeconomic integration (if applicable), these program resources can be used in pursuit of the objectives of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), which supports State and local efforts to enable all elementary and secondary school students to achieve high standards and which holds schools, LEAs, and States accountable for ensuring that their students do so. In particular, the MSAP provides an opportunity for eligible entities to expand their capacity to provide public school choice to students who attend low-performing schools. The Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII), is seeking peer reviewers for the MSAP grant competition. Qualified peer reviewers must meet the criteria listed below.

WHO?

We are seeking peer reviewers from various educational backgrounds and professions, including State or district education officials, PK-12 teachers and principals, school attorneys, college or university educators, researchers, and evaluators with experience from one or more areas in the field of Education. The selected reviewers should have expertise in at least one of the following areas: magnet school planning and implementation; education civil rights law; education administration, curriculum development and staff development for elementary and/or secondary education; and/or evaluation of educational programs.

Magnet School Planning and Implementation

- Knowledge of magnet schools and/or theme-based education, including planning and implementation.
- Knowledge of the sociocultural context in which diverse students learn.
- Understanding and knowledge of school desegregation, public school choice, and minority achievement.
- Knowledge of effective desegregation strategies including student assignment, attendance zones, weighted lotteries, magnet school siting, and recruitment plans.
- Understanding of the research on school climate and its impact on school achievement.
- Knowledge of working in comprehensive school buildings and the role of family and community engagement.

Education Civil Rights Law

- Knowledge of education civil rights enforcement with a particular emphasis on desegregation court orders and voluntary desegregation plans.
- Understanding of the importance of diversity and fostering meaningful interaction among students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, beginning at the earliest stage of such students' education.
- Knowledge of recent Supreme Court decisions concerning civil rights and desegregation.

Education Administration, Curriculum and Staff Development

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- Knowledge of elementary and secondary schools, magnet and/or theme-based curricula.
- Knowledge of and experience with school structures, effective leader paradigms, managerial processes and fiscal management.
- Understanding of research-based staff development strategies as well as high-quality professional development methods, particularly as it relates to magnet and/or theme-based schools.
- Knowledge of frameworks for outcome based professional development that focuses on change in teachers' classroom practices, change in their beliefs and attitudes, and change in students' achievement levels.
- Knowledge of comprehensive instructional programs and the research targeting approaches for heterogeneous groups that result in high achievement.

Evaluation of Educational Programs

- Familiarity with What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards.
- Knowledge of, and experience with, studies of school reforms focused on increasing socioeconomic integration and academic achievement.
- Understanding of accountability structures, program and grant management.
- Understanding of education research, quantitative and qualitative methods of project evaluation, and recent findings of the relevant literature.
- Knowledge in evaluating school assessment plans and benchmarks for effective student outcomes.

Review

- Experience reviewing grant applications.

WHAT?

Peer reviewers will independently read, score, and provide written comments for grant proposals submitted to the U.S. Department of Education from applicants seeking federal funding under the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). The purpose of this program is to provide competitive grants to eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) and consortia of LEAs to support magnet schools that are part of an approved desegregation plan. Through the implementation of magnet schools, program resources are utilized to eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation in elementary and secondary schools with substantial portions of minority students as well as enable magnet school students to meet high academic standards. The review process will largely be conducted electronically from the reviewer's location. Reviewers will receive an honorarium for their services.

REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the skills, attributes and expertise highlighted above, peer reviewers must also meet the following requirements:

Availability. Each reviewer *must* be available for *at least three weeks* to review *at least five* applications. An online orientation session will occur prior to the assignment and review of the applications, and a series of conference calls will be required in order to complete the paneling process.

Tools. Each reviewer *must* have access to the Internet, a phone, a printer and have the ability to navigate a web-based environment.

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Quality of Review. Each reviewer ***must*** provide detailed, objective, constructive, and timely oral and written reviews to applicants and/or organizations for each assigned application. These reviews will be used to recommend applications for funding. They will also be shared with each applicant, and the comments regarding applicants selected for funding will be made available to the general public following the completion of the review process.

WHEN?

The review process will span several weeks ranging from ***Monday, June 13, 2016*** through ***Friday, July 15, 2016***. An orientation call will be held prior to the review period. Reviewers will receive an honorarium for the satisfactory completion of the above requirements during the grant review schedule. A satisfactory review requires that each application is thoroughly read, scored, and discussed. The final, high-quality comments and corresponding scores will be reviewed and approved by a panel moderator prior to their final submission in the G5 system.

INTERESTED?

If you would like to be considered as a peer reviewer, please complete the Peer Reviewer Checklist, and send either your resume or curriculum vitae to the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) at [***msap.team@ed.gov***](mailto:msap.team@ed.gov) by ***Friday, April 29, 2016***.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

For more information about the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), please visit: [***http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/parental-options/magnet-school-assistance-program-msap/***](http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/parental-options/magnet-school-assistance-program-msap/).