



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

ASSISTANT DEPUTY SECRETARY

Dear Colleagues:

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) is seeking qualified peer reviewers to read and evaluate discretionary grant proposals for programs that provide funding for competitive grants.

The OSDFS peer review process is designed to ensure that each discretionary grant is awarded on the basis of evaluation selection criteria. Therefore, we rely on peer reviewers to critically evaluate all submitted proposals to ensure objective and independent recommendations. Each year we assemble panels of educators, policymakers, and experts to participate. I am writing to request your assistance in identifying possible candidates for consideration.

The peer review process consists of an orientation, evaluation and scoring of applications consistent with established selection criteria, written reviews of each application to support the scores, and discussions with other panelists. The review process for each program is conducted electronically via the Internet, eliminating the need for any travel to Washington, DC. However, each peer reviewer is expected to commit approximately 35 – 45 hours to complete a review of applications on schedule. They are expected to review about 10 applications assigned to their panel and participate in three conference calls. Generally this time comes in a very compressed period, sometimes as little as two weeks, meaning that the commitment can be very intense. Reviewers will receive an honorarium after completion of required work assigned to them and submission of mandatory forms. Persons interested in serving as peer reviewers may apply at any time.

Expertise in the following areas is strongly suggested and should be noted, when applying:

- strong writing, listening, and speaking skills;
- superior analytical skills, including the ability to provide thoughtful, objective evaluations of proposals using the designated selection criteria;
- relevant education, training, and/or experience in the subject area of the grant program;
- knowledge of and/or experience with program planning, implementation, and/or research and evaluation processes;
- ability to work collegially with others in a team environment; and
- experience working with diverse communities.

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Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation.

For OSDFS grant competitions, peer reviewers with backgrounds in one or more of the following areas are particularly helpful:

- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention
- Character Education
- Civic Education
- Emergency Management, Disaster Response, and/or School Security
- School-based Mental Health Services
- School-based Health and Wellness Program
- Violence Prevention

Reviewers should also have significant experience working at one of the following educational levels:

- early childhood
- elementary
- secondary
- higher education

Please be aware that participation in the peer review process will require reviewers to determine if they have a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict, in reviewing assigned grant applications. A peer reviewer is considered to have a conflict of interest when the reviewer, or certain individuals and entities with which the reviewer has a relationship, has a financial interest in the outcomes of the competition for which he or she is serving as a reviewer.

If you and/or qualified colleagues recommended by you would be interested in serving as a peer reviewer, please complete the peer reviewer [checklist](#) (MS Word) document and email it, along with a current resume, to osdfs@fbs-dc.com. I encourage you to share this information with others that are qualified and may be interested in participating in this process.

For further information about the review process or how to apply to be a peer reviewer, please contact Debbie Kalnasy at debbie.kalnasy@ed.gov.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.



Kevin Jennings