



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

June 19, 2019

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your correspondence seeking additional information regarding the “educational choice” competitive preference priority in the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Program competition. You also requested the U.S. Department of Education (Department) provide information from prior competitions. Your letter has been referred to my office, and I am pleased to respond.

Our inclusion of educational choice in the CCAMPIS NIA is designed to expand the ability of the program to meet the needs of student-parents. For example, instead of supporting operating costs for on-campus centers that may not serve large numbers of students, an institution could provide more funds to eligible providers so that more student-parents can access childcare in their local communities. In addition, while campus-based childcare may be helpful to some students, others may find community-based childcare to be more convenient if they rely on public transportation to get to campus, spend some days on campus but other days working at a job not near the campus, attend classes at night when campus-based childcare centers are closed, or if they are enrolled exclusively in online courses.

Your letter included five enumerated questions, which I have answered, in turn, below:

1. You requested applicant scoring information for the last five CCAMPIS competitions. Scoring information for the FY 2018 competition is below. As discussed previously with your staff, we will provide information on the FY 2013 and 2017 competitions after the FY 2019 CCAMPIS competition is completed. However, the records for the oldest two of the last five previous competitions (FY 2005 and FY 2008) were disposed of in accordance with the Department’s regular record retention rules under the Federal Records Act, and we do not have the information needed to respond to your requests.

In the FY 2018 competition, the Department received 140 eligible applications and made 99 new awards at a cost of \$17,056,937. Approximately 70 percent of eligible applicants from the competition received awards. Of the 99 funded applications: 75 were solely to provide services at the institution’s on-campus child care center; eight were solely to provide services at child care providers that were off-campus; and 16 were designed to provide services at both on-campus and off-campus providers.

2. In response to your question about scoring applications, I want to point out that the Department generally does not score applications and will not be assigning scores under the competitive preference priority in the FY 2019 CCAMPIS competition. An independent panel of peer reviewers scores applications according to the publicly available selection criteria provided in the NIA. We refer you to the NIA, which is posted on the Department's website, for a full listing of the applicable selection criteria.
3. You also asked specifically about the definition of the term "early learning settings," which is used in the educational choice priority. As you may know, the educational choice priority was taken from the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities.¹ Those final priorities do not explicitly define "early learning settings," but public comment did not suggest a need for such an explicit definition. Should applicants or peer reviewers need further clarification regarding the meaning of this term, we will provide that through our normal technical assistance process.
4. In your letter, you also request information for the total number of applications that were not awarded but were within five points of the award threshold, as well as the difference between the score for the lowest-scoring funded application and the score for the highest-scoring unfunded application from the last five competitions. In the FY 2018 competition, 14 unfunded applications were within five points of the award threshold, and the difference between the lowest-scoring funded application and the highest scoring unfunded application was one half of a point. Again, we will provide scoring information for the FY 2013 and 2017 competitions after the FY 2019 CCAMPIS competition is concluded. Data from the FY 2005 and FY 2008 competitions are not available, as described above.
5. As you are aware, the application deadline under the NIA for the FY 2019 CCAMPIS Program competition was May 31, 2019. We cannot speculate on the outcome of a competition that has not concluded.

Thank you for your interest in the CCAMPIS Program. The Department remains committed to the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education. If you have further concerns, please contact the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs at (202) 401-0020.

Sincerely,



Diane Auer Jones
Principal Deputy Under Secretary
Delegated the Duties of Under Secretary

¹ Federal Register Volume 83, Issue 42 (March 2, 2018). U.S. Department of Education. "Secretary's Final Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs."
www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/03/02/2018-04291/secretarys-final-supplemental-priorities-and-definitions-for-discretionary-grant-programs.