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ABSTRACT

As a result of an evaluation of Florida State community service programs financed under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, a set of 16 guidelines was drawn up. The first six, in order of priority, are: a project should be directed toward filling a community (rather than an institutional) need; objectives should be realistic and measurable; the program should involve the proper target audience; members of this audience should be involved in planning, execution, and evaluating; there should be realistic allocation of resources; and the proposal should indicate the nature and extent of interagency cooperation. Based on two components of projects (process and means used in achieving the objectives), evaluation criteria were established. These include: need identification; involvement of community leaders; communication and cooperation; followup; target audience; staff; dissemination of information; and preventative duplication. (NL)

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GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT APPROVAL AND EVALUATION CRITERIA TITLE 1, HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1965

**PREPARED THROUGH THE
OFFICE OF THE STATE
COORDINATOR TITLE 1,
HIGHER EDUCATION ACT,
1965**

**BOARD OF REGENTS
STATE OF FLORIDA**

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GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT APPROVAL AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

TITLE I, HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1965

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Prepared Through The
Office of the State Coordinator
Title I, Higher Education Act, 1965

Florida

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RATIONALE AND DISCUSSION

The guidelines that constitute the bulk of the following pages were designed at the request of the Advisory Committee of Title I, Higher Education Act, 1965, for the State of Florida.

The Advisory Committee and the State Coordinator of Title I felt the need to determine the following: (1) What impact has Title I had on the state; (2) Were the projects accomplishing the goals and objectives of both the federal and state plans; (3) Was the administration of Title I in the state effective; (4) What are appropriate and acceptable requirements for approving or rejecting projects for funding; and (5) What are the feelings of the institutions of higher education in Florida toward Title I?

To these ends an evaluation was requested. It is out of the evaluation process that the guidelines in this paper receive their origin.

Essentially, the guidelines were constructed after we (the evaluators) had completed the following:

1. Reviewed the Federal Act and the State Plan and Objectives.
2. Reviewed proposals, progress reports, and evaluations of Title I projects from 1966 to the present;
3. Reviewed the literature on guidelines and criteria for approval of Title I projects;
4. Visited and interviewed several project directors, staff, community leaders and project participants.

The review of the Federal Act and the State Plan Objectives disclosed a strong mandate for projects to be directed toward action that would make a concentrated effort on alleviating problems within a community that were detrimental to the well-being of the members within that community. A strong emphasis was placed on the development of innovative educational programs as the means for accomplishing this goal. Community involvement in the planning and execution of projects received a high priority. An equally strong directive was given to strengthening the community service programs in institutions of higher education that would enable them to function more effectively in assisting communities in the alleviation or solution of community problems.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE OF GUIDELINES

Proposal Format or Application

A standard application form is used for all proposals, and it is with this form that many of the problems in assessing proposals begin. One of the major difficulties that we encountered was in being able to determine such things as the role of community leaders or agencies with the project,

documentation of community need or problem, and dissemination of information. There is a need to request that project directors provide more specific information in the proposal application.

Reviewing Committee or Board

Two major points must be made regarding the committee or board that is responsible for approving or rejecting Title I proposals.

The first is that the committee consist of persons who (a) possess an understanding of the potential inherent within an institution of higher education for assisting communities with problem solving and growth, and (b) are capable of assessing both the practicality and the probability of a program in accomplishing its intended outcomes. We are not suggesting here that the members of the committee be averse to innovation or creativity but rather that they possess the knowledge and sensitivity that will enable them to support and encourage innovativeness.

The second point concerns itself with time. Specifically, we are referring to the allotment of time necessary to thoroughly review and discuss the submitted proposals. Proposals should be in the hands of each committee member two weeks prior to the review session of the committee and each member should thoroughly read and make comments on each proposal. The approval or rejection session should be based on a sufficient discussion time of each individual project.

The review board should have a membership of not more than ten persons drawn from the following areas: higher education, state urban and rural planning commission, state community affairs department, and community service agencies (i.e., YMCA, welfare councils).

Reviewing Methods

In the following paragraphs we will present three methods of proposal selection with a discussion of their advantages and disadvantages.

The first method involves only the review board or Title I Advisory Committee. Each member of the committee receives a copy of all submitted proposals two weeks prior to the selection meeting. Each member reviews every proposal and, with the assistance of guidelines, scores or ranks the proposal. At the selection meeting the members discuss the proposals and use the scoring or ranking system to help them make the final selections.

A major disadvantage of this method is that questions committee members might have regarding a proposal must go unanswered or the decision on that proposal must be postponed until the information can be obtained.

The advantages of this method are (a) the committee members have had adequate time to review, consider, and formulate questions regarding the proposal, (b) the ranking or scoring system based on the guidelines helps to identify discrepancies among the members and pinpoints items that need to be discussed, and (c) most of the time at the discussion meeting can be devoted to discussion and decision-making rather than reviewing proposals.

The second method involves two groups of people, (1) reviewers, and (2) the approval committee.

The reviewers committee should consist of three to five members and should be appointed by the state coordinator or the proposal approval committee.

The main responsibility of this committee would be to review all proposals submitted for funding with the main purpose of "weeding out" those proposals that (1) bear no relationship to the purposes and objectives of Title I, and (2) are not community service in nature. The committee would also return proposals that are in need of clarification, alteration, or additional information. Its third major function would be to prepare comments on the proposals that will be forwarded to the approval committee.

Once this process is completed the approval committee would meet and approve or reject proposals on the basis of the extent to which they meet the requirements of the guidelines.

The disadvantage of this method is that it requires two groups to accomplish the task of approving projects for funding, but the use of two groups is also an advantage in that more time can be devoted by the approval committee to a thorough review of the projects submitted to them. In addition, this method helps to diminish strong bias on the part of any member of the approval committee toward a particular project.

The third method involves a meeting in which project directors present their proposal to the review board. Once all proposals have been presented the committee would then discuss the proposals and make their selections.

There are several disadvantages to this method. First is the enormous amount of time required for presentations and then discussion and selection. The second is that project directors or writers who possess the skills of verbal persuasion have an advantage over those who lack these skills. Third is that it may be impossible for all project directors to be in attendance or to have someone represent them.

A major advantage of this method lies in the presence of project directors for the purpose of answering questions raised by the selection committee.

Summary

In summary, we wish to suggest that the success and effectiveness of Title I, Higher Education Act, 1965, lies not in hope or chance, but rather in a combination of guided program selection, competent program administration, and commitment to the purposes and objectives of Title I.

The remaining pages are, we believe, a step in that direction.

INTRODUCTION

The first six guidelines are arranged in order of priority. Projects that fail to adequately meet the requirements of these guidelines are, we believe, not designed for the purposes of assisting in the solution of community problems or of strengthening the institution's ability to function more effectively in the area of community service. Projects receiving a low rating on these priorities are deemed questionable. However, projects receiving a high rating on the first six guidelines should receive strong consideration for funding.

The remaining guidelines are also important and reflect the following:

1. The institution's capability to conduct the project.
2. Its commitment to the community and to Title I.
3. Its attempt to extend its efforts at solving the identified problem in the greater community of the state.

GUIDELINES

New Proposals

- I. The proposed project should be directed toward fulfilling a community need or problem rather than an institutional need.
 - A. The project should be focused upon an identified community problem or need.
 - B. The problem or need identified should be well documented, i.e., surveys, reports, census information, questionnaires, previous studies.
 - C. The project design should clearly indicate in what ways it will attempt to fulfill the identified need or how it will assist in solving the identified problem.
- II. The project objectives should be realistic, relevant, and measurable in light of the identified need or problem.
 - A. They should be established in consultation with members of the target audience.
 - B. They should be stated in specific terms.
 - C. They should clearly state the expected immediate results.
 - D. They should clearly state the expected long-term results.
 - E. They should clearly state the behavioral changes in the participants that the project is designed to bring about.

- III. The proposed program should involve the correct target audience.
 - A. It should be aimed at those persons who illustrate the need for this kind of program.
 - B. Reasonable assurance should be given that the identified target audience will be reached.
 - C. Effort should be expended toward providing the service to the target audience that could not normally afford or receive the service or assistance.

- IV. Members of the target audience and persons who have influence with the target audience should be involved in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the proposed program.
 - A. Decision-making power should be granted to these persons indicated and documented.
 - B. Clarification of their responsibility and accountability in all phases of the project should be in evidence.

- V. There should be a realistic allocation of funds, personnel, and time for progress reports and evaluation of the project.
 - A. Inclusion of a realistic evaluation design that includes:
 - 1. The method to be used,
 - 2. The measures to be applied,
 - 3. The schedule, and
 - 4. The plan for reporting results.
 - B. Funds should be allocated for progress report.
 - C. Funds and personnel should be allocated for evaluation.

- VI. The proposal should clearly indicate the nature and extent of cooperation with other agencies and institutions in relationship to the project.
 - A. Other community agencies and institutions should be involved in ways such as:
 - 1. Providing resource staff,
 - 2. Providing facilities, and
 - 3. Participation in planning, execution, and evaluation.

- B. The proposal should indicate the way in which the institution is assisting the cooperating agencies and institutions to develop the competence or resources that will enable them to conduct similar projects.
- VII. The proposal should contain an introductory statement adequately describing the project in broad and general terms, including:
- A. The purpose of the project,
 - B. The nature of the project,
 - C. The subject matter in broad general terms,
 - D. The target group in specific terms, and
 - E. The proposed timing of the project.
- VIII. The institution should possess the capability for carrying out the proposed project, such as:
- A. An experienced and competent staff in the problem area,
 - B. Documented interest and commitment on the part of the institution's administration, faculty, and staff,
 - C. The institution's experience in dealing with the defined problem area or with other community service programs,
 - D. The facilities and equipment available for conducting the program or easy access to these, and
 - E. The existence within the institution of a community service or continuing education department.
- IX. The proposal should define the involvement of the appropriate staff in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the program, including:
- A. The extent of their decision-making power,
 - B. Their relationship to the project director and to the target audience, and
 - C. Their functional role in the project.
- X. The proposal should define the potential of the program for continuing benefits to the community and the state:
- A. In terms of a demonstration of methodology that may be utilized elsewhere,
 - B. In terms of a multiplier effect (i.e., persons who are trained may themselves organize or conduct similar programs in other areas of the community or state), and

- C. In terms of providing a base upon which to build other programs, serving as a catalyst to trigger additional programs, or as a model for other programs.
- XI. The proposal should indicate to which problem area in the state plan it is related. If the proposal is in a problem area not identified in the state plan it should provide well-documented evidence to support the need in the new area.
- XII. The proposal should clearly indicate its relationship to other projects in the community or state that are directed to a similar or related program, in terms of:
 - A. Its complementation or competition with other projects,
 - B. The involvement of the staff of related projects as consultants or resource persons on this project, and
 - C. The use of the findings or results of related projects in the planning or execution of this project.
- XIII. Sound administrative and educational principles should be clearly discernible in the project design by:
 - A. The use of teaching methods appropriate to both target audience and content, and
 - B. By the use of administrative practices that will maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the operating structure.
- XIV. The proposal should contain an outline indicating the means by which the project findings will be disseminated to the appropriate audiences through:
 - A. An indication of intention of communicating this information, and
 - B. A proposed plan for disseminating the information.
- XV. The proposal should indicate the way in which the execution of this project will enable the institution to strengthen its services to the community.

APPROVAL OF CONTINUATION PROPOSALS

The guidelines mentioned above are appropriate for the consideration of new proposals, but are not in themselves sufficient when continuation proposals are being considered.

The very fact that the project has already had an opportunity to function provides it with a different scope than when it was initially funded.

In addition, one year of operation may have suggested changes in objectives, methods, target audience, or even purpose.

In light of these possibilities it is necessary to review continuation proposals using the preceding guidelines as well as those listed below.

- I. The proposal should contain an evaluation report (abstract) of the preceding stage of the project which would:
 - A. outline the extent to which the objectives in the first stage were accomplished,
 - B. include an evaluation report from staff, target audiences, and community leaders, and
 - C. indicate the extent the success of the project had on the alleviation of the problem to which it was directed.
- II. The continuation proposal should indicate how the preceding stage of the project strengthened the institution's capability to serve the community.
- III. The continuation proposal should clearly indicate the relationship of the second phase to the first and document the need for this new phase.
- IV. The members of the approval committee should, from the evidence presented in the evaluation of Phase One, be convinced that the project is worthy of continuation and that institution has demonstrated the capability for continuing with this project.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

These criteria have been developed for use by the Advisory Committee in the future. They were not used during the current evaluation.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

"The community involvement and services effort of an institution must be judged in terms of its impact on the community, in terms of how the community or its citizens are better off or have changed behavior as a result of service programs."

--Nathan C. Shaw and J. Kenneth Cumiskey

The nature of the Title I program for a state suggests that an evaluation of individual projects should concern itself not only with whether or not changes occurred in participants, or a community problem was solved, but also with the process involved in achieving the project objectives.

More specifically, concern must be given to the means used to achieve the objectives and it is on the basis of these two components that the evaluation criteria for individual projects was established.

I. Identification of Actual Problem or Need

- A. The problem area should be adequately identified in terms of well-documented evidence, i.e., surveys, reports, census information, etc.
- B. The problem area of the state plan to which the project is directed should be clearly defined.
- C. The project should clearly indicate in what ways it will attempt to fulfill the identified need or how it will assist in solving the identified problem.

II. Involvement of Community Leaders and Participants

- A. There should be an indication of involvement of community leaders in planning and coordination.
- B. There should be an indication of involvement of target group members in setting program and/or course objectives along with project planning.
- C. There should be an indication of the utilization of feedback from target group and community leaders.

III. Objectives

- A. The objectives should be stated in specific terms and be measurable in terms of intended outcomes.
- B. The objectives should indicate measurement of short-term and long-term results.
- C. The objectives should clearly state how and under what conditions target group members will be involved.
- D. The objectives should be realistic in terms of the capabilities and particular limitations of the institution involved, i.e., facilities, staff, physical plant, etc.
- E. The objectives should indicate a well-conceived plan of sequentially based activities, carefully planned and ordered.
- F. The objectives should be realistic in terms of the knowledge possessed regarding the target population, i.e., in line with their intellectual capabilities, i.e., whether or not they will be able to make use of the new learnings.

IV. Communication and Cooperation

- A. The institution conducting the project should enlist the advice, services, and/or expertise of other institutions throughout the state.
- B. The institution should cooperate with community agencies working in similar problem areas, i.e., illiteracy, education for retired.
- C. Channels of communication should be opened for dissemination of information from the institution to the community at large, i.e., newspapers, TV, radio, etc.
- D. The need for cooperation with the state coordinator's office should be indicated.

V. Followup

- A. There should be an indication of the "type" of followup procedures to be used, i.e., courses, workshops, meetings, questionnaires.
- B. There should be an indication of "frequency" of followup, i.e., once, twice, or more after completion of project.
- C. There should be an indication of the results of followup, i.e., change in future program planning, alterations in methods, techniques, etc.

VI. Evaluation

- A. There should be mention of specific pre-program and post-program evaluation procedures.
- B. There should be an indication of "how" evaluation is to occur, i.e., methods to be employed.
- C. There should be an indication of the frequency of evaluation.
- D. There should be an indication of how evaluation results are to be utilized in program.

VII. Target Audience

- A. There should be an indication the program is aimed at the specific group or community who illustrate a need.
- B. There should be reasonable assurance that the target audience will be reached.
- C. There should be an indication of geographic location (if possible, of target audience and boundaries indicated, i.e., rural, urban, ghetto, suburbs, farm areas, etc.)

VIII. Staff

- A. There should be an indication of the number of staff needed to fulfill project objectives.
- B. There should be an indication of the competence and capabilities of the staff (teachers, consultants, etc.) in regard to past experience.
- C. Staff duties and responsibilities should be as clearly stated as possible.
- D. Staff salaries, expenses, and amount of time to be spent in project should be as specific as possible.

IX. Dissemination of Information

- A. The dissemination of results of the project to the general public should be planned for.
- B. Provisions should be made for dissemination, i.e., newsletters, brochures, TV advertising, etc.

X. Preventative Duplication

- A. Provisions should have been made to see that the proposed project is not a duplication of similar projects either being planned or in progress in same problem area.

XI. Contribution of Project to Solution of Community Problems

- A. Participants should be better off for having participated in the program.
- B. Some changes in the behavior or attitude of the target audiences should be attributable to participation in this program.
- C. The change should be as positive as possible.
- D. Participation in the program should assist the target audience in solving their problems.

TITLE I STATE PROGRAM

Effective functioning of any program requires two basic components. The first is a clearly defined future condition and the second is a built-in system of evaluation and feedback.

The Federal Act and the Florida state plan for Title I, Higher Education, 1965, have made an honest effort to achieve component one, but considerable flexibility of interpretation has hindered its full accomplishment.

The second component, a built-in system of evaluation and feedback, has been minimal in the State of Florida program.

Component one has been discussed in the recommendations and summary of our evaluation report and will not be dealt with here. This section of the report will direct itself to setting forth criteria for an evaluation and feedback system for the state plan of Title I, Higher Education Act, 1965.

An evaluation need not be a complex process that requires specialists for its administration or interpretations of the findings. With this in mind, we propose the following criteria for evaluating a state-administered Title I program.

I. Strengthening of the Institution's Community Service Program

- A. To what extent and in what manner have the community service programs of the institutions receiving Title I funds been strengthened, i.e.,
 - 1. The institutions should now be able to offer services to the community that they did not offer before.
 - 2. They should indicate whether receiving Title I funds has enabled them to employ additional qualified community service staff.

3. There should now be greater interaction between the community service program department and the community than existed prior to these institution's receiving Title I funds.

II. Assist in the Solution or Alleviation of Identified Community Problems

- A. Are the problems or needs identified in the projects real ones or are they based on intuition, interest, or speculation of project directors?
- B. In what ways have projects contributed to the solution or alleviation of community problems, i.e.,
 1. The problems have been eliminated or lessened.
 2. The participants are now able to cope more effectively with the problem.
 3. The participants are now more actively engaged in working on a solution to the problem.
- C. Were the methods and techniques used in projects effective, i.e., were they the most satisfactory for accomplishing the objectives of the projects?

III. Impact of Projects on Problem Areas Defined in the State Plan

- A. Are problem areas receiving equal attention, i.e.,
 1. There should be some semblance of balance in the number of projects funded in each problem area.
 2. The amount of funds allocated in one problem area should not be considerably greater than the other areas.
 3. The sub-areas defined within each problem area should receive reasonably equal attention.
- B. Have the projects funded within each problem area significantly reduced or altered these areas as statewide problems?
- C. Do other institutions or agencies not receiving Title I funds view Title I as having made a significant contribution to the major community problems of the state?

IV. Relationship of Projects to the Purposes and Objectives of the State Plan

- A. Are problem areas for projects identified in cooperation with community leaders and target audiences?
- B. Are the projects educational in design?

V. Institution and Geographic Distribution of Projects

- A. Is there a clustering of projects in a relatively few geographic areas of the state or are projects distributed evenly throughout the state?
- B. Is there an even distribution of projects among the institutions of higher education or are there relatively few institutions conducting most of the projects.
- C. Are projects within the various problem areas attacking the problems in the various areas throughout the state where the problem is manifest or are only a few locations throughout the state receiving assistance?

VI. Involvement of Institutions of Higher Education

- A. Are all institutions of higher education within the state informed of the possibility of receiving Title I funds?
- B. Are only those institutions that have adequate community service programs and resources receiving Title I funds?
- C. Has any attempt been made to encourage or assist those institutions of higher education that have small or weak programs of community service?
- D. What is the percentage of the total number of institutions of higher education within the state that are conducting Title I projects?

VII. Functions of the State Coordinator and the Advisory Committee

- A. Is the state coordinator communicating effectively with the representatives of the institutions of higher education in the state?
- B. Are the activities of the state coordinator designed to enable him to guide the Title I efforts toward a coordinated attack on the major problem areas identified in the state plan?
- C. Is the state coordinator in close contact with all institutions of higher education within the state so that he is aware of their community service program efforts?
- D. Does the state coordinator attempt to coordinate efforts of institutions conducting projects in similar problem areas?
- E. Are members of the advisory or project approval committee adequately familiar with all aspects of Title I?
- F. Does the advisory or project approval committee devote sufficient time to a study and review of projects submitted for approval?

- G. Is the project selection progress unified and systematic, or is it haphazard?
- H. Is project approval based on a set of objectively established criteria or is it based on subjective criteria?

VIII. The State Plan

- A. Are the problem areas identified in the state plan relevant?
- B. Is the state plan flexible enough to encompass newly identified problem areas?
- C. Are the objectives of the state plan clearly identified?
- D. Does the state plan provide for an evaluation that can adequately measure the degree of accomplishment of its objectives?

IX. Inter-Institutional Cooperation

- A. Is there cooperation and/or coordination among institutions receiving Title I funds conducting similar projects?
- B. What is the nature and extent of cooperation by institutions receiving Title I funds with other institutions and agencies within the community (as it relates to projects funded under Title I)?

X. Funding

- A. Have Title I funds been used as seed money or has it been used to maintain new community service departments or programs?
- B. Are funds being allocated to projects that should more appropriately be funded by some agency other than Title I?

XI. Dissemination of Information

- A. Has any effort been made to disseminate the results or findings of projects to the appropriate publics, i.e.,
 - 1. Related community serving agencies should be included in the dissemination effort.
 - 2. Other institutions of higher education interested in a particular problem area should also be included.

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