

OPM 98-69

October 27, 1998

TO: All Appointing Authorities

FROM: Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.
Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources

RE: 1999 Innovations In American Government Awards

The Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University have recently announced that applications will be accepted until January 8, 1999 for the "1999 Innovations in American Government" awards. See attachment for information on Eligibility, Deadline and Decision Schedule, Selection Criteria, and Target Themes.

The Innovations Program strives to identify and celebrate outstanding examples of creative problem-solving in the public sector. Since its inception in 1966, the Program has recognized 230 innovative programs, which have received 14.6 million in Ford Foundation grants. Of these programs, 125 have received \$100,000 grants and 105 have received \$20,000 grants, which were first awarded in 1992. In 1999 the Ford Foundation will award grants of \$100,000 each to 10 government programs and grants of \$20,000 each to an additional 15 programs.

If you have questions or would like to receive more information about prior award winners, or 1998 applications, please write or call:

**INNOVATIONS
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
79 JFK Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
1-800-722-0074**

Also, you may visit the Innovations home page on the world wide web:
<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/innovations/>

Attachment

1999 INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an Innovations award, a program must involve a fresh approach to a problem of significant concern to a portion of the U.S. public, and must:

- Be administered under the authority of one or more governmental entities (federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial) that have played a formative role in designing and initiating the program.
- Be submitted by the government agency responsible for the innovation (non-profit; private sector and union initiatives are eligible only with significant governmental involvement and oversight);
- Have been in operation for at least one year prior to the application deadline;
- Certify and be able to document that one or more government institutions currently provide at least half of its funding; and
- Be able to demonstrate that it has contributed significantly toward the achievement of its stated goals.

DEADLINE AND DECISION SCHEDULE

Completed applications for the 1999 Innovations in American Government awards competition must be received by 5:00 p.m., Friday January 8, 1999. FAX applications will not be accepted.

- In March 1999, 100 applicants will be selected as semifinalists and asked to submit a supplementary application. Each semifinalist will be required at that time to submit a letter of endorsement by the chief elected official of its jurisdiction or-in the case of federal, judicial, and independent authority programs-the chief executive officer of its agency.
- 20 finalists will be selected and receive site visits late in the spring of 1999.
- The site visits are used to determine eligibility for a \$20,000 finalist award, as well as to assist the National Selection Committee in making the selection of winners.
- The National Selection Committee will choose the \$100,000 award winners and certify the status of the \$20,000 award winners in the fall of 1999.

SELECTION CRITERIA

At each stage in the selection process, a program will be evaluated according to the following four selection criteria:

- Its novelty, judged by the degree to which it demonstrates a leap of creativity.
- Its effectiveness, demonstrated by evidence that the program has achieved tangible results.
- Its significance, particularly the degree to which it successfully address an important problem of public concern.
- Its transferability, or the degree to which it shows promise of inspiring successful replication by other governmental units.

TARGET THEMES

In addition, the Innovations Awards Program seeks to highlight examples of government programs that:

- Tap the creativity of frontline employees, through changes in work design and supervision.
- Reshape organizational culture in profound ways that improve public performance.
- Implement significant policy innovation.
- Exemplify multi-agency, intergovernmental, or public/private collaboration.
- Demonstrate effectiveness in performance-based management.