

Posted May 15, 2000

TO: All State Grant Agencies
FROM: U.S. Department of Education
RE: SLEAP PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR THE 2000-2001 AWARD YEAR

We are providing this guidance to States to help them administer the Special Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (SLEAP) Program during the **2000-2001 award year (first year)** in the absence of SLEAP regulations. This guidance is based on section 415E of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). **The final regulations for the SLEAP Program may change this guidance for the 2001-2002 award year.**

States are reminded that in order to participate in the SLEAP Program, a State must also participate in the LEAP Program. Therefore, a State must satisfy the Base Year Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE), the Dollar-for-Dollar Match, and the Three-Year-Average MOE under the LEAP Program, in order to participate in the SLEAP Program. For purposes of the SLEAP Program, an educational institution's revenues and expenditures are not considered part of the State's revenues and expenditures when meeting the matching and MOE requirements.

Authorized Activity Issues for SLEAP for the 2000-2001 Award Year

1. What are the authorized activities under the SLEAP Program?

The SLEAP Program includes eight authorized activities to assist States in providing assistance to eligible students who demonstrate financial need. Under the SLEAP Program a State may do the following:

- (1) LEAP Grant Supplement - Supplement its LEAP Program by increasing LEAP Program grant amounts for postsecondary students (including exceeding the \$5,000 maximum LEAP award limit), or by increasing the number of LEAP recipients. This supplement may consist of Federal SLEAP funds or SLEAP matching funds, or both, and is accounted for and reported under SLEAP and not LEAP.
- (2) Transition Programs - Implement transition programs for students who are enrolled in secondary school or who have graduated from secondary school and are accepted for enrollment in a postsecondary institution.
- (3) Aid Programs for Critical Careers - Award financial aid to postsecondary students who wish to enter careers in information technology, or other fields of study that the State determines are critical to the State's workforce needs.
- (4) Community Service Work-Study Jobs - Pay wages or salaries to postsecondary students for community service work-study jobs.
- (5) Teaching Scholarship Programs - Establish a postsecondary scholarship program that makes awards to students who wish to become teachers.
- (6) Mathematics, Computer Science, or Engineering Scholarship Programs
Establish a postsecondary scholarship program that makes awards to students who wish to pursue a program of study leading to a degree in mathematics, computer science, or engineering.
- (7) Early Intervention, Mentoring, and Career Education Programs -
Implement early intervention, mentoring, and career education programs for preschool, elementary school, or secondary school students.
- (8) Merit and Academic Scholarships - Award merit or academic scholarships to postsecondary students for any field of study, including teaching, mathematics, computer, science, and engineering.

2. Must a State select more than one activity under the SLEAP Program?

No, a State may support one or more activities under the SLEAP Program.

3. May a State fund financial aid awards to eligible students under SLEAP authorized activities five (Teaching Scholarship Programs) and six (Mathematics, Computer Science, or Engineering Scholarship Programs)?

Yes, a State may pay financial aid awards to eligible students that demonstrate financial need and meet the criteria for SLEAP Program activities five and six.

4. Who is an "eligible student" under the eight authorized activities?

Under activities one, three, four, five, six, and eight, an eligible student is a postsecondary student who satisfies the general eligibility requirements of section 484 of the HEA and demonstrates financial need as defined under the LEAP Program.

Under activity two, an eligible student is a secondary school student, or a secondary school graduate who is accepted for enrollment in a postsecondary institution.

Under activity seven, an eligible student is a preschool, elementary, or secondary school student. Under activities two and seven, the student must satisfy the State's definition of financial need, and the citizenship or residency requirements of section 484 of the HEA.

Matching Issues for SLEAP for the 2000-2001 Award Year

5. What funds may a State use as matching funds under the SLEAP Program?

A State may use any non-Federal funds that are spent for any of the eight authorized activities, as long as those funds are not also being used to match other Federal programs. Non-Federal funds include, but are not limited to, State-appropriated funds or privately donated funds.

6. Is the matching requirement under the SLEAP Program an aggregate matching requirement among the authorized activities, so that a State may use the non-Federal funds for one authorized activity and use the Federal funds for a different authorized activity?

Yes, the Federal SLEAP dollars may be spent for one authorized activity and non-Federal funds may be used for another authorized activity.

7. How many dollars does a State need to provide for the matching requirement under the SLEAP Program?

For every Federal SLEAP dollar a State spends, it must spend at least two matching dollars from non-Federal funds.

8. May the non-Federal funds that are used as a match for SLEAP come from a State program that also contains some LEAP Program funds (Federal and State)?

Yes, if all the following conditions are met:

The non-Federal funds are not reported as part of the LEAP Program for the same award year. The fact that a part of a State program is reported as LEAP matching funds does not prevent a State from using the part of the program that is not reported as LEAP matching funds for SLEAP matching funds.

The non-Federal funds are not being used as a match for any other Federally funded program. The non-Federal funds are used to perform at least one of the eight authorized SLEAP activities.

Maintenance-of-Effort Issues for SLEAP for the 2000-2001 Award Year

9. When a State first applies for SLEAP funds, what is the State's SLEAP MOE requirement?

Under the SLEAP Program, the State must assure that its expenditures for the eight authorized activities, in the aggregate or per student, in the preceding award year were not less than its expenditures for those eight activities, in the aggregate or per student, in the second preceding award year.

10. When applying for 2000-2001 SLEAP funds, what award year expenditures must a State use to assure that it will meet the SLEAP MOE?

A State must compare its final 1998-1999 award year expenditures for SLEAP activities two through eight with its actual and projected 1999-2000 award year expenditures for those seven activities. The 1999-2000 figures, when finalized, must equal or exceed the final data for the 1998-1999 award year in order to meet the SLEAP MOE requirement for the 2000-2001 award year.

When calculating the SLEAP MOE for the 2000-2001 award year, we will not consider that a State has expended any funds under activity one during award years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, because we view activity one as supplementing a State's LEAP Program for grants with SLEAP Program funds. A State could not have used SLEAP funds during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 award years because there was no SLEAP Program during those award years.