



Waivers Requests

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The Safe and Drug-Free Schools
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Waivers Requests:
The True Title IV-A Story

NCLB § 4115 (a) (3)

RUTGERS The Truth About The Waiver Process

Waiver Request Myths

- School districts are not allowed to submit waivers
- School districts must select a program from the list of approved programs
- It is too complicated and burdensome to support a waiver application

RUTGERS The Truth About The Waiver Process

When Must an LEA Request a Waiver?

- Whenever a school district plans to implement a program, service, or activity not on the list of scientifically-based programs. Examples include:
 - Established or "Home Grown" Programs
 - Activities
 - Substance Awareness Coordinators or any other staff – *function vs. position*
 - Security Equipment or Personnel
- A waiver is NOT required if an activity directly supports a science-based program

RUTGERS The Truth About The Waiver Process

Waiver Requests for New Science-Based Programs

Indicate the name of the program exactly as it appears on the *Blueprints*' list

In the "Explanation and Research Justification" field

"Science-based program that is now on the Blueprints' Matrix, but does not appear on the EWEG drop down list."

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What Information is Necessary to Complete a Waiver Request?

Program Title and Description

- Full program name or title
- Name of the developer or the source of the program, service, or activity
- Goals and objectives of the program
- Description
- Program components

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What Information is Necessary to Complete a Waiver Request?

Explanation and Research Justification

This is the rationale that makes clear that the program, service, or activity has a "substantial likelihood of success" in addressing:

- The priority problem
- Justification statement
- Area measured

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What Information is Necessary to Complete a Waiver Request?

Explanation and Research Justification

There are two options for the explanation and research justification:

- **Outcome data** – research or evaluation activities have been conducted that support the program, service, or activity
- **Credible theory** – relevant professional literature directly supports the program, service, or activity

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What are the Considerations when Using Outcome Data?

- The target audience is similar to those in the sample
- **Objective data** on program effects (not process data) is used

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What is “process data?”

- How often a program, service or activity is offered
- The number of student, parents or teachers that attend an event

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What is “objective data?”

- Information not influenced by emotion, conjecture, or personal opinion
- Measures behavior in clearly defined terms
- Examples of objective data sources:
 - Surveys
 - Frequency of occurrences
 - Pre or Post Tests

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How Can Credible Theory be Used to Support a Waiver Request?

If no research or evaluation activities have been conducted, school districts can provide justification for a request based on relevant professional literature that includes:

- The source of the article that describes the relevant program, service or activity (e.g., professional journal or newsletter, scholarly paper)
- A clear explanation of how the information in the article relates to the proposed program, service, or activity

RUTGERS The Truth About The Waiver Process

Wrap Up

- A waiver is a viable alternative to selecting scientifically based programs listed on EWEG
- Waiver requests must be submitted whenever Title IV-A funds are expended on programs, services, or activities not on the EWEG list
- Waiver requests must address a documented priority problem, and be consistent with the purposes of Title IV-A
- Waiver requests can be justified using either outcome data or credible theory
- Help is available through the Rutgers Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project and through the New Jersey Department of Education

What Information is Required on a Waiver Request?

Proposed Program Title

Program Title: Name of the program, activity or service

Proposed Program Description

Developer: Developer name or the source of the activity

Goal: Brief description of program goals

Description: A brief summary of the program

Components: Brief description of program components

Explanation and Research Justification

Priority Problem: Description of priority problem being addressed by the proposed activity (from needs assessment)

Justification: Provide a statement justifying the selection of the program, service or activity, explaining why the program, service or activity has a substantial likelihood of success in addressing the priority problem.

Area Measured: How effectiveness will be measured (from needs assessment/program plan)

If using outcome data option to support the waiver application, provide the following:

Outcome Data:

Evaluation data supplied by the developer of the activity, from your school district, from another school district, etc. that shows behavioral change as a result of the program.

OR

If using credible theory option to support the waiver application, provide the following:

Research:

Cite the source of the relevant, professional or authoritative literature.

Waiver Requests for New Science-Based Programs

To request funds for a program currently appearing on the *Blueprints'* list, but not on the EWEG drop-down list, the following **must** be provided under "Request for Waiver":

- In "Proposed Program Title" text field, districts must type in the name of the program exactly as it appears on the *Blueprints'* list;
- In the "Proposed Program Description" text field briefly describe the program; and
- In the "Explanation and Research Justification" text field, districts must insert the following phrase:
"Science-based program that is now on the Blueprints' Matrix, but does not appear on the EWEG drop down list."

*NOTE: By following this procedure, districts are **not** requesting a waiver; they are only recording their request to implement an acknowledged science-based program that is not on the EWEG drop down list.*

Sample Waiver Request (Outcome Data Option)

Proposed Program Title

Program Title: Gang Prevention/Intervention Program

Proposed Program Description

Developer: Oak Youth Services, Oak, NJ.

Goal: Reduce incidents of gang violence in schools.

Description: Interventionists, trained to work with school-age teens suspected of gang activity, confront teens' anti-social behavior & identify alternative activities appropriate to their needs.

Components: Referral, crisis intervention, identification of pertinent issues, identification of appropriate services.

Explanation & Research Justification

Priority Problem: Gang activity.

Justification: Program reduces gang acts by identifying & intervening with students involved or at-risk of involvement with gangs.

Area Measured: Reduced incidents of gang activity in schools.

Outcome Data: Program evaluation shows reduction in the number of gang-related incidents reported to police since program inception (1995 – 14 incidents; 1996-97 – 2 incidents; 1998 – 1 incident). Program cited as a Best Practice Program by the 1999 United States Conference of Mayors.

Sample Waiver Request (Credible Theory Option)

Proposed Program Title

Program Title: Resolve Conflict

Proposed Program Description

Developer: University of Florida.

Goal: Provide students with skills & knowledge to effectively manage conflict.

Description: Curriculum provides information to increase awareness of conflict & conflict situations. Provides opportunities to practice/apply conflict resolution & peer mediation skills.

Components: 5 Units (understand conflict, effective communication, understand anger, handle anger, peer mediation).

Explanation & Research Justification

Priority Problem: Inter-group conflict in elementary schools.

Justification: Research documents that conflict can be reduced when all elementary school students learn alternate conflict resolution skills.

Area Measured: Reduced number of fights on school grounds.

Research: Smith, S.W., & Daunic, A.P. (2006). *Managing Difficult Behavior Through Problem Solving Instruction: Strategies for the Elementary Classroom*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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Teen-Savvy Smoking Prevention

by Karen Stuyck

When most people hear the words “smoking prevention,” they don’t think of computer games. But ASPIRE is just that—an interactive multi-media CD-ROM used as part of a curriculum to convince teenagers to stop smoking—or better yet, never start.

ASPIRE (“A Smoking Prevention Interactive Experience”) provides smoking cessation awareness for high school students using captivating graphics and a video game feel. The program was originally designed as a research project in Houston-area schools, but portions of the program are now available online (www.mdanderson.org/aspireonline) for kids to access any time, according to the project’s creator, Alexander Prokhorov, M.D., Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Behavioral Science at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.



ASPIRE’s interactive multi-media CD-ROM includes quizzes, a video game, animated scenarios, and videos of other teenagers confronting smoking dilemmas.

“Student response to the program was overwhelming,” he said. “Now that we’ve completed the study, we’re eager to let parents, teachers, and most of all, teens, know that help is available.”

ASPIRE’s interactive multi-media CD-ROM includes quizzes, a video game, animated scenarios, and videos of other teenagers confronting smoking dilemmas. ASPIRE shows students why smoking is harmful and offers specific help on how to stop. Each part of the curriculum is modified for individuals, depending on how they answer questions about their behavior and attitudes toward smoking. Once the student’s stage of readiness to change is identified, ASPIRE offers eight educational tracks to meet the students’ individual needs. Thus, someone who is only thinking about starting to smoke would see different scenarios and get different information than another student who is already smoking and not sure that he wants to quit.

While young people are a notoriously difficult audience for stop-smoking programs, they are an important group to reach since 90% of smokers start smoking before age 18. Part of the problem in interesting younger smokers in quitting is that young people tend to think of themselves as invincible. “Younger smokers usually don’t yet have smoking-related physical problems, and telling them that smoking increases their chances of dying of lung cancer at 40 or 50 just doesn’t work,” Dr. Prokhorov said. “In addition, adolescent smokers often don’t want their parents to know that they smoke.”

Different approaches are needed to reach younger smokers than those traditionally used with adults. Lung cancer statistics, for instance, may not be compelling to these students, but they are very

interested in how smoking may affect their athletic performance or how it can lead to impotence, infertility, or complications during pregnancy—factors that might affect them now or in the near future.

Increasingly, M. D. Anderson researchers are designing tobacco cessation programs for specific populations. Realizing that different groups of people respond to stop-smoking programs in different ways, the scientists tailor clinical trials to determine the best approach for each audience. Recent stop-smoking research projects, for instance, have focused on pregnant women, teenagers, Spanish-speaking people, and college students. Several of Dr. Prokhorov’s smoking cessation projects are designed for young people; ASPIRE, for instance, is targeted specifically for high school students.

The video game component of ASPIRE has players making a journey up a steep mountain to find their place on Mount Aspire. Along the way, students reach Decision Point, Commitment Peak, Action Steppes, Perseverance Gorge, Balance Bluff, Temptation Quarry, and Independence Overlook. Each stopping place on the mountain gives students a variety of information and a chance to make decisions. At Temptation Quarry, for instance, they learn that the three main motivations for teen smoking are social reasons, addiction, and mood alterations such as calming down or help in coping with difficult situations.

Three animated monkeys show how to stop smoking using the three R’s: **Recognize** what kinds of things tempt you to smoke, such as a specific time of day or being around certain types of people; **Remember** why you want to quit, such as wanting to be a better athlete or deciding “I want to respect Number One”; and **React** to the situation without smoking.

Furthermore, students are able to interact with the program and find myriad ways to cope with their own specific temptations. For instance, if a teenager is having a hard time dealing with social pressures such as smoking at parties or not knowing what to say when friends offer a cigarette, he can click the icon with this temptation on the screen. In a variety of scenarios—videos of other teens discussing the issue, an animated ballpark stand where each character has a different phrase on how to say no if friends are pressuring him to smoke—he can pick up ideas.

The student learns that it’s smart to avoid situations where people are smoking. But if friends are smoking around him, it’s a good idea to have phrases ready. Maybe he’ll want to ask for support: “Dude, I’m trying to quit smoking. Do you mind?” Or perhaps she’ll opt for being direct (“It’s not my thing.”), changing the subject (“Want a carrot?”), or using humor (“No way, man. Cigarettes kill trees. Smoke veggies, not cigarettes.”) The coping devices, illustrated by other kids implementing the approaches, include having positive plans, using humor, being smart, ignoring the invitation to smoke or changing the subject, being direct, and asking for support.

About 1,600 students from Houston-area high schools completed the ASPIRE program. Eighteen months after completing the program only 2% of ASPIRE students had become new smokers, compared with 6% of a control group. “We showed that the program changes kids’ perceptions of tobacco,” Dr. Prokhorov said. “It increases their self-efficacy in quitting smoking or in not starting.”

Dr. Prokhorov’s passion to help young people give up or avoid smoking has not stopped with high school kids. Another study is designed to help college students quit smoking by having

them look at their own health and by showing them how smoking has affected their lung and bronchial function.

“We tried to make ‘invulnerable’ students feel more vulnerable,” he said. Using spirometry, a lung function test, students can see the age of their lungs. “Quite a lot of the students who smoked exhibited decreased lung function, which frequently translated into a 19-year-old having the lungs of a 30-year-old,” Dr. Prokhorov said. A carbon monoxide meter showed students how smoking increases their carbon monoxide level, which adversely affects athletic performance. Students who later quit smoking were happy to see their individual respiratory symptoms improve, their carbon monoxide levels go down dramatically, and their lung age decrease.

“Students were intrigued by the program; it held their interest,” Dr. Prokhorov said. “Many student participants said they would recommend the program to friends and family members.”

Dr. Prokhorov’s group is now developing a Web-based smoking cessation program specifically for middle school students. The program will use some elements of ASPIRE such as quizzes, games, flash animation, and video clips. “We want this program to be edgy, full of animation and videos,” Dr. Prokhorov said. He hopes that an adolescent, for instance, who feels pressured to try smoking, can go to the ASPIRE program on the Internet and choose from menu options to see how to cope. Since the program can be accessed at any time, Dr. Prokhorov hopes this “cyber support” will help make a real difference in teens’ attitudes toward smoking.

For more information on this topic or for questions about M. D. Anderson’s treatments, programs, or services, call the M. D. Anderson Information Line at (800) 392-1611 (in the United States) or (713) 792-3245 (in Houston and outside the United States).

Sample Waiver Request Activity (Outcome Data Option)

Proposed Program Title

Program Title:

Proposed Program Description

Developer:

Goal:

Description

Components:

Explanation & Research Justification

Priority Problem:

Justification:

Area Measured:

Outcome Data:

The Moccasin Project Credible Theory Waiver Request

Walk a Mile in My Shoes: A Creative Approach to Reduce Bullying

The Moccasin Project, a comprehensive approach to bullying and intimidation remediation will begin to accept applications for participating school districts in early July 2006.

The old Native American adage goes “to truly know another you must walk a day in his moccasins.” The Moccasin Project endorses the belief that it is much more difficult to act in a negative manner toward another if you can identify with their experiences. Additionally it is the projects belief that most acts of aggression toward immigrant populations, competing social and economic groups and the elderly are fueled by fear born out of a lack of knowledge, familiarity and understanding. These remarks were made by Moccasin project spokesperson Ron Atwell at the recent national conference of the Association of Elementary and Secondary Principals in Washington D.C.

The Moccasin Project is being developed by The Center for Social Action (CSA) at Alta University, under the direction of Dr. Janet Roche, author of more then a dozen books on social interaction and behavioral science and former Assistant Secretary of Education under President Jimmy Carter where she lead the special panel on cultural integration. CSA proposes to develop site specific programs that will allow conflicting populations to come together to reduce cultural and racial tensions.

CSA has spent the past 8 months training facilitators to go into schools to work with students, teachers and school staff as well as the community at large to foster understanding with the intent of reducing incidents of violence, bullying and intimidation. Facilitators will be carefully matched to the needs of each school district and to their identified priority problem. Facilitators will spend 3 to 5 days per month for the entire school year working in each district. Activities such as role playing, viewing videos and reading about and interviewing members of diverse cultures in the district will be included. Dr. Roche expects that the Facilitators will spend about a third of their time in direct contact with the student population and about 20 percent with school staff and administrators conducting workshops and exercises designed to allow the school to continue the project into the future with some support from CSA. “The rest of the time will be spent in the community developing opportunities for the different groups to interact,” said Atwell, “That’s what makes the Moccasin project special.” It is expected that the different groups will participate in cross cultural events such as cultural and religious celebrations, being invited to individual homes to share a family meal and a great emphasis on volunteering in each others community projects.

The Moccasin project expects to be available to 15 school systems in FY 2007, with increases yearly as facilitators are brought online.

Excerpted from: Holochifinia, Simon. (March 2006). Walk a mile in my shoes: A creative approach to reduce bullying. *Journal of American Education*, 45.

Waiver Request Activity (Credible Theory Option)

Proposed Program Title

Program Title: The Moccasin Project

Proposed Program Name & Description

Developer: Center for Social Action at Alta University

Goal: Reduce incidents of violence, intimidation and bullying

Description: Project designed for bullying and intimidation remediation by having facilitators work with students and staff to foster understanding of diverse populations.

Components: Facilitators work in the districts for 3 to 5 days per month throughout the school year. Activities include role playing, watching videos, reading about and interviewing individuals from diverse cultures and participating in cultural and religious celebrations. Workshops and exercises for school staff are designed to allow the district to continue the program in following years.

Explanation & Research Justification

Priority Problem: Bullying

Justification: The Moccasin Project is designed to reduce violence, bullying and intimidation by increasing student awareness of diverse cultures.

Area Measured: Student reported attitudes towards bullying behavior.

Research: Holochifinia, Simon. (March 2006). Walk a mile in my shoes: A creative approach to reduce bullying. *Journal of American Education*, 45.