

## § 1330.20

of rehabilitation services, clinical care, or training offered by the project.

(6) Disseminating materials to or otherwise increasing the access to disability information among minority populations.

### Subpart C—Selection of Awardees

#### § 1330.20 Peer review purpose.

The purpose of peer review is to insure that:

(a) Those activities supported by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) are of the highest scientific, administrative, and technical quality; and

(b) Activity results may be widely applied to appropriate target populations and rehabilitation problems.

#### § 1330.21 Peer review process.

(a) The Director refers each application for an award governed by these regulations in this part to a peer review panel established by the Director.

(b) Peer review panels review applications on the basis of the applicable selection criteria in § 1330.23.

#### § 1330.22 Composition of peer review panel.

(a) The Director selects as members of a peer review panel scientists and other experts in disability, independent living, rehabilitation or related fields who are qualified, on the basis of training, knowledge, or experience, to give expert advice on the merit of the applications under review.

(b) The scientific peer review process shall be conducted by individuals who are not Department of Health and Human Services employees.

(c) In selecting members to serve on a peer review panel, the Director may take into account the following factors:

(1) The level of formal scientific or technical education completed by potential panel members.

(2) The extent to which potential panel members have engaged in scientific, technical, or administrative activities appropriate to the category of applications that the panel will consider; the roles of potential panel mem-

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bers in those activities; and the quality of those activities.

(3) The recognition received by potential panel members as reflected by awards and other honors from scientific and professional agencies and organizations outside the Department.

(4) Whether the panel includes knowledgeable individuals with disabilities, or parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities.

(5) Whether the panel includes individuals from diverse populations.

#### § 1330.23 Evaluation process.

(a) The Director selects one or more of the selection criteria to evaluate an application:

(1) The Director establishes selection criteria based on statutory provisions that apply to the Program which may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Specific statutory selection criteria;

(ii) Allowable activities;

(iii) Application content requirements; or

(iv) Other pre-award and post-award conditions; or

(2) The Director may use a combination of selection criteria established under paragraph (a)(1) of this section and selection criteria from § 1330.24 to evaluate a competition.

(3) For Field-Initiated Projects, the Director does not consider § 1330.24(b) (Responsiveness to the Absolute or Competitive Priority) in evaluating an application.

(b) In considering selection criteria in § 1330.24, the Director selects one or more of the factors listed in the criteria, but always considers the factors in § 1330.24(n) regarding people with disabilities, and members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), or age.

(c) The maximum possible score for an application is 100 points.

(d) In the application package or a notice published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, the Director informs applicants of:

(1) The selection criteria chosen and the maximum possible score for each of the selection criteria; and

(2) The factors selected for considering the selection criteria and if points are assigned to each factor, the maximum possible score for each factor under each criterion. If no points are assigned to each factor, the Director evaluates each factor equally.

(e) For all instances in which the Director chooses to allow field-initiated research and development, the selection criteria in §1330.25 will apply, including the requirement that the applicant must achieve a score of 85 percent or more of maximum possible points.

[81 FR 29159, May 11, 2016, as amended at 87 FR 50003, Aug. 15, 2022]

#### § 1330.24 Selection criteria.

In addition to criteria established under §1330.23(a)(1), the Director may select one or more of the following criteria in evaluating an application:

(a) *Importance of the problem.* In determining the importance of the problem, the Director considers one or more of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the need and target population.

(2) The extent to which the proposed activities further the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act.

(3) The extent to which the proposed activities address a significant need of individuals with disabilities.

(4) The extent to which the proposed activities address a significant need of rehabilitation service providers.

(5) The extent to which the proposed activities address a significant need of those who provide services to individuals with disabilities.

(6) The extent to which the applicant proposes to provide training in a rehabilitation discipline or area of study in which there is a shortage of qualified researchers, or to a trainee population in which there is a need for more qualified researchers.

(7) The extent to which the proposed project will have beneficial impact on the target population.

(b) *Responsiveness to an absolute or competitive priority.* In determining the application's responsiveness to the application package or the absolute or competitive priority published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, the Director con-

siders one or more of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant addresses all requirements of the absolute or competitive priority.

(2) The extent to which the applicant's proposed activities are likely to achieve the purposes of the absolute or competitive priority.

(c) *Design of research activities.* In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Director considers one or more of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the research activities constitute a coherent, sustained approach to research in the field, including a substantial addition to the state-of-the-art.

(2) The extent to which the methodology of each proposed research activity is meritorious, including consideration of the extent to which:

(i) The proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art;

(ii) Each research hypothesis or research question, as appropriate, is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge;

(iii) Each sample is drawn from an appropriate, specified population and is of sufficient size to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions, as appropriate, and to support the proposed data analysis methods;

(iv) The source or sources of the data and the data collection methods are appropriate to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions and to support the proposed data analysis methods;

(v) The data analysis methods are appropriate;

(vi) Implementation of the proposed research design is feasible, given the current state of the science and the time and resources available;

(vii) Input of individuals with disabilities and other key stakeholders is used to shape the proposed research activities; and

(viii) The applicant identifies and justifies the stage of research being proposed and the research methods associated with the stage.