

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research; Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (D&U) Program**

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of proposed funding priority for fiscal years 1995–1996 for the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Program.

SUMMARY: The Secretary proposes a funding priority for the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (D&U) Program under the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) for fiscal years 1995–1996. The Secretary takes this action to ensure that rehabilitation knowledge generated from projects and centers funded by NIDRR and others is utilized fully to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 1, 1995.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning this proposed priority should be addressed to Betty Jo Berland, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW, Switzer Building, Room 3422, Washington, DC 20202–2601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Esquith. Telephone: (202) 205–8801. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205–8133.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains one proposed priority under the D&U program, in the area of community integration for individuals with mental retardation.

Authority for the D&U program of NIDRR is contained in sections 202 and 204(a) and 204(b)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 760–762). Under this program the Secretary makes awards to public and private agencies and organizations, including institutions of higher education and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

This proposed priority supports the National Education Goal that calls for all Americans to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Under the regulations for this program (see 34 CFR 355.32), the Secretary may establish research priorities by reserving funds to support particular research activities.

The Secretary will announce the final funding priority in a notice in the

Federal Register. The final priority will be determined by responses to this notice, available funds, and other considerations of the Department. Funding of particular projects depends on the final priority, the availability of funds, and the quality of the applications received. The publication of this proposed priority does not preclude the Secretary from proposing additional priorities, nor does it limit the Secretary to funding only this priority, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice of proposed priority does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition will be published in the **Federal Register** concurrent with or following publication of the notice of final priority.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary proposes to fund under this program only applications that meet this absolute priority:

Proposed Priority: Facilitating Community Integration for Individuals with Mental Retardation*Background*

NIDRR has supported Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers in the area of mental retardation and developmental disabilities since 1965. In addition, NIDRR has supported a number of research projects targeted on this population in areas such as transition from school to work, public policy and expenditures for developmental disabilities in the U.S., and successful transitions from nursing homes into the community. As a result of such research and training efforts over many years, a large body of knowledge now exists relative to enabling individuals with mental retardation to live in their communities.

The population of public institutions for persons with mental retardation has decreased from 195,000 in 1967 to 81,200 persons in 1991, (Lakin, 1993) as a result of public policy decisions and vigorous efforts of public leadership groups to effect deinstitutionalization. However, successful integration into communities that includes residential, employment, and full participation components is not easily achieved.

During the past eight years there have been major developments in the understanding of community integration needs and strategies, including: Funding models that allow for individualized options; systems for assessing support needs for an individual and in a

community; models for both formal and informal support systems, and for integrating the two approaches; and model strategies for systems change within States. (Horner, 1994). Yet in nearly every State, policy and practice do not reflect these advances in knowledge and understanding, and do not take advantage of the best practices models and implementation strategies that have evolved through research and practice.

As a result, innovative supports for living in their own home or community are available to very few of those who potentially could benefit from them. Many thousands of people with developmental disabilities continue to live in private and public institutions and “mini-institutions” in the community. In many cases, “deinstitutionalization has resulted in trans-institutionalization”. (Taylor, 1994) There are approximately 64,800 persons with mental retardation and related conditions who are not receiving any form of residential services and who are now on waiting lists for community residential services (Lakin et al., 1993). And, although 48 percent of all individuals with mental retardation nationwide resided in large congregate care settings in 1992, there were 8 States that provided services to more than 60 percent of consumers in family-scale settings serving six or fewer individuals, while conversely, 6 States served fewer than 10 percent of their clients in such small settings (Braddock, 1994).

Thus, there is a demand for community integration assistance, coupled with a tremendous variation in State ability to meet those demands. This variation in services indicates that there is a critical need for information about innovative, state-of-the-art practices and for training and technical assistance on how to improve policies and practices on community integration at the State and community levels.

NIDRR received substantial public comment on its 1995 proposed priorities, contending that there is a national need for information on best practices for community integration and a demand for training of service providers and consumers to help communities overcome the challenges of fully including all of their citizens and their families, and to make community integration a reality. State and local policy makers, regulators, and service agencies, as well as community service providers require training and technical assistance to enable them to address the issues that will emerge as States and localities move toward a system of individualized supports. States and communities require

information and training on policies and strategies that could assist them in shifting from a provider-driven to a consumer-driven service delivery system. The quality of community services delivered to persons with disabilities and their families will also depend on the ability of educational, employment and residential service agencies to effectively address the training needs of their approximately 250,000 direct service personnel (Wallace, T. & Johnson, D., 1992 and Braddock, 1994).

The Secretary believes that there is a critical need for dissemination of information on model programs, integrated statewide systems of service delivery, exemplary practices, and systems change strategies. In addition, there is a need to develop more effective mechanisms for training community-level service providers to ensure the implementation of best practices, and to provide training and technical assistance to consumer-directed self-advocacy organizations and parent organizations.

Priority

Under this priority, the Secretary supports a dissemination and technical assistance center that—(1) identifies and disseminates exemplary practices in community integration for individuals with mental retardation; and (2) provides training and technical

assistance to State and local agencies, community-based service providers, and consumer-controlled advocacy organizations to facilitate the adoption of exemplary practices in community integration for individuals with mental retardation.

In addition to activities proposed by the applicant to carry out these purposes, the center must conduct the following activities.

- Design and implement a national information resource on community integration to serve policymakers and administrators, community-based service providers, consumer-controlled advocacy organizations, and individuals with mental retardation and their families, ensuring that information is available in accessible formats appropriate to individuals with a range of sensory, cognitive, and other disabilities;

- Prepare materials on important topical issues, which might include, for example: Strategies to address social and cultural barriers to full inclusion; strategies for cross-agency collaboration in the development of individualized services or case management practices; and reasonable accommodations to facilitate community inclusion, and use them in information dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities as appropriate; and

- Coordinate with existing NIDRR-funded projects and centers, and build

upon the products of past NIDRR projects and similar efforts funded by other Federal agencies, to ensure that the best and most current information on needs and best practices is incorporated into the information dissemination, training, and technical assistance of this center.

Invitation To Comment

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding this proposed priority.

All comments submitted in response to this proposed priority will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Room 3424, Switzer Building, 330 C Street SW., Washington, DC between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR parts 350 and 355.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 760-762.

Dated: March 28, 1995.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.133D, Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Program)

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