

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (D&U) Program; Notice of Final Funding Priority for Fiscal Years 1995-1996 for the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Program

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces a final 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.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority takes effect on June 29, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Esquith, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Switzer Building, room 3424, Washington, DC 20202-2601. 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 final 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). This 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.

On March 31, 1995, the Secretary published a notice of proposed priority in the **Federal Register** at 60 FR 16760. The comments received in response to that notice, and the Secretary's responses to them, are discussed in the following section of this notice.

Analysis of Comments and Responses

The Secretary received 13 letters of comment prior to the deadline date for receipt of comments. All but one of these comments supported the idea of an information center on community integration and mental retardation, but several made suggestions for additional activities. These comments are synopsized below, along with the Secretary's responses and any changes to the priority.

Comment: One commenter pointed out that the Background statement was misleading in stating that "48 percent of all individuals with mental retardation nationwide resided in large congregate care settings."

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that the statement should be revised to clarify that the percentage refers to all persons residing in other than their family homes.

Changes: The statement has been revised to read, "of the 347,000 persons with mental retardation who resided in out-of-home care, 48 percent were in settings of 16 or more beds."

Comment: A number of commenters urged NIDRR to continue research in the area of community integration and mental retardation, and many suggested specific research topics or areas for investigation.

Discussion: NIDRR currently maintains support for four Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs) in community integration for persons with developmental disabilities, including mental retardation, and supports additional work in this area in centers on families, ADA technical assistance and training projects, and discrete research projects. NIDRR expects to initiate a number of activities to review these programs, the state-of-the-art, and opportunities for future research in order to establish a timely and coherent agenda of research in community integration. However, the Secretary has determined that there is a need for information and technical assistance to community-based service providers, State and local agencies, consumer advocates, and consumers and their families about the findings of research, best practices, and integration strategies. This priority addresses that need.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter urged that the Department include information to facilitate community integration for individuals with mental illness in the activities under this priority.

Discussion: While the Secretary does not dispute the possible value of such an activity, he declines to add it to this priority for several reasons. First, the knowledge base on community integration is different for the two disability categories, as are the populations that would be the targets of the information dissemination and technical assistance activities. In addition, NIDRR has just announced a priority for an RRTC on long-term mental illness that will work to further develop and disseminate a knowledge base in the specific area of peer support and community integration.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter stated that it is not clear that consumers and their families are dissatisfied with the Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) that now exist, and also noted that studies show ICFs of four to six residents have favorable integration outcomes.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that the dissemination Center must provide information and assistance that addresses a range of consumer and family goals. The background statement to the proposed priority expressed agreement with this commenter's point in that it did endorse the residential facility serving "six or fewer individuals" as a positive model.

Changes: None.

Comment: The same commenter noted that there are different concerns among different segments of the consumer and family populations, contending that some parent groups value health and safety while others focus on inclusion and integration, and stating that it would be important to address the range of concerns.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that the range of concerns of self advocates and family advocates should be taken into consideration, but the primary focus of this Center is on community integration because that is one of NIDRR's statutorily-mandated objectives. The Secretary believes that maintenance of healthy and safe environments is a component of successful community integration.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter stated that NIDRR grantees should establish training and technical assistance resources with sophisticated knowledge of local conditions in each State and that are easily accessed by local providers.

Discussion: The Secretary believes this is one strategy grantees could use to disseminate information, but prefers to let the applicants present those approaches to dissemination that they believe will be most effective.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the new Center be required to inform all State and local government agencies dealing with mental retardation of its existence and the type of services it offers.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that it is important that the Center address the information needs of State and local government agencies, but believes that the phrase "all state and local government agencies dealing with mental retardation" is too vague and could pose a potential burden on the grantee to identify all agencies

regardless of their role. Therefore, the Secretary has revised the statement of priority to require that the Center advise all State Developmental Disabilities Councils and all State Protection and Advocacy Systems of its existence and proposed services.

Changes: The phrase, "The Center must advise every State Developmental Disabilities Council and every State Protection and Advocacy System of its existence and proposed services", has been added at the end of the bullet requiring broad coordination.

Comment: One commenter stated that it is inappropriate for NIDRR to limit the work of this Center to community integration for individuals with mental retardation since Congress has stated that "supported employment" is for people with various types of disabilities, and people with mental retardation have resources for extended on-going support services that people with other disabilities do not have.

Discussion: The Secretary points out that the dissemination Center will not focus primarily on supported employment and will not provide resources for extended support services. NIDRR supports ongoing research and demonstrations on supported employment, and on community integration and independent living, for persons with physical, sensory, and emotional disabilities. The purpose of the Center to be established under this priority is to compile and disseminate what has been learned in previous research and demonstration projects about community integration strategies for a population that has often been institutionalized. Research to promote community integration is a statutorily-authorized objective of NIDRR.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that the priority specifically detail responsibilities related to lifelong learning and literacy education.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that literacy and opportunities for lifelong learning often are important components of community integration. However, the Secretary intentionally elected not to require that any specific components be addressed, but to encourage applicants to address those components that they believe are most critical and in which there is a substantial knowledge base for dissemination. The peer review panel will assess the appropriateness of the scope presented by the applicants.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter stated that the priority should require the grantee to address bankers, lenders, and

financial policymakers in the private and public sectors to promote mortgage availability for individuals with mental retardation.

Discussion: The Secretary elects to allow applicants to address those components of community integration which it believes are most critical and likely to have the greatest impact on community integration.

Changes: None.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published in the this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary will fund under this program only applications that meet this absolute 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 in 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, of the 347,000 persons with mental retardation who resided in out-of-home care, 48 percent were in settings of 16 or more beds. However, 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, six 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. The Center must advise every State Developmental Disabilities Council and every State Protection and Advocacy System of its existence and proposed services.

Applicable Program Regulations

34 CFR parts 350 and 355.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 760–762.

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

Dated: May 23, 1995.

Howard R. Moses,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 95–13066 Filed 5–26–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.133D]

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Notice Inviting Applications Under the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 1995

Purpose of Program: The Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Program is designed to support activities that will ensure that rehabilitation knowledge generated from projects and centers funded by NIDRR and from other sources is fully utilized to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The final priority for this award, entitled “Information and Technical Assistance Center to Facilitate Community Integration,” is published in this issue of the **Federal Register**. Potential applicants should consult the statement of the final priority published in this issue to ascertain the substantive requirements for their application.

This notice 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.

Eligible Applicants: Parties eligible to apply for grants under this program are public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies and organizations, including institutions of higher education and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

Applications Available: June 7, 1995.

Application Deadline: July 28, 1995.

Available Funds: \$400,000 per year.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The estimates of funding levels and awards in this notice do not bind the Department of Education to a specific level of funding or number of grants.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86; (b) the regulations for this program in 34 CFR parts 350 (amended April 5, 1995, (60 FR 17426)) and 355 (amended September 22, 1993 (58 FR 49419)); and the notice of final priority published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

For Further Information Contact: In order to obtain an application package, contact William H. Whalen, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Switzer Building, room 3411, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 205–9141. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205–8887.

Information about the Department’s funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department’s electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260–9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 761a and 762.

Dated: May 23, 1995.

Howard R. Moses,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 95–13067 Filed 5–26–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P