

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Grant Applications**

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 1998.

SUMMARY: On June 4, 1997, the President signed into law Public Law 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, amending the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This notice provides closing dates and other information regarding the transmittal of applications for fiscal year 1998 competitions under four programs authorized by IDEA, as amended. The four programs are: (1) Special Education—Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (four priorities); (2) Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities (two priorities); (3) Research and Innovation to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (one priority); and (4) Special Education—Personnel Preparation to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (one priority).

This notice supports the National Education Goals by helping to improve results for children with disabilities.

Waiver of Rulemaking

It is generally the practice of the Secretary to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities. However, section 661(e)(2) of IDEA makes the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) inapplicable to the priorities in this notice. In order to make awards on a timely basis, the Secretary has decided to publish these priorities in final under the authority of section 661(e)(2).

General Requirements

(a) Projects funded under this notice must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in project activities (see Section 606 of IDEA);

(b) Applicants and grant recipients funded under this notice must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see Section 661(f)(1)(A) of IDEA); and

(c) Projects funded under these priorities must budget for a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, D.C. during each year of the project.

(d) In a single application, an applicant is required to address only one absolute priority in this notice.

Note: The Department of Education is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Special Education—Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and information through such mechanisms as institutes, regional resource centers, clearinghouses and programs that support States and local entities in building capacity, to improve early intervention, educational, and transitional services and results for children with disabilities and their families, and address systemic-change goals and priorities.

Eligible Applicants: State and local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The selection criteria included in regulations for these programs in 34 CFR part 305.31 for the Regional Resource Centers priority, and 320.30 for the remaining three priorities.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Priority

Under section 685 and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet any one of the following priorities. The Secretary funds under these competitions only those applications that meet these absolute priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Regional Resource Centers (84.326R)**Background**

State educational agencies (SEAs) are increasingly being asked to make changes to their systems for providing early intervention, special education, and transition services to improve results for children with disabilities and their families. Recent findings on educational change suggest that in order to create successful and lasting "systemic change": (1) decisions should be data-based; (2) multiple aspects of the system should be considered, including policies and practices at national, State, district, classroom,

teacher, and student levels; (3) change should be driven from both the top-down and the bottom-up; (4) barriers to systemic change, such as fragmented policies and complicated administrative requirements should be eliminated; and (5) changes to one sector of the system should be directly linked to changes in all other system sectors (for example, personnel development and teacher certification must be linked to curriculum content and student outcomes). Furthermore, SEAs striving for such complex transformations will be required to establish new partnerships, translate validated research findings into practice, and provide personnel with specialized knowledge and skills.

In order to help States improve their special education programs, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has supported Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) which employ a variety of strategies, including needs assessment, staff training, policy and product development, and information dissemination. Historically, these strategies, although requested and well received by SEAs, have focused primarily on specific policy or program issues. They have seldom addressed the SEA's systemic needs.

For over a decade, OSEP has supported State system change efforts through a number of discretionary projects. These projects, although successful, were limited in number and scope, focusing specifically on secondary transition and the education of children with severe disabilities. The IDEA Amendments of 1997 specifically authorize technical assistance on assisting SEAs and their partners in planning and implementing systemic change. In this regard, the following priority would require the RRCs to assist SEAs and LEAs in including general educators in systems change efforts designed to improve results for children with disabilities.

The Regional Resource Centers will become a key component of OSEP's expanded systems change efforts, serving not only in their traditional capacity as technical assistance providers, but also as brokers of technical assistance for SEAs, LEAs, and their partners. This new role would require RRCs to serve as a link between SEAs and appropriate technical assistance providers at national, State, and local levels that can assist States in achieving systemic change and improving results for children with disabilities and their families.

Consistent with the Regional Resource Centers' central mission of helping States improve their special education

programs, the following priority requires centers to address the general technical assistance needs of SEAs and their partners related to the development and implementation of State Improvement Plans under the new State Program Improvement Grants for Children with Disabilities (or SIG program). The SIG program supports competitive grants designed to assist State educational agencies and their partners in reforming and improving their systems for providing educational, early intervention, and transitional services, including their systems for professional development, technical assistance, and dissemination of knowledge about best practices, in order to improve results for children with disabilities. Because Regional Resource Centers are funded to provide technical assistance and to serve as a resource for information requests from all States within their regions, and must do so on an equitable basis across those States, centers are prohibited from helping a State draft its SIG application, providing technical assistance on what to include in the application or how to draft the application contents, or performing any other function that could be viewed as providing a competitive advantage to one potential SIG program applicant over another. On the other hand, helping States, for example, with needs assessments, project implementation, and evaluation, and other activities related to the State improvement plan are consistent with the centers' general role and are authorized under the following priority.

Priority

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for the purpose of supporting Regional Resource Centers. The Regional Resource Centers, through written technical assistance agreements with SEAs, LEAs, and other entities must—

(a) Increase the depth and utility of information in on-going and emerging areas of priority needs as identified by States, local educational agencies, and participants in SIG partnerships that are in the process of making systemic changes. To expand information depth and utility, Regional Resource Centers must, for example, cooperate with the Federal Resource Center in collecting and sharing information on current practices, policies, and programs relevant to State implementation of IDEA.

(b) Promote change through a multi-State or regional framework that benefits States, local educational agencies, and participants in SIG partnerships pursuing systemic-changes. To promote

change, Regional Resource Centers must conduct activities such as—

(1) Identifying general and special education technical assistance providers funded by the Department of Education at national, State, and local levels, and linking them with SEAs to help them achieve systemic change and improved results for children with disabilities and their families.

(2) Collaborating with other Department-funded programs that address special needs related to school-based reform (e.g., school-wide and other programs under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act).

(3) Participating in Department of Education program coordinated reviews whose purpose is to ensure that technical assistance activities of the centers are coordinated with those of other technical assistance providers to meet State identified needs in a comprehensive and efficient manner. The program coordinated reviews conducted by the Department focus on areas in which technical assistance is needed across programs such as standards and assessments, parent involvement, professional development, transition from school to work, and education reform.

(c) Promote communication and information exchange among States, local educational agencies, and participants in SIG partnerships based on the needs, concerns, emerging issues, and trends identified by these agencies and participants. Such bases may include, for example:

(1) Persistent problems that arise as States comply with IDEA requirements (e.g., identifying appropriate settings for infants and toddlers, transition issues, shortages of related service personnel, alternate assessment strategies, or determining appropriate uses of technology).

(2) Issues faced by local, regional, and State entities in implementing systemic reform, (e.g., placement issues, training and support for teachers, developing useful curricular materials based on sound instructional principles, managing children who exhibit challenging behaviors).

(3) Variance in practices, procedures, and policies of States, local educational agencies, and participants in SIG partnerships.

(4) Accountability of States, local educational agencies and participants in SIG partnerships for improved early intervention, educational, and transitional results for children with disabilities.

(d) Provide technical assistance to State educational agencies and their

partners related to State improvement plans under the SIG program. Technical assistance activities may include—

(1) Developing general models for SEAs to use in developing their State improvement plans under the SIG program (See § 653 of IDEA);

(2) Helping SEAs conduct needs assessment activities stipulated in the State improvement plan (See § 653(b) of IDEA);

(3) Helping SEAs and their partners implement systemic changes specified in the State improvement plan (See § 653(c) of IDEA);

(4) Helping to evaluate the systemic outcomes of State improvement activities (See § 653(f) of IDEA); and

(5) Serving as a technical assistance facilitator to establish mentoring relationships between SEAs that have successfully implemented State improvement activities under the SIG program and those seeking funding under the SIG program.

(e) Assist States in developing and implementing strategies to comply with IDEA requirements such as establishing performance goals and indicators under section 612(a)(16). To assist States, the Regional Resource Centers may conduct activities such as—

(1) Designing LEA systems for ensuring compliance, (e.g., LEA monitoring, eligibility, complaint resolution);

(2) Developing and assisting in the implementation of corrective action plans in response to U.S. Department of Education monitoring findings; and

(3) Assisting in coordinated program reviews conducted by the U.S. Department of Education.

(f) Conduct, every two years, a results-based evaluation of the technical assistance provided. Such an evaluation must be conducted by a review team consisting of three experts approved by the Secretary and must measure elements such as—

(1) The type of technical assistance provided and the perception of its quality by the target audience;

(2) The changes that occurred as a result of the technical assistance provided; and

(3) How the changes relate to State plan goals and objectives.

The services of the review team, including a two-day site visit to the centers are to be performed during the last half of a center's second year and may be included in that year's evaluation required under 34 CFR 75.590. Costs associated with the services to be performed by the review team must also be included in the Regional Resource Center's budget for

year two. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$4,000.

Geographic Regions:

The Secretary establishes the following geographic regions for the RRCs:

Region 1: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region 2: Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Region 3: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Region 4: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin

Region 5: Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, New Mexico, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Region 6: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Marianas, and the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau—for as long as they participate under Part B of IDEA.

In addition to the two-day Project Directors' meeting (see general requirement (c)), the project must also budget for an additional trip to Washington, D.C. to collaborate with the OSEP project officer.

Under this priority, the Secretary will make six awards for cooperative agreements with a project period of up to 60 months subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards. In determining whether to continue the Regional Resource Centers for the fourth and fifth years of the project period, the Secretary, in addition to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), will consider the timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the Regional Resource Centers.

Project Period: Up to 56 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$1,040,000 for the first budget period of 8 months, and \$1,500,000 for the subsequent 12 month budget periods. The Secretary may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is

where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Absolute Priority 2—National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education (84.326H)

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority to support a National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities. The National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary must—

(a) Collect and disseminate information on: the characteristics of individuals with disabilities entering and participating in education and training programs after high school; legislation affecting such individuals and such programs; policies, procedures, support service, (including assistive technology and adaptations), and other resources available or recommended to facilitate the postsecondary education of individuals with disabilities; available educational programs and services in postsecondary settings that include, or can be adapted to include, individuals with disabilities; and sources of financial aid for the postsecondary education and training of individuals with disabilities;

(b) Identify areas, in addition to those specified in paragraph (a), in which information is needed and provide information in those areas;

(c) Develop a coordinated network of professionals, related organizations and associations, mass media, other clearinghouses, and governmental agencies at the Federal, regional, State, and local level for purposes of disseminating information, promoting awareness of issues related to the postsecondary education of individuals with disabilities, and referring individuals who request information to local resources;

(d) Respond to requests for information from individuals with disabilities, their parents, and professionals who work with such individuals so that persons may make informed decisions about postsecondary education and training. All information requests should be collected and responses disseminated, at no cost to the requester, through multiple vehicles such as a toll free telephone number, a World Wide Web Site, and through electronic and regular mail. The project must link with other Federally supported technical assistance projects in collecting and disseminating information. Information products must be made available in accessible formats and, as appropriate, foreign languages.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$450,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page

abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Absolute Priority 3—National Information Center for Children With Disabilities (84.326N)

Background

There is a need to disseminate information and provide technical assistance on a national basis to parents, professionals, and other interested parties who live with, and work with, infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities. Activities such as disseminating information and providing technical assistance are intended to support States and local entities in building capacity to improve early intervention, educational, and transitional services, and results for children with disabilities and their families, and to address systemic-change goals and priorities. Since the inception of IDEA, the informational needs of parents, professionals, and others has greatly increased. Public awareness of IDEA has continued to improve. As additional parents and professionals confront issues related to IDEA and children with disabilities, the need for information will intensify and existing materials will have to be updated, revised, and improved upon.

Priority

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for the purpose of establishing and operating a national information dissemination center to improve early intervention results for infants and toddlers and educational and transitional results for children with disabilities. The center shall also address national needs for the preparation and dissemination of information relating to eliminating barriers to systemic change.

The national information dissemination center must—

(a) Collect, develop, and disseminate research-based information on the characteristics of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and on the programs, legislation, and services related to early intervention or education under IDEA and other Federal laws;

(b) Develop and implement a process for reviewing materials related to the IDEA Amendments of 1997 for accuracy and for consistency with those

Amendments. The process must be approved by OSEP prior to implementation;

(c) Participate in programs and activities for providing outreach, technical assistance, and collection and dissemination of information on issues related to children with disabilities; and promote networking between individuals and appropriate national, State, and local agencies and organizations that deal with issues under IDEA. The center must coordinate its activities with parent training and information centers; community parent resource centers; early childhood, elementary, secondary and postsecondary technical assistance centers; the technical assistance to parent information centers project; regional resource centers; and other national technical assistance systems and information sources, such as the center on dispute resolution, that are supported under IDEA. The project must create links with other Federally supported technical assistance projects and create a World Wide Web home page to link electronically to these projects, as appropriate;

(d) Establish a coordinated network and conduct outreach activities with relevant Federal, State, and local organizations and other sources for promoting public awareness of disability issues and the availability of relevant information, programs, and services;

(e) Collect, develop and disseminate research-based information related to early intervention, education, and related services of individuals with disabilities that is responsive to current and future informational needs of parents, professionals, individuals with disabilities, and other interested parties. Information, must be collected and disseminated on a national, regional, and State basis as appropriate;

(f) Provide technical assistance to national, federally supported, regional, State, and local agencies and organizations seeking to establish information and referral services for individuals with disabilities and their families;

(g) Develop strategies to disseminate information to underrepresented groups such as those with limited English proficiency, for purposes of carrying out center activities.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$1,100,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum

amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Program Authority: Section 685 of the Act.

Absolute Priority 4—Linking Policy and Practice Audiences With the 1997 Amendments of IDEA (84.326A)

Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) made improvements to the IDEA that will help ensure that each child (ages birth through 21) with a disability is provided with a high quality individually designed program of services to meet his or her developmental and educational needs. The IDEA Amendments of 1997 build on the original purposes of the law: each child must be ensured a free appropriate public education, each child's education must be determined on an individualized basis, a program must be designed to meet the child's particular needs in the least restrictive appropriate environment, and the rights of children and their families must be ensured and protected through procedural safeguards.

The new IDEA provisions begin to shift the focus of the law from providing access to education and early intervention services to improving results for children with disabilities. For example, the IDEA Amendments of 1997 include additional requirements to help ensure that children with disabilities have access to challenging curricula, that their developmental and educational programs are based on high expectations, and that their progress is regularly assessed and their parents are kept informed.

Educational and professional associations, parent organizations, and other entities concerned with early intervention and the education of children with disabilities played an important role in the reauthorization of IDEA. Each supported and advocated for a clear focus on results as well as on access. These same entities, and their grassroots constituents, will be critical to the implementation of the new law by helping to ensure that the changes made by the IDEA Amendments of 1997 are understood and put into practice by their members at the State and local levels.

Priority

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority to support four partnerships among associations and other entities so they can contribute to the successful implementation of IDEA, including Part C. These partnerships will be established in order to inform and provide support to partnership's members and constituents in understanding the changes to the law, the implications of these changes for their respective roles in improving results for children with disabilities, and how research-based best practices can be used to implement the law. Associations and other entities forming partnerships must—

(a) Collaborate to meet the needs of one of four audiences: (1) policy makers (e.g., chief State school officers, State boards of education, local school boards, State directors of special education, State directors of mental health programs, State directors of vocational rehabilitation programs, State directors of programs for children with special health care needs, deans of education and special education department chairs, school superintendents, governors, State legislators); (2) service providers, (e.g., general and special education teachers, early childhood specialists, community-based providers, vocational educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals); (3) local-level administrators (e.g., elementary, middle

and secondary school principals; special education administrators; and administrators of private schools); and (4) families and advocates (e.g., parents and family members of general and special education students and infants with disabilities, and disability advocacy organizations). One partnership will be supported for each collective audience. Each partnership must include—

(i) From 5 to 10 associations and entities representing general and special education interests; and

(ii) One project director responsible for the leadership and management of the partnership.

(b) Conduct needs assessments of member associations and other entities prior to submitting an application in order to identify the needs of their respective memberships and constituents regarding the implementation of the amended IDEA.

Partnerships must—

(1) Describe in the application the strategies (e.g., questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups, the use of documents in electronic formats) used to obtain input and need-based information from their respective memberships and constituents;

(2) Provide an analysis of the needs assessment data with the application and submit the analysis to the Coordinating Committee described in paragraph (e) once the committee is established.

(c) Develop a joint agreement among its participating associations and other entities to be included in the application. This agreement must describe—

(1) The audience whose needs the partnership will address;

(2) The roles and responsibilities of each member organization or other entity in the partnership;

(3) The activities that the partnership is proposing to conduct. Activities must include dissemination and outreach. Each partnership must also employ information specialists to answer questions and provide materials to audience members and constituents upon request; and

(4) How resources are proposed to be allocated to ensure the success of the partnership activities.

(d) Budget for the participation of three partnership members in up to five days of training on the IDEA Amendments of 1997. This training will be conducted by OSEP staff in Washington DC.

(e) Propose an approach for establishing and operating a Coordinating Committee comprised of representatives of each of the four

partnerships supported under this priority. The Coordinating Committee shall include, at a minimum, the project director of each partnership and appropriate OSEP staff, and may also include other partnership staff for purposes of carrying out committee responsibilities, including assisting partnerships in implementing their projects. The proposal under this paragraph must address each of the committee functions listed below and include a method for allocating partnership resources to support committee activities. Committee members will convene during the second month of the award to reach consensus on a single approach based on the proposals in one or more of the partnership's respective applications. The Coordinating Committee shall—

(1) Provide technical assistance and develop materials to ensure clarity, accuracy, consistency of message and efficient use of resources across the partnerships;

(2) Provide partnerships timely information, including information on pertinent research;

(3) Implement an external review process in which experts review partnership materials for technical accuracy and clarity. Experts must be knowledgeable in the IDEA Amendments of 1997, supporting legislative history, and regulations implementing the Amendments, and also must be familiar with related OSEP policy guidance. The external expert review process shall be finalized in consultation with, and approved by, OSEP;

(4) Implement a joint marketing, training, dissemination, and outreach plan, based on the results of the partnerships' needs assessments, for reaching each of the four target audiences in an efficient and timely manner. This plan must include a timeline and a range of strategies, with differing degrees of intensity, to reach each of the four audiences (e.g., mailouts to members and constituents, training trainers, providing on-site technical assistance, preparing and disseminating materials). The marketing plan must explain: how partners will use funds provided under this priority to supplement their ongoing organizational efforts to improve results for children with disabilities; how partners intend to create a cadre of individuals who have in-depth knowledge of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 and can provide necessary training; how these representatives of the various partnerships will participate in training members of other partnerships; how partners will reach

their members and constituents at the local level; how partners will address the level of awareness, knowledge, and skill of their respective targeted audiences; and how the partners will use the knowledge from research-based best practices to effectively implement the IDEA Amendments of 1997; and

(5) Design and conduct a communication campaign that includes the successful implementation of researched-based practices and that increases public awareness of how children with disabilities are being served appropriately and how appropriate services affect results for children. Appropriate resources must be allocated to the communication campaign. The communication campaign also must be based on the needs assessments, and should use a range of strategies. Elements of the campaign might include, but need not be limited to: an 800 number to provide accurate answers to inquiries related to the IDEA Amendments of 1997 and to provide information about the partnerships' successes; one or more web sites with shared information among the partnerships and links to other information providers; a database of material developed by the partnerships; regular information updates keeping abreast of new developments in the law; and a media campaign highlighting the exemplary practices of the partnerships through television, radio and print public service announcements, a press package, regional events and conferences, and targeted mailings. The communication campaign will culminate in the third and fifth years with a national conference on best practices for achieving positive results for children with disabilities.

Project Period

Under this priority, The Secretary will make an award for a cooperative agreement with a project period of up to 60 months subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards. In determining whether to continue a partnership for the fourth and fifth years of the project period, the Secretary, in addition to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), will consider—

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of three experts selected by the Secretary. The team's review is to be performed during the last half of the partnership's second year. The cost of this review, which is estimated to be approximately \$4,000, must be included in the partnership's budget for year two;

(b) The quality and accuracy of materials and information provided by

the partnership, as well as the timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the partnership; and

(c) The degree to which the partnership assists audience members in using best practices to implement the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

Number of Awards: Four partnership awards will be made: policy maker partnership; local-level administrator partnership; service provider partnership; and family and advocate partnership.

Review and Approval by OSEP: Information products produced under this award may not be disseminated to outside audiences without prior approval by OSEP.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$1,500,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application (the application narrative), applicants must address the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" X 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals With Disabilities [CFDA No. 84.327]

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is to promote the development, demonstration, and utilization of technology and to support educational media activities designed to be of educational value to children with disabilities. This program also provides support for some captioning, video description, and cultural activities.

Eligible Applicants: State and local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The selection criteria included in regulations for these programs in 34 CFR 332.32 for the Captioned Films and Videos Distribution System priority, and CFR 333.21 for the Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities priority.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Priority

Under section 687 and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet any one of the following priorities. The Secretary funds under these competitions only those applications that meet these absolute priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Captioned Films and Videos Distribution System (84.327N)

Background

This priority supports the operation of a distribution system of captioned films and videos that provides deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as other individuals with disabilities, with access to captioned educational and general interest media on a nonprofit free-loan basis. This priority provides students and other individuals with disabilities with captioned media so they may benefit from the same educational media used to enrich the educational and cultural experiences of students and other individuals who do not have disabilities. Activities under this priority include, but are not limited to:

(a) Improving the accessibility of all students and other individuals to captioned media;

(b) Circulation of free-loan captioned media;

(c) Producing and providing printed, cd-rom, and online listings and catalogs of available materials; and

(d) Outreach activities to promote the program to users and to inform school systems as to the availability of educational captioned media.

Priority

To be funded under this priority, the project must—

(a) Develop strategies and procedures to be implemented in operating a distribution system, consisting of local and regional centers, including depositories, and one central general interest and educational media center. Local and regional centers may include State schools for disabled individuals, public or private school systems, public libraries, colleges or universities, or other distribution points that distribute captioned media;

(b) Ensure that the system permits interdepository circulation of free-loan captioned educational media, and allows individuals, depositories, and local and regional centers to access booking information from the (1) computerized depositories; and (2) general interest and educational films and video center via on-line access;

(c) Establish and describe the computerized registration procedures that will be used to register users, schedule captioned media retrieval and use, and track and record consumer feedback and usage information;

(d) Develop and implement criteria and procedures for replacing irreparable captioned media;

(e) Prepare, update, and distribute copies of a catalog listing all captioned media available under this project, including copies of the lesson guides as they become available;

(f) Convene an annual meeting of depository managers, librarians, and audiovisual and other personnel from local, regional, and State educational agencies for the purpose of training, planning, sharing, brainstorming, and other activities related to improving the access of individuals to captioned media. The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area will be the site of the meeting;

(g) Implement outreach activities, especially activities that reach out to local school systems to make them aware of the open and closed captioned materials that are available to them under this program and from other sources; and

(h) Submit quarterly progress reports to the project officers.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$1,350,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Absolute Priority 2—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students With Disabilities (84.327A)

The purpose of this priority is for the support of projects that—

(a) Select and describe a technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the following purposes: (1) Improving literacy for students with disabilities; (2) improving access to and participation in the general curriculum for students with disabilities; and (3) improving accountability and participation in educational reform for students with disabilities. The technology-based approach must consist of an innovative and emerging technology, and additional curriculum materials and instructional methodologies that enable the technology to achieve educational purposes for students with disabilities;

(b) Justify the approach on the basis of research or theory that supports the effectiveness of the technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (a); and

(c) Conduct work in *ONE* of the following phases:

(1) *Phase 1—Development:* Projects funded under Phase 1 must develop and refine a technology-based approach, and test its feasibility for use with students with disabilities. Activities may include development, adaptation, and refinement of technology, curriculum materials, or instructional methodologies. Activities must include formative evaluation. The primary product of Phase 1 should be a promising technology-based approach that is suitable for field-based evaluation of effectiveness.

(2) *Phase 2—Research and Evaluation:* Projects funded under Phase 2 must select a promising technology-based approach that has been developed in a manner consistent with Phase 1, and subject the approach to rigorous field-based research and evaluation to determine effectiveness and feasibility in educational settings. Products of Phase 2 include a further refinement and description of the technology-based approach, and sound evidence that, in a defined range of real world contexts, the approach can be effective in achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (1).

(3) *Phase 3—Implementation and Validation:* Projects funded under Phase 3 must select a technology-based approach that has been evaluated for effectiveness and feasibility in a manner consistent with Phase 2, and must study the implementation of the approach in multiple, complex settings to acquire an improved understanding of the range of contexts in which the approach can be used effectively, and the factors that determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach in this range of contexts. Factors to be studied in Phase 3 include factors related to the technology, curriculum materials and instructional methodologies that constitute the technology-based approach. Phases 2 and 3 can be contrasted as follows: Phase 2 studies the effectiveness the approach can have, while Phase 3 studies the effectiveness the approach is likely to have in sustained use in a range of typical educational settings. The primary product of Phase 3 should be a detailed blueprint that can be used in dissemination and utilization of the technology-based approach. Also to be studied in Phase 3 are contextual factors associated with students, teacher

attitudes skills and actions, physical setting, curriculum and instruction, resources, and professional development and policy supports, etc.;

(d) In addition to the annual two-day Research to Practice Division Project Directors' meeting in Washington, D.C. mentioned above in the General Requirements section of this notice, budget for another annual trip to Washington, D.C. to collaborate with the Federal project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, and to share information and discuss findings and methods of dissemination; and

(e) Prepare products from the project in formats that are useful for specific audiences as appropriate, including parents, administrators, teachers, early intervention personnel, related services personnel, researchers, and individuals with disabilities.

Project Period: The Secretary intends to fund at least one project in each phase. Projects funded under Phase 1 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 2 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 3 will be funded for up to 36 months. During the final year of projects funded under Phase 3, the Secretary will determine whether or not to fund an optional six-month period for additional dissemination activities.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget

section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Research and Innovation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities

Purpose of Program: To produce, and advance the use of, knowledge to: (1) improve services provided under IDEA, including the practices of professionals and others involved in providing those services to children with disabilities; and (2) improve educational and early intervention results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.

Eligible Applicants: State and local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Research Institute To Improve Results for Adolescents With Disabilities in General Education Academic Curricula

Background

The purpose of this priority is to support an institute that will conduct research and development activities aimed at improving results for secondary school-aged (grades 9 through 12) students with disabilities participating in the general education academic curricula. Research must be conducted on how students with disabilities learn challenging academic content, as well as on a broad array of instructional and contextual variables that influence skill acquisition among high school students with disabilities. The institute must also develop approaches to disseminating effective research-based information and practices to secondary education teachers who serve high school students with disabilities participating in general education academic curricula.

Although various school reforms have been implemented that are intended to

help all students succeed academically, multiple and significant challenges face both general and special educators. For example, findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study indicate that students with disabilities are spending, on average, nearly 70 percent of their school day in regular education classrooms where exposure to general education academic curricula is most common. However, it is uncertain if academic content is learned when fewer than one-quarter of students with disabilities move on to two or four-year colleges. Furthermore, when special education and other related services are being increasingly provided in regular education classrooms, a stronger collaboration among general and special educators is needed. For example, general educators play an increasingly prominent role in the education of students with disabilities, not only as classroom teacher for academic content, but also in the IEP process. Therefore, the redefinition of responsibilities for both general and special educators will require the learning of new content and new strategies for teaching and assessing students.

Furthermore, many high school students with disabilities have significant skill deficiencies that prevent them from benefiting from instruction offered in the general education academic curricula. Studies are needed to develop instructional strategies that enable students with disabilities to understand, remember, and integrate content information contained in academic curricula, and to examine factors which define the instructional dynamic within high school classrooms between teachers and students and between groups of students.

Some of the specific questions about which more knowledge is needed include: Are current practices sufficient for teaching complex, high school subject content within the context of restructured high schools to students with disabilities, including students who live in poverty? How do classroom teachers best structure and deliver content information? How can teachers best organize instruction within an academically diverse class to ensure that all students master and can generalize targeted content? What are the critical instructional and contextual variables that influence skill acquisition among adolescents with disabilities? How can this knowledge inform the improvement of instructional practice?

For real change to occur, secondary special and general education teachers who serve children with disabilities in the general education academic

curricula need to know of, and be able to use, research-based practices. Moreover, it is necessary to develop effective ways of disseminating research results and effective research-based practices to teachers and other school personnel. This calls for ambitious, innovative, and collaborative approaches to infuse research findings into professional practice. Effective approaches for translating research to secondary school practice can help ensure that students with disabilities have access to and achieve success in general education curricula with high, measurable standards, and that they will be prepared to succeed in post-secondary education.

Priority

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for a research institute to improve results for high school students with disabilities by enhancing learning in general education academic curricula. A project funded under this priority must—

(a) Review and identify the critical gaps in the current knowledge in the following areas:

(1) How high school students with disabilities learn challenging academic content, specifically in core high school courses (e.g., math, science, English, social studies, and foreign language);

(2) How teachers learn and use effective and efficient, research-based instructional practices including necessary instructional accommodations and supports to help students with disabilities achieve in a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. We know that certain teaching strategies (e.g., intensive instruction; individualized, instructional decision-making and planning; curriculum that provides contextualized learning opportunities) enable students to learn in a more efficient manner; and

(3) How contextual factors in secondary classrooms and schools influence teaching and learning. For example, scheduling, cross-disciplinary teaching and cooperative teaching approaches, and the use of technology to support instruction and learning are often-cited factors that improve learning for all students;

(b) Design and conduct a strategic program of research that addresses knowledge gaps identified in paragraph (a) by:

(1) Conducting a rigorous research program and employing collaborative research team models (e.g., teacher-researcher partnership research, action research);

(2) Conducting the program of research in organizationally and

demographically diverse high school settings, including high poverty rural and urban schools; and

(3) Collaborating with other research institutes supported under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other experts and researchers in related subject matter and methodological fields in designing and conducting the activities of the institute; and

(c) Design, implement, and evaluate a dissemination approach that links research to practice and promotes the use of current knowledge and ongoing research findings in the professional development of teachers. This approach must—

(1) Serve as a “blueprint” for maximizing the use of research-based knowledge to improve and sustain effective and efficient instructional practices of general and special education teachers in high school academic courses;

(2) Actively engage teachers, administrators, and related service personnel in learning, adapting, and evaluating research;

(3) Be comprehensive, flexible and responsive to new knowledge and to changing school environments;

(4) Include a rigorous evaluation methodology with multiple outcome measures to assess its effectiveness across diverse sites;

(5) Be implemented and evaluated in organizationally and demographically diverse settings including high poverty urban and rural high schools; and

(6) Be developed in coordination with other U. S. Department of Education-sponsored efforts and technical assistance providers, including other research institutes, centers, and information clearinghouses; and

(d) The project must budget three trips annually to Washington, D. C. (two trips to meet with U.S. Department of Education officials and one trip, as specified in the general requirements for all projects, to attend the Office of Special Education Programs Project Director’s Conference).

Program Authority: Sections 672 and 685 of IDEA.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$700,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by

reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 60 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A “page” is 8½” x 11” (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

Special Education—Personnel Preparation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities [CFDA 84.325]

Purpose of Program: The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for qualified personnel in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education, to work with children with disabilities; and (2) to ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful, that are needed to serve those children.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; (b) The selection criteria included in regulations in 34 CFR Part 318.22; and (c) 34 CFR Part 318.31–318.33.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Priority

Under section 673 and 34 CFR 75.105 (c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the

following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition only those applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Improving the Preparation of Personnel To Serve Children With High-Incidence Disabilities

Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 clearly reflect the importance of ensuring that personnel working with children with disabilities have the skills and knowledge that are needed to effectively serve such children. Pursuant to this objective, the Department of Education supports grants to improve the preparation of personnel serving children with the full range of disabilities. A priority supporting programs for personnel to serve children with low-incidence disabilities was announced in the **Federal Register** on August 4, 1997. The following priority addresses the preparation of personnel serving children with high-incidence disabilities.

State agencies, university training programs, local schools, and other community-based agencies and organizations confirm both the importance and the challenge of improving training programs for personnel to serve children with high-incidence disabilities and of meeting the staffing needs of localities experiencing chronic shortages of these personnel.

This priority is intended to improve personnel preparation programs throughout the Nation and help meet shortages in particular areas. The project requirements in conjunction with competitive priorities also reflect a number of important factors that are common to effective personnel preparation programs. These factors are:

- (a) Collaboration among governmental, educational and community-based organizations on the Federal, State and local levels in meeting personnel needs;
- (b) Field-based training opportunities for students to use acquired knowledge and skills in schools reflecting wide contextual and student diversity, including high poverty schools;
- (c) Multi-disciplinary training of teachers, including regular and special education teachers, and related services personnel;
- (d) Coordinating personnel preparation programs aimed at addressing chronic personnel shortages with State practices for addressing such needs;

(e) Addressing shortages of teachers in particular geographic and content areas;

(f) Integration of research based curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and practices; and

(g) Meeting the needs of trainees, and of children with disabilities, from diverse backgrounds.

Priority

Consistent with section 673(e) of IDEA, the purpose of this priority is to develop or improve, and implement, programs that provide preservice preparation for special and regular education teachers and related services personnel in order to meet the diverse needs of children with high incidence disabilities and to enhance the supply of well-trained personnel to serve these children in areas of chronic shortage. Student financial assistance is authorized only for the preservice preparation of special educators and related services personnel to serve children ages 3 through 21 with high-incidence disabilities. The term "high-incidence disabilities" includes disabilities such as mild or moderate mental retardation, speech or language impairments, emotional disturbance, or specific learning disability. Training of para-professionals to serve children with high-incidence disabilities is authorized under this priority. Training of early intervention personnel is not authorized under this priority.

A preservice program is defined as one that leads toward a degree, certification, or professional licence or standard, and may be supported at the associate, baccalaureate, master's or specialist level. A preservice program may include the preparation of currently employed personnel who are seeking additional degrees, certifications, endorsements, or licences.

Projects funded under this priority must—

- (a) Develop or improve, and implement, partnerships that are mutually beneficial to grantees and LEAs in order to promote continuous improvement of preparation programs;
- (b) Use research-based curriculum and pedagogy to prepare personnel able to assist students with disabilities in achieving under the general education curricula and able to improve student outcomes;
- (c) Develop or improve, and implement, strategies for instructing students on how special education, related services, and regular education personnel can collaborate to improve results for children with disabilities; and

(d) Include field-based training opportunities for students in schools reflecting wide contextual and student diversity, including high poverty schools;

An applicant must satisfy the following requirements contained in Section 673(f)–(h) of IDEA:

(a) Demonstrate, through letters from one or more States that the project proposes to serve, that the States:

(1) Intend to accept successful completion of the proposed personnel preparation program as meeting State personnel standards for serving children with disabilities; and

(2) Need personnel in the area or areas in which the applicant proposes to provide preparation, as identified in the States' comprehensive systems of personnel development under Part B of the Act;

(b) Demonstrate that it has engaged in a cooperative effort with one or more State educational agencies to plan the project, and will cooperate with such agency or agencies in carrying out and monitoring the project;

(c) Meet State and professionally-recognized standards for the preparation of special education and related service personnel if the project provides financial assistance to assist personnel in obtaining degrees; and,

(d) Ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project will subsequently provide special education and related services to children with disabilities for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received or repay all or part of the cost of that assistance. Applicants must describe how they will notify scholarship recipients of this work or repay requirement which is specified under section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1474(h)(1)). The requirement must be implemented consistent with section 673(h)(1) and with applicable regulations in effect prior to the awarding of grants under this priority.

Competitive preferences: Within this absolute priority the Secretary will give the following competitive preferences:

- (a) Up to ten (10) points to an application that includes strategies for recruiting students from under-represented populations, including students with disabilities; and
- (b) Up to ten (10) points to an application that demonstrates that a majority of the graduates of its program consistently enter jobs in which they serve children with disabilities in high poverty rural or inner city areas.

Applicants who fulfill the requirements of each of the two competitive preferences can be awarded

a total of 20 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting both of these competitive preferences could earn a maximum total of 120 points.

Project Period: The maximum funding period for awards is 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 in Federal funding for any single budget period of twelve months.

Page Limit Requirements for All Applications: In Part III of the application, the application narrative is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating an application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 40 double-spaced number of pages, using the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use

no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

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Program Authority: Section 673 of IDEA.

For Applications and General Information Contact: Requests for applications and general information should be addressed to the Grants and Contracts Services Team, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. The preferred method for requesting information is to FAX your request to: (202) 205-8717. Telephone: (202) 260-9182.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of this notice or the application packages referred to in this notice in an alternate format (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Department as listed above. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternate format the standard forms included in the application package.

Intergovernmental Review

All programs in this notice (except for Research and Innovation Projects) are subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an inter-governmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for those program.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT—APPLICATION NOTICE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

CFDA No. and name	Applica-tions available	Applica-tion deadline Date	Deadline for inter-governmental review	Maximum award (per year) ¹	Page limit ²	Estimated number of awards
84.326R Regional Resource Centers	3/6/98	6/5/98	8/5/98	³ \$1,040,000	40	6
84.326H National Postsecondary Clearinghouse	3/6/98	4/24/98	6/24/98	450,000	40	1
84.326N National Information Center	3/6/98	4/24/98	6/24/98	1,100,000	40	1
84.326A IDEA Implementation—Associations	3/6/98	4/24/98	6/24/98	1,500,000	40	4
84.327N Captioned Films and Videos Distribution	3/6/98	4/24/98	6/24/98	1,350,000	40	1
84.327A Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities	3/6/98	5/8/98	7/8/98	200,000	40	15
84.324S Research Institute to Improve Results for Adolescents with Disabilities in General Education Academic Curricula	3/6/98	4/24/98	6/24/98	700,000	60	1
84.325H Professional Development—High Incidence	3/6/98	5/1/98	7/1/98	200,000	40	32

¹ The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding the amount listed for each priority for any single budget period of 12 months.

² Applicants must limit the Application Narrative, Part III of the Application, to the page limits noted above. Please refer to the "Page Limit" section of this notice for the specific requirements. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that does not adhere to this requirement.

³ The first budget period will be 8 months, and the subsequent budget periods will be 12 months. The maximum award for the first budget period will be \$1,040,000. The maximum award for the subsequent 12-month periods will be \$1,500,000.

Electronic Access to This Document

Anyone may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the **Federal Register**, in text or portable document format (pdf) on the World Wide Web at either of the following sites:

<http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.htm>
<http://www.ed.gov/news.html>

To use the pdf you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader Program with Search, which is available free at either of the previous sites. If you have questions about using the pdf, call the U.S. Government Printing Office toll free at 1-888-293-6498.

Anyone may also view these documents in text copy only on an electronic bulletin board of the

Department. Telephone: (202) 219-1511 or, toll free, 1-800-222-4922. The documents are located under Option G—Files/Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases.

Note: The official version of a document is the document published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: January 29, 1998.

Judith E. Heumann,

*Assistant Secretary for Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.*

[FR Doc. 98-4577 Filed 2-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P