

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Training of Interpreters for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of proposed priorities for fiscal year (FY) 2000 and subsequent fiscal years

SUMMARY: The Secretary proposes funding priorities under the Training of Interpreters for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind program. The Secretary may use these priorities for competitions in FY 2000 and in subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to assist with the establishment of interpreter training programs or to assist ongoing programs to train a sufficient number of qualified interpreters throughout the country to meet the communication needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who are deaf-blind by— (a) Training new manual, tactile, oral, and cued speech interpreters; (b) Ensuring the maintenance of the skills of working interpreters; and (c) Providing opportunities for interpreters to raise their level of competence and expand their skills.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before June 9, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments about these proposed priorities to Mary Lovley, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Mary E. Switzer Building, Room 3217, Washington, DC 20202-2736. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: Mary_Lovley@ed.gov

You must include the term "Grants for Training Interpreters" in the subject line of your electronic message.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Lovley. Telephone: (202) 205-9393. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the TDD number at (202) 401-3664.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternate format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed in the preceding paragraph.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Training of Interpreters for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind program is authorized under section 302(f) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Goals 2000) focuses the Nation's education reform efforts on the eight National Education Goals and provides a framework for meeting them. Goals 2000 promotes new partnerships to strengthen schools and expands the Department's capacities for helping communities to exchange ideas and obtain information needed to achieve the goals.

These proposed priorities support the National Education Goal that, by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The proposed priorities further the objectives of this Goal by focusing available funds on projects that train a sufficient number of qualified interpreters throughout the country to meet the communication needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who are deaf-blind. Training and improving the manual, tactile, oral, and cued speech interpreting skills of interpreters working in vocational rehabilitation environments will improve the ability of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who are deaf-blind to function successfully in their vocational pursuits.

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

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which the Secretary chooses to use any of these priorities, the Secretary invites applications through a notice in the **Federal Register**. A notice inviting applications under these competitions will be published in the **Federal Register** concurrent with or following publication of the notice of final priorities.

Priorities

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet one of the following priorities. The Secretary proposes to fund under these

competitions only applications that meet one of these absolute priorities:

*Proposed Priority 1—National Project With Major Emphasis on Distance Education as a Medium for Interpreter Training***Background**

Historically interpreter training programs have been located in colleges and universities in metropolitan areas or in areas of high population. While demand for interpreter services exceeds the supply of interpreters even in metropolitan areas, the dearth of interpreters in rural areas is marked. A *Study of Interpreter Services for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, published in 1993, concluded that "there is sufficient work/need for additional professional interpreters in every state and many major communities." Organizations such as the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) have also identified the shortage of qualified interpreters. Some States, such as Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia, as well as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific other than Guam, have no degree granting interpreter training program. Due to the relatively sparse population in large geographical areas, student enrollment may not be sufficient to support interpreter training programs should they be established in these areas. As a result, individuals living in these States or areas who are interested in obtaining interpreter training must seek that training at a great distance from their homes. Further, the few working interpreters living in these States or areas who wish to maintain or upgrade their skills often find it difficult to locate nearby sources for continuing education. Distance education can help fill this void. The challenge, however, is to effectively deliver the interpreter training curricula, which is a skill-based, visual-based curricula rather than a knowledge-based or text-based curricula. Therefore, it is of critical importance that interpreter training curricula be modified to make the best use of a blend of all of the available technologies, such as video conferencing, internet web classes and chat rooms, e-mail, and voice mail. With proper curricular modifications, interpreter training can be provided via distance education to rural areas, remote locations, and areas with low populations in a cost-effective manner.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has determined that a national project is needed that will focus on adapting existing model interpreter training curricula used by two-year and four-year interpreter training programs for delivery via distance education. In addition, there is a need for technical assistance to, and coordination and cooperation with, interpreter training programs across the Nation on matters related to the use of distance education as a medium for interpreter training.

Priority

A project must—

- Be national in scope;
- Adapt or modify existing model interpreter training curricula or develop new appropriate interpreter training curricula for delivery via distance education and package it for easy use by the RSA-funded regional interpreter training projects and other trainers and interpreter training programs;
 - Develop detailed instruction manuals to accompany each packaged curriculum;
 - Provide technical assistance to interpreter training programs on the feasibility and effectiveness of distance interpreter education;
 - Establish cooperative working relationships with the RSA-funded regional interpreter training projects;
 - Furnish technical assistance to the RSA-funded regional interpreter training projects in developing and using distance education as a mechanism for training interpreters to meet the communication needs of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind in their regions;
 - Provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities for interpreter trainers across the Nation on the development and use of distance education as a mechanism for training interpreters to meet the communication needs of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. The technical assistance must address matters such as the proper use of the distance interpreter education curriculum; the proper use of the most current and available technologies, such as video conferencing, videotaping, internet web classes and chat rooms, e-mail, and voice mail; the technical infrastructure needed to successfully conduct distance interpreter education; and the policy implications and barriers that exist in providing distance interpreter education across a State or across State lines (e.g., classification of distance education students as in-State or out-of-State, the geographic area the institution is designed to serve, etc.); and

- Disseminate the packaged distance education curricula to interpreter educators nationwide.

Proposed Priority 2—National Project With Major Emphasis on Training Interpreter Educators

Background

In order to train qualified interpreters, interpreter educators must be both sufficient in number and current in knowledge and best practices. There are, however, very few programs that prepare interpreter educators to teach the interpreting process and the skill of interpreting. As a result, many faculty teaching at the 100-plus interpreter training programs have had little or no opportunity to study how to teach interpretation. Further, over the last 10 years RSA has funded the development of model curricula emphasizing the interpreting needs of culturally diverse communities, deaf-blind interpreting, and interpreting in educational and rehabilitation environments. Due to the low number of programs to train interpreter educators, this curriculum is not being shared widely and, as a result, is not being used extensively.

The model curricula on interpreting in educational environments and interpreting in rehabilitation environments is available at the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials at Oklahoma State University, 5202 Richmond Hill Drive, Stillwater, OK 74078-4080. The model curricula on the interpreting needs of culturally diverse communities and interpreting for individuals who are deaf-blind are being developed under currently funded projects. These curricula will be available at the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials once these projects have completed their activities. The project developing the model curriculum on the interpreting needs of culturally diverse communities ends on December 31, 2000, and the project developing the model curriculum on interpreting for individuals who are deaf-blind ends on September 30, 2000.

Another aspect of training a sufficient number of qualified interpreters is the practice of mentoring. Mentors are experienced interpreters and interpreter educators who provide one-on-one technical assistance to novice interpreters or to working interpreters who wish to improve or expand their skills or work toward certification. While “mentoring is not a substitute for comprehensive interpreter education or for the internships and practicums associated with such formal training”

(RID Standard Practice Paper on “Mentoring”), it supports and augments the training received in those settings. While the field of interpreting embraces the use of mentoring, there is no established uniform mechanism for training individuals to serve as mentors.

In order to train a sufficient number of qualified interpreters throughout the country, there is a need to increase the number of highly trained interpreter educators and mentors. A national project is needed to address these issues.

Priority

A project must—

- Be national in scope;
- Develop a new curriculum, or update a former or existing curriculum, to prepare interpreter educators and, once this is developed, use it to train both working interpreter educators who need to obtain, enhance, or update their training and new interpreter educators. This newly developed or updated curriculum must include all issues pertinent to the training of interpreters and the use of the model curricula developed by recent and current RSA-funded national interpreter training projects that emphasize the interpreting needs of culturally diverse communities, interpreting for deaf-blind individuals, and interpreting in educational and rehabilitation environments;
 - Identify and update or develop a model mentor training curriculum that includes elements such as diagnostic assessment, goal setting, discourse analysis, and effective feedback provision and, once this is developed, train experienced interpreters or interpreter educators to serve as mentors. This mentor training program must train mentors to serve in a variety of situations or environments (i.e., in urban and rural settings; in various regions; in culturally diverse environments; in situations in which various modes of communication (deaf-blind, oral, cued speech, etc.) are present; in specialized settings (legal, medical, educational, etc.); and with interns at varying skill levels, etc.);
 - Provide technical assistance to organizations or bodies establishing mentorship programs and to existing mentorship programs on all aspects of mentoring, including the identification of trained mentors;
 - Ensure that the curricula are developed with input from a culturally diverse, consumer-based consortium;
 - Ensure that training is available to culturally diverse audiences and is sensitive to the needs of all audiences;

- Use innovative as well as traditional approaches to the provision of training (i.e., distance education, short-term intensive training sessions or seminars, delivering training to communities in need, etc.); and
- Establish cooperative relationships with the regional interpreter training projects the Secretary plans to propose in fiscal year 2000.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is 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 intergovernmental 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 this program.

Invitation To Comment

We invite you to submit comments and recommendations regarding these proposed priorities. During and after the

comment period, you may inspect all public comments about these proposed priorities in the Mary E. Switzer Building, Room 3217, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC., between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Assistance to Individuals With Disabilities in Reviewing the Rulemaking Record

On request, we will supply an appropriate aid, such as a reader or print magnifier, to an individual with a disability who needs assistance to review the comments or other documents in the public rulemaking record for these proposed priorities. If you want to schedule an appointment for this type of aid, you may call (202) 205-8113 or (202) 260-9895. If you use a TDD, you may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 772(f).

Dated: May 5, 1999.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.160, Training of Interpreters for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind)

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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