

## VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118.

4. *Performance Measures:* Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the Department is currently developing measures that will yield information on various aspects of the quality of the Technology and Media Services to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program (e.g., the extent to which projects are of high quality and are relevant to the needs of children with disabilities). Data on these measures will be collected from the projects funded under this competition.

Grantees will also be required to report information on their projects' performance in annual reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

We will notify grantees of the performance measures once they are developed.

## VII. Agency Contact

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dave Malouf, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4078, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7427.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative

format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request by contacting the following office: The Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363.

## VIII. Other Information

*Electronic Access to This Document:* You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>.

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

**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.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Dated: February 24, 2005.

**John H. Hager,**

*Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

[FR Doc. 05-4103 Filed 3-2-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4000-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—State and Federal Policy Forum for Program Improvement; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.326F.*

**DATES:** *Applications Available:* March 4, 2005.

*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* April 15, 2005.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* June 14, 2005.

*Eligible Applicants:* State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs) public charter schools that are LEAs under State law, institutions of higher education (IHEs), other public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations,

outlying areas, freely associated States, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$450,000.

*Maximum Award:* The Secretary does not intend to fund an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$450,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

*Number of Awards:* 1.

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

*Project Period:* Up to 60 months.

## Full Text of Announcement

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

*Purpose of Program:* The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and dissemination of useful information to improve services to children with disabilities by applying scientifically based findings to facilitate systemic changes in policy, procedure, practice and the training and use of personnel. Specifically, the program authorizes activities including those that assist States and local educational agencies with the process of planning systemic changes that will promote improved early intervention, educational and transitional results for children with disabilities.

*Priority:* In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 663(b), 663(c), and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

*Absolute Priority:* For FY 2005 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

*Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities—State and Federal Policy Forum for Program Improvement.*

*Background:* Access to information is critical for decision makers and policy officials to ensure that appropriate and effective education is available for all eligible children with disabilities, and early intervention services are available to all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities. State and Federal decision makers responsible for the implementation of IDEA must have access to valid statistics, research findings, policy analyses, and current information on trends in the provision of special education and related services and early intervention services.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), within the Office of

Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), is the principal agency within the Department of Education responsible for Federal administration of IDEA. SEAs, and certain other designated State agencies under Part C of IDEA oversee the administration of IDEA at State and local levels. The project funded under this competition will provide access to and analysis of administrative and policy information generated by the States and other jurisdictions, and will facilitate coordination between OSEP and State and local administrators of IDEA.

*Priority:* The Assistant Secretary establishes a priority to facilitate communication between OSEP and State and local administrators of IDEA, and to synthesize national program information that will improve the management, administration, delivery, and effectiveness of programs and services provided under IDEA. The cooperative agreement funded under this priority will provide OSEP with a mechanism and resources for analyzing policies and emerging issues that are of significant national concern.

In order to meet the requirements of this priority, the project must—

(a) Identify national and State needs for program improvement information through contact with experts, research reviews, regular communication with State and local policy officials and other types of needs assessments, and in conjunction with OSEP staff. Such information is critical to obtain better results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities;

(b) Collect, organize, synthesize, interpret and integrate information needed for program improvement using a variety of methods and formats, consistent with the nature of the data and the types of entities performing the specific tasks. Specifically, such information may be gathered through activities such as surveys, interviews, brief case examinations, and meetings among special education administrators, outside experts, representatives of students with disabilities and their families, and others;

(c) Analyze emerging policy or program issues regarding the administration of special education, early intervention, and related services at the Federal, State, and local levels. Review, plan, and provide leadership in recommending multi-level actions that respond to emerging issues;

(d) Facilitate the flow of information at the Federal, State, and local levels related to program improvement for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, through various

resources, including the Regional Resource Centers, Regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers, other OSEP-supported technical assistance efforts, and OSEP-affiliated communities of practice;

(e) Communicate, collaborate, and form partnerships as appropriate and as directed by OSEP, with technical assistance providers at the national and regional levels, including those that are part of the OSEP-supported special education technical assistance and dissemination network;

(f) Maintain a Web site, with a dedicated URL, on which all anticipated, ongoing, and completed products, as well as related information, are available in a form that meets a government or industry-recognized standard for accessibility;

(g) Organize, coordinate, maintain, and promote access to a database of laws, policies, and regulations that govern special education and early intervention within the States and other jurisdictions;

(h) Communicate regularly with OSEP to provide and receive information that may assist OSEP in improving its efficiency and effectiveness in administering IDEA; and

(i) Budget for an annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC during each year of the project and another annual two-day trip to Washington, DC during each year of the project to meet and collaborate with the OSEP project officer, other OSEP staff, and other funded projects for purposes of cross-project collaboration and information exchange.

In deciding whether to continue this project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), and in addition—

(1) The recommendation of a review team consisting of experts selected by the Secretary. The review will be conducted in Washington, DC during the last half of the project's second year. Projects must budget for the travel associated with this one-day intensive review; and

(2) The timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(3) The degree to which the project's design and technical strategies demonstrate the potential for disseminating significant new knowledge.

*Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking:*

Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on a proposed priority. However, section 681(d) of

IDEA makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

**Program Authority:** 20 U.S.C. 1463.

*Applicable Regulations:* The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

## II. Award Information

*Type of Award:* Cooperative agreement.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$450,000.

*Maximum Award:* The Secretary does not intend to fund an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$450,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

*Number of Awards:* 1.

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

*Project Period:* Up to 60 months.

## III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* SEAs, LEAs public charter schools that are LEAs under State law, IHEs, other public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, outlying areas, freely associated States, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This competition does not involve cost sharing or matching.

3. *Other: General Requirements—*(a) The projects funded under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (*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 ages birth through 26 in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (*see* section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

## IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Telephone (toll free): 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (301) 470-1244. If

you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call (toll free): 1-877-576-7734.

You may also contact ED Pubs at its Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html> or you may contact ED Pubs at its e-mail address: [edpubs@inet.ed.gov](mailto:edpubs@inet.ed.gov).

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.326F.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII of this notice.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

*Page Limit:* The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 70 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) 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.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per 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, the resumes, the bibliography, the references, or the letters of support. However, you must include all of the application narrative in Part III.

We will reject your application if—

- You apply these standards and exceed the page limit; or
- You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:* Applications Available: March 4, 2005.

*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* April 15, 2005.

Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (*Grants.gov*), or in paper format by mail or hand delivery. For

information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or by mail or hand delivery, please refer to section IV. 6. *Other Submission Requirements* in this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* June 14, 2005.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically or in paper format by mail or hand delivery.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.* We have been accepting applications electronically through the Department's e-Application system since FY 2000. In order to expand on those efforts and comply with the President's Management Agenda, we are continuing to participate as a partner in the new governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site in FY 2005. The State and Federal Policy Forum for Program Improvement—(CFDA Number 84.326F) competition is one of the competitions included in this project.

If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must use the Grants.gov Apply site (<http://www.grants.gov>). Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

You may access the electronic grant application for the State and Federal Policy Forum for Program Improvement—(CFDA Number 84.326F) competition at: <http://www.grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in Grants.gov is voluntary.
- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically

through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted with a date/time received by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We will not consider your application if it was received by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m. on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was submitted after 4:30 p.m. on the application deadline date.

- If you experience technical difficulties on the application deadline date and are unable to meet the 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, deadline, print out your application and follow the instructions in this notice for the submission of paper applications by mail or hand delivery.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that your application is submitted timely to the Grants.gov system.

- To use Grants.gov, you, as the applicant, must have a D-U-N-S Number and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You should allow a minimum of five business days to complete the CCR registration.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit your application in paper format.

- You may submit all documents electronically, including all information typically included on the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Any narrative sections of your application should be attached as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text) or .PDF (Portable Document) format.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. The Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you a second confirmation by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

b. *Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.* If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

*By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.326F), 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260; or

*By mail through a commercial carrier:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center—Stop 4260, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.326F), 7100 Old Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark, or
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

**Note:** The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. *Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.* If you submit your application in paper format by hand delivery, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before

the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.326F), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays.

**Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications:** If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 4 of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424) the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

## V. Application Review Information

*Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

## VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year

award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118.

4. *Performance Measures:* Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the Department is currently developing measures that will yield information on various aspects of the quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program. These are: the extent to which projects provide high quality products and services, the relevance of project products and services to educational and early intervention policy and practice, and the use of products and services to improve educational and early intervention policy and practice. Data on these measures will be collected from any project funded under this competition.

The grantee will also be required to report information on its project's performance in annual reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

We will notify grantees of the performance measures once they are developed.

## VII. Agency Contact

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Patricia Gonzalez, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4057, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2600. Telephone: (202) 245-7355.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

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## VIII. Other Information

*Electronic Access to This Document:* You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>.

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888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

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Dated: February 14, 2005.

**John H. Hager,**

*Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

[FR Doc. 05-4104 Filed 3-2-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4000-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program—Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

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

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed priority.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services proposes one funding priority for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research's (NIDRR) Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) program. This priority may be used for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2005 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend this priority to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

**DATES:** We must receive your comments on or before April 4, 2005.

**ADDRESSES:** Address all comments about this proposed priority to Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6030, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20204-2700. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: [donna.nangle@ed.gov](mailto:donna.nangle@ed.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donna Nangle. Telephone: (202) 245-7462.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) on

request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Invitation To Comment

We invite you to submit comments regarding this proposed priority.

We invite you to assist us in complying with the specific requirements of Executive Order 12866 and its overall requirement of reducing regulatory burden that might result from this proposed priority. Please let us know of any further opportunities we should take to reduce potential costs or increase potential benefits while preserving the effective and efficient administration of the program.

During and after the comment period, you may inspect all public comments about this proposed priority in room 6030, 550 12th Street, SW., Potomac Center Plaza, 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 this proposed priority. If you want to schedule an appointment for this type of aid, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

We will announce the final priority in a notice in the **Federal Register**. We will determine the final priority after considering responses to this notice and other information available to the Department. This notice does not preclude us from proposing or funding additional priorities, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

**Note:** This notice does *not* solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this proposed priority, we invite applications through a notice in the **Federal Register**. When inviting applications we designate the priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational. The effect of each type of priority follows:

**Absolute priority:** Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

**Competitive preference priority:** Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by either (1) awarding additional points, depending on how

well or the extent to which the application meets the competitive priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the competitive priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

**Invitational priority:** Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the invitational priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

**Note:** NIDRR supports the goals of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative (NFI). The NFI can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/newfreedom>.

The proposed priority is in concert with NIDRR's Long-Range Plan (Plan). The Plan is comprehensive and integrates many issues relating to disability and rehabilitation research topics. While applicants will find many sections throughout the Plan that support potential research to be conducted under the proposed priority, a specific reference is included for the priority presented in this notice. The Plan can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/index.html>.

Through the implementation of the NFI and the Plan, NIDRR seeks to: (1) Improve the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research; (2) foster an exchange of expertise, information, and training to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of traditionally underserved populations; (3) determine best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

##### Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

RRTCs conduct coordinated and integrated advanced programs of research targeted toward the production of new knowledge to improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems, alleviate or stabilize disability conditions, or promote maximum social and economic independence for persons with disabilities. Additional information on the RRTC program can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC>.