

INFORMATION CONTACT in section VII in this notice.

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Dated: July 1, 2008.

Douglas B. Mesecar,
Assistant Deputy Secretary for Innovation and Improvement.

[FR Doc. E8-15363 Filed 7-3-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Overview Information; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program—Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)—Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas; Notice Inviting Applications for a New Award for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133B-11.

DATES: *Applications Available:* July 7, 2008.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: July 22, 2008.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 21, 2008.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the RRTC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, through advanced research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in general problem areas, as specified by NIDRR. Such activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and the

family members or other authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities.

Additional information on the RRTC program can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC>.

Priorities: NIDRR has established two priorities for this competition. The *General RRTC Requirements* priority is from the notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, published in the **Federal Register** on February 1, 2008 (73 FR 6132). The RRTC on *Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas* priority is from the notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2008, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet these priorities.

These priorities are:
General Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) Requirements and an RRTC on *Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas*.

Note: The full text of each of these priorities is included in its notice of final priorities in the **Federal Register** and in the application package.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97. (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 350. (c) The notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, published in the **Federal Register** on February 1, 2008 (73 FR 6132). (d) The notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.
Estimated Available Funds: \$850,000.
Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$850,000 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**.

Note: The maximum amount includes direct and indirect costs. A grantee may not

collect more than fifteen percent of the total grant award as indirect cost charges (34 CFR 350.23).

Estimated 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:* States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; IHEs; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html>. To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: Education Publications Center, 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), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html> or at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA Number 84.133B-11.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the person or team listed under *Alternative Format* in section VIII 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. We recommend that you limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 125 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. Single spacing may be used for 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 recommended 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, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section (Part III).

The application package will provide instructions for completing all components to be included in the application. Each application must include a cover sheet (Standard Form 424); budget requirements (ED Form 524) and a narrative budget justification; other required forms; an abstract, Human Subjects narrative, Part III narrative; resumes of staff; and other related materials, if applicable.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: July 7, 2008.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting:

Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting to discuss the priorities and to receive information and technical assistance through individual consultation with NIDRR staff. The pre-application meeting will be held on July 22, 2008. Interested parties may participate in this meeting by conference call with NIDRR staff from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Washington, DC time. NIDRR staff also will be available from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the same day, by telephone, to provide information and technical assistance through individual consultation. For further information or to make arrangements to participate in the meeting via conference call or for an individual consultation, contact Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), room 6029, 550 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-7462 or by e-mail: Donna.Nangle@ed.gov.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 21, 2008.

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application

electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, 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.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII in this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

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

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.*

Applications for grants under the Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers competition, CFDA number 84.133B-11, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at <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 will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers competition—CFDA number 84.133B-11 at <http://www.Grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.133, not 84.133B).

Please note the following:

- 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 date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received—that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system—after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- 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 submission 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 you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (2) registering yourself

as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to submit successfully an application via Grants.gov. In addition you will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Please note that two of these forms—the SF 424 and the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424—have replaced the ED 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance).

- You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified in this paragraph or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

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

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application 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.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII in this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system; and
- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day

before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6029, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Fax: (202) 245-7323.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. *Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. 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 84.133B-11), 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 84.133B-11), 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.
- (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.

(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 qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You 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 84.133B-11), 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 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification 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

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 350.54 and are listed in the application package.

2. *Review and Selection Process:* Additional factors we consider in selecting an application for an award are as follows:

The Secretary is interested in outcomes-oriented research or development projects that use rigorous scientific methodologies. To address this interest, applicants are encouraged to articulate goals, objectives, and expected outcomes for the proposed research or development activities. Proposals should describe how results and planned outputs are expected to contribute to advances in knowledge, improvements in policy and practice, and public benefits for individuals with

disabilities. Applicants should propose projects that are designed to be consistent with these goals. We encourage applicants to include in their application a description of how results will measure progress towards achievement of anticipated outcomes (including a discussion of measures of effectiveness), the mechanisms that will be used to evaluate outcomes associated with specific problems or issues, and how the proposed activities will support new intervention approaches and strategies. Submission of the information identified in this section V. 2. *Review and Selection Process* is voluntary, except where required by the selection criteria 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 notify you informally, also.

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 in this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section in 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 directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>.

Note: NIDRR will provide information by letter to grantees on how and when to submit the final performance report.

4. *Performance Measures:* To evaluate the overall success of its research program, NIDRR assesses the quality of its funded projects through a review of grantee performance and products. Each

year, NIDRR examines a portion of its grantees to determine:

- The percentage of newly-awarded NIDRR projects that are conducting at least one multi-site, collaborative, controlled trial of interventions and programs.
- The number of accomplishments (e.g., new or improved tools, methods, discoveries, standards, interventions, programs, or devices) developed or tested with NIDRR funding that have been judged by expert panels to be of high quality and to advance the field.
- The average number of publications per award based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.
- The percentage of new grants that include studies funded by NIDRR that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous methods.

NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports (APRs) in support of these performance measures.

Updates on the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) indicators, revisions and methods appear on the NIDRR Program Review Web site: <http://www.neweditions.net/pr/commonfiles/pmconcepts.htm>.

Grantees should consult this site on a regular basis to obtain details and explanations on how NIDRR programs contribute to the advancement of the Department's long-term and annual performance goals.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6029, PCP, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-7462 or by e-mail: Donna.Nangle@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD, call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Alternative Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and 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, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5075, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD, call the FRS, toll-free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Dated: July 1, 2008.

Tracy R. Justesen,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. E8-15359 Filed 7-3-08; 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—Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs) and Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)

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

ACTION: Notice of final priorities for DRRP and RRTC.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces certain funding priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). Specifically, this notice announces one priority for a DRRP and one priority for an RRTC. The Assistant Secretary may use these priorities for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2008 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend these priorities to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities are effective August 6, 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information regarding Priority 1—Centers on Research and Capacity Building to Improve Outcomes for Individuals With Disabilities from Traditionally Underserved Racial and

Ethnic Populations, contact: Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6026, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail: marlene.spencer@ed.gov.

For further information regarding Priority 2—Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas, contact: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 6029, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7462 or by e-mail: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

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

Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We published a notice of proposed priorities (NPP) for NIDRR's Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program in the **Federal Register** on April 22, 2008 (73 FR 21607). The NPP included background statements that described our rationale for the three priorities proposed in that notice.

There are differences between the NPP and this notice of final priorities (NFP) as discussed in the following section.

In this notice, we are announcing one priority for a DRRP and one priority for an RRTC.

For the DRRP, the final priority is:

- *Priority 1—Centers on Research and Capacity Building To Improve Outcomes for Individuals With Disabilities From Traditionally Underserved Racial and Ethnic Populations.*

For the RRTC, the final priority is:

- *Priority 2—Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas.*

Note: NIDRR intends to publish a separate notice of final priority for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Technologies for Successful Aging with Disability that was proposed in the NPP.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to our invitation in the NPP, 2 parties submitted comments on the proposed priorities for the DRRP and RRTC. An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priorities since publication of the NPP follows.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes, or

suggested changes the law does not authorize us to make under the applicable statutory authority. In addition, we do not address general comments that raised concerns not directly related to the proposed priorities.

DRRP

Priority 1—Centers on Research and Capacity Building To Improve Outcomes for Individuals With Disabilities From Traditionally Underserved Racial and Ethnic Populations

Comment: One commenter asked for a definition of the term “traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations.”

Discussion: As stated in the priority, the term “traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations” refers to the racial and ethnic minority populations that have not traditionally received equal access to and benefits of rehabilitation services as discussed in section 21(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. However, because section 21(a) does not identify or provide examples of specific populations that meet this definition, we expect each applicant to identify the particular population(s) it proposes to study and to provide support that the selected population(s) are traditionally underserved.

Changes: We have revised the priority to include the requirement that an applicant identify the particular population(s) it proposes to study, and to provide support that the selected population(s) are, in fact, racial or ethnic minority populations that have not traditionally received equal access to and benefits of rehabilitation services.

RRTC

Priority 2—Individuals With Disabilities Living in Rural Areas

Comment: One commenter noted that this priority emphasizes research that promotes outcomes in two of NIDRR's three areas of focus: Employment, and health and function. The commenter noted, however, that the priority does not include an emphasis on outcomes in NIDRR's third area of focus: participation and community living.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the priority does not emphasize participation and community living. However, as we describe in our Final Long Range Plan for FY 2005–2009, 71 FR 8165 (Plan), the domains of employment, health and function, and participation and community living are highly interrelated. For example, employment can be a critical part of