VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or another accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at *www.govinfo.gov.* At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at *www.federalregister.gov.* Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Michelle Asha Cooper,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

[FR Doc. 2021–16832 Filed 8–4–21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities and Technical Assistance on State Data Collection—National Assessment Center

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for a new award for fiscal year (FY) 2021 for a National Assessment Center, Assistance Listing Number 84.326G. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820–0028.

DATES:

Applications available: August 5, 2021.

Deadline for transmittal of applications: September 7, 2021.

Pre-application webinar information: No later than August 10, 2021, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will post a pre-recorded informational webinar designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to interested applicants. The webinar may be found at *www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/osep/new-osep-grants.html.*

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at *www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Egnor, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5163, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–5076. Telephone: (202) 245–7334 or (202) 856–6409. Email: *David.Egnor@ed.gov.*

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1–800–877–8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Programs: The purpose of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing TA, supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The purpose of the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection program is to improve the capacity of States to meet the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) data collection and reporting requirements.

Priorities: This notice contains two absolute priorities. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), Absolute Priority 1 is from allowable activities specified or otherwise authorized in the IDEA (see sections 663 and 681(d) of the IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 1463 and 1481(d)). Absolute Priority 2 is from the notice of final priority (NFP) for the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection Program—Targeted and Intensive Technical Assistance to States on the Analysis and Use of Diagnostic, Interim, and Summative Assessment Data to Support Implementation of States' Identified Measurable Result(s) published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2021 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet both of these priorities.

These priorities are:

Priority 1: Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities—National Assessment Center.

Background:

Section 612(a)(16) of the IDEA requires that all students with disabilities are included in all general State and districtwide assessments, including assessments described under section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs (IEPs). In accordance with Federal law, there are several ways for students with disabilities to participate appropriately in State and districtwide assessments: General assessments (with or without accommodations), alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, and alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Despite the progress State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) have made in including students with disabilities in assessments and accountability systems, SEAs and LEAs continue to face challenges, such as (1) integrating data from dissimilar tests (*e.g.,* general without accommodations, general with accommodations, alternate) into a single accountability system; (2) developing consistent SEA and LEA policies on assessment accommodations that provide maximum accessibility while maintaining test reliability and validity; (3) analyzing and using diagnostic, interim,[1] and summative assessment data to improve instruction, learning,

[1] For the purposes of this priority, the term ''interim assessments'' refer to assessments that are administered several times during a school year to measure progress. Another term that is sometimes used to describe these assessments is ''formative assessments.''

and accountability for students with disabilities; and (4) addressing test security, accessibility, technical support, and other challenges associated with transitioning from traditional paper-and-pencil assessments to digitally-based assessments (DBAs), including DBAs that can be administered via distance education and other remote service delivery models of instruction.

Furthermore, one of the most complex challenges faced by SEAs and LEAs is developing and administering English language proficiency (ELP) assessments to students with disabilities who are English learners (ELs). Properly identifying these students as disabled is also a significant challenge if their disabilities are masked by their limited English proficiency, or vice versa. Improper identification may lead to inappropriate instruction, assessments, and accommodations for these students. Linguistic and cultural biases may also affect the validity of assessments for ELs with disabilities.

Finally, the Department notes that in many schools, there may be unnecessary testing or unclear purpose applied to the task of assessing students, including students with disabilities, that consumes too much instructional time and creates undue stress for educators and students. (For more information, see the Department's February 2, 2016, letter to Chief State School Officers available at *www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa/16-0002signedcsso222016ltr.pdf.*)

These and other complex challenges will continue to arise as States continue to implement, revise, or adopt new challenging academic content standards and develop new, valid, more instructionally useful, and inclusive assessments aligned to these standards. Developing these new assessments has been and will continue to be challenging and time-consuming, and States and LEAs need support in identifying and implementing effective practices for identifying and including children with disabilities in State and districtwide assessments. Moreover, methods for analyzing and effectively using State and districtwide assessment data to improve instruction, learning, and accountability for students with disabilities will continue to need further development, refinement, and technical support.

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to support the establishment and operation of a National Assessment Center (Center) to address national, State, and local assessment issues related to students with disabilities. The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities in State and districtwide assessments and accountability systems:

Knowledge Development Outcomes.

(a) Increased body of knowledge on practices supported by evidence to collect, analyze, synthesize, and disseminate relevant information regarding State and districtwide assessments of students with disabilities, including on topics such as—

(1) The inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability systems;

(2) Assessment accommodations;

(3) Alternate assessments;

(4) Universal design of assessments;

(5) Technology-based assessments, including DBAs;

(6) Interim assessments;

(7) Competency-based assessments;

(8) Performance-based assessments;

(9) The analysis and reporting of assessment data (including methods for addressing assessment data interoperability challenges);

(10) Application of growth models in assessment programs;

(11) Uses of diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to inform instructional programs for students with disabilities; and

(12) Identifying and assessing ELs with disabilities, including ensuring that all ELs with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations, as needed, on ELP assessments, and that the results of ELP assessments for students with disabilities are validly used in making accountability determinations under the ESEA.

(b) Increased capacity of SEA and LEA personnel to assess SEA and LEA needs, and track SEA and LEA activities and trends, related to including students with disabilities in State and districtwide assessments, including, as appropriate, improving the knowledge and skills of SEA and LEA personnel related to any of the topics listed in paragraph (a) of the *Knowledge Development Outcomes* section of the priority.

(c) Increased capacity of parents of students with disabilities to understand the statutory and regulatory bases for including all students with disabilities in State and districtwide assessments, including general assessments with and without accommodations, alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, and alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Technical Assistance and Dissemination Outcomes.

(a) Increased capacity of SEA and LEA personnel to collect and analyze diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data on the performance of students with disabilities, including ELs with disabilities.

(b) Increased capacity of SEA and LEA personnel to use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to develop, evaluate, and improve educational policies and increase accountability for students with disabilities, including ELs with disabilities.

(c) Increased capacity of LEA personnel to use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment results in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities, including ELs with disabilities.

(d) Increased capacity of parents of students with disabilities to understand how students with disabilities are included in, and benefit from, participation in State and districtwide assessments, including general assessments with and without accommodations, alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and other assessments listed in paragraphs (a)(5)–(8) of the *Knowledge Development Outcomes* section of the priority.

(e) Increased awareness of national policymakers regarding how students with disabilities are included in and benefit from current and emerging approaches to State and districtwide assessment, including topics listed in paragraph (a) of the *Knowledge Development Outcomes* section of this priority.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements under *Priority 2.*

Priority 2: Targeted and Intensive Technical Assistance to States on the Analysis and Use of Diagnostic, Interim, and Summative Assessment Data to Support Implementation of States' Identified Measurable Results.

Background:

The purpose of this priority is to (1) assist those States that have a State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) related to assessment in analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to better achieve the SIMR as described in their

IDEA Part B State-Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs); and (2) assist State efforts to provide TA to LEAs in the analyzing and using State and districtwide assessment data for those States that have a SIMR related to assessment, to better achieve the SIMR, as appropriate.

As detailed in the background section for Priority 1, research indicates that SEAs and LEAs continue to face challenges in analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to improve instruction, learning, and accountability for students with disabilities. SEAs also need assistance analyzing State assessment data submitted as part of the SSIP and the SIMR in accordance with section 616 of IDEA and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance. Beginning in the IDEA Part B Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), States were required to provide, as part of Phase I of the SSIP, a statement of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through implementation of the SSIP, which is referred to as the SIMR for Children with Disabilities. States were required to establish ''measurable and rigorous'' targets for their SIMRs for each successive year of the SPP (FFYs 2014 through 2019) and will be required to do so for each year of the next SPP (FFYs 2020 through 2025) as part of their SPP/APR submissions. At least 36 States have focused their SIMRs on improving academic achievement as measured by assessment results for children with disabilities. These States will need assistance in analyzing and using State and districtwide assessment data to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities.

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to (1) assist those States that have a SIMR related to assessment in analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to better achieve the SIMR as described in their IDEA Part B SSIPs; and (2) assist State efforts to provide TA to LEAs in analyzing and using State and districtwide assessment data, for those States that have a SIMR related to assessment, to better achieve the SIMR, as appropriate.

The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Increased capacity of SEA personnel in States that have a SIMR related to assessment results to analyze and use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to better achieve the SIMR as described in the IDEA Part B SSIP, including using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to evaluate and improve educational policy, inform instructional programs, and improve instruction for students with disabilities;

(b) Increased capacity of SEA personnel to provide TA to LEAs to analyze and use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to improve instruction of students with disabilities and support the implementation of the SIMR; and

(c) Increased capacity of parents of students with disabilities to understand how students with disabilities are included in, and benefit from, participation in diagnostic, interim and summative assessments to improve instruction of students with disabilities and support implementation of the SIMR.

In addition to the programmatic requirements contained in both priorities, to be considered for funding applicants must meet the following application and administrative requirements,[2] which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Significance,'' how the proposed project will—

(1) Address the needs of SEAs and LEAs to analyze and use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities. To meet this requirement the applicant must—

(i) Present applicable national, State, and local data demonstrating the needs of SEAs and LEAs to analyze and use diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of current educational issues and policy initiatives related to analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities; and

(iii) Describe the current level of implementation related to analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities; and

(2) Improve the analysis and use of diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of project services,'' how the proposed project will—

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will—

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that products and services meet the needs of the intended recipients (*e.g.,* by creating materials in formats and languages accessible to the stakeholders served by the intended recipients);

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide—

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model [3] by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks: *www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel* and *www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.*

(4) Be based on current research and make use of evidence-based [4] practices (EBPs). To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) The current research on the effectiveness of analyzing and using

[2] Paragraph (b)(5)(ii) applies only to Priority 1. Paragraph (b)(5)(iv) applies only to Priority 2.

[3] Logic model (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (*i.e.,* the active ''ingredients'' that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes.

[4] For the purposes of this priority, ''evidence-based'' means, at a minimum, evidence that demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1), where a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities; and

(ii) How the proposed project will incorporate current EBPs in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How it proposes to identify or develop the knowledge base on analyzing and using diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities;

(ii) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,[5] which must identify the intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(iii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,[6] which must identify—

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach; and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,[7] which must identify—

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of SEA and LEA personnel to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the SEA and LEA levels;

(C) Its proposed plan for assisting SEAs (and LEAs, in conjunction with SEAs) to build or enhance training systems that include professional development based on adult learning principles and coaching;

(D) Its proposed plan for working with appropriate levels of the education system (*e.g.,* SEAs, regional TA providers, LEAs, schools, and families) to ensure that there is communication between each level and that there are systems in place to support the collection, analysis, and use of diagnostic, interim, and summative assessment data in instructional decision-making to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities; and

(E) Its proposed plan for collaborating and coordinating with Department-funded TA investments, where appropriate, in order to align complementary work and jointly develop and implement products and services to meet the purposes of the priorities;

(6) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes; and

(7) Develop a dissemination plan that describes how the applicant will systematically distribute information, products, and services to varied intended audiences, using a variety of dissemination strategies, to promote awareness and use of the Center's products and services.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of the project evaluation,'' include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator.[8] The evaluation plan must—

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of these requirements;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation, and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the annual performance report (APR) and at the end of Year 2 for the review process described under the heading, *Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project;* and

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a ''third-party'' evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel,'' how—

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications

[5] ''Universal, general TA'' means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

[6] ''Targeted, specialized TA'' means TA service based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

[7] ''Intensive, sustained TA'' means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA center staff and the TA recipient. ''TA services'' are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

[8] A ''third-party'' evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, nor have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of the management plan,'' how—

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements. The applicant must—

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative; [9]

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or virtually, during each year of the project period;

(iii) Two annual two-day trips, or virtually, to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

(iv) A one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, during the second year of the project period;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of five percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility;

(5) Ensure that annual project progress toward meeting project goals is posted on the project website; and

(6) Include, in Appendix A, two assurances. The first assurance is to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to a new award at the end of this award period, as appropriate. The second assurance is to ensure the applicant will track and report IDEA section 663 funds separately from IDEA section 611(i) funds. Please refer to Part II Award Information of this notice for more information about preparing the budget.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project:

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

(a) The recommendations of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts who have experience and knowledge in providing technical assistance to SEA and LEA personnel in including students with disabilities in assessments and accountability systems. This review will be conducted during a one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

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 proposed priorities and requirements. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to Absolute Priority 1 in this notice.

Program Authority: For Absolute Priority 1, 20 U.S.C. 1463 and 1481; for Absolute Priority 2, 20 U.S.C. 1411(c) and 1416(i).

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The NFP.

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 institutions of higher education (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: $1,750,000.

Estimated Available Funds under IDEA section 663: $1,000,000.

[9] OSEP has found that a minimum of a three-quarter time equivalency (0.75 FTE) in the role of project director (or divided between a half-time equivalency in the role of the project director and a quarter-time equivalency in the role of a co-project director) is necessary to ensure effective implementation of the management plan and that products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients.

Estimated Available Funds under IDEA section 616(i): $750,000.

Note: Applicants must submit a separate ED 524 form with a budget and budget narrative for Absolute Priority 1 only and a separate ED 524 form with a budget and budget narrative for Absolute Priority 2 only. The Secretary will reject any application that does not address all the elements of Absolute Priority 1 separately from the elements of Absolute Priority 2 and that does not include a separate budget and budget narrative for Absolute Priority 1, separate and distinct from a budget and budget narrative for Absolute Priority 2.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2022 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will reject and not review any application that proposes a budget for Absolute Priority 1 that exceeds $1,000,000 or Absolute Priority 2 that exceeds $750,000 for a single budget period of 12 months, and we will reject and not review any application that proposes a total budget that exceeds $1,750,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Department may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

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:* SEAs; LEAs, including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

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

b. *Indirect Cost Rate Information:* This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see *www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.*

c. *Administrative Cost Limitation:* This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to the Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. *Subgrantees:* A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Application Submission Instructions:* Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at *www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf,* which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. *Intergovernmental Review:* This competition 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. However, under 34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to make an award by the end of FY 2021.

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

4. *Recommended Page Limit:* The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 70 pages and (2) use 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, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are as follows:

(a) *Significance (10 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses; and

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

(b) *Quality of project services (35 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;

(ii) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework;

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

(iv) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services; and

(v) The extent to which the TA services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(c) *Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project;

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies;

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(d) *Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator;

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel;

(iii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;

(iv) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) *Quality of the management plan (20 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project;

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project; and

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. *Review and Selection Process:* We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. *Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:* In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. *Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:* Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions, and under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. *Integrity and Performance System:* If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards—that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant—before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds $10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed $10,000,000.

6. *In General:* In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with—

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in

alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 115–232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

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); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your 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 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. *Open Licensing Requirements:* Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. *Reporting:* (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) 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 multiyear 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 *www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.*

5. *Performance Measures:* For the purposes of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) and reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program. These measures are:

- *Program Performance Measure 1:* The percentage of technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.
- *Program Performance Measure 2:* The percentage of special education technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.
- *Program Performance Measure 3:* The percentage of all special education technical assistance and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.
- *Program Performance Measure 4:* The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.
- *Long-term Program Performance Measure:* The percentage of States receiving special education technical assistance and dissemination services regarding scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that successfully promote the implementation of those practices in school districts and service agencies.

Note: These measures apply only to activities funded under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program (*i.e.,* Absolute Priority 1), and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the Center meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the Center to report on such alignment in their annual and final performance reports.

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: Whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official

edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at *www.govinfo.gov.* At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at *www.federalregister.gov.* Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Katherine Neas,

Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2021–16855 Filed 8–3–21; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meetings

AGENCY: U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

ACTION: Sunshine Act Notice; Notice of Public Roundtable Agenda.

SUMMARY: 2020 EAVS and 2020 Elections Lessons Learned Roundtable.

DATES: Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. Eastern.

ADDRESSES: Virtual via Zoom.

The roundtable is open to the public and will be livestreamed on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission YouTube Channel: *https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpN6i0g2rlF4ITWhwvBwwZw.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristen Muthig, Telephone: (202) 897–9285, Email: *kmuthig@eac.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose: In accordance with the Government in the Sunshine Act (Sunshine Act), Public Law 94–409, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552b), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) will conduct a virtual roundtable discussion on the new Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) 2020 Comprehensive Report and ''Lessons Learned from the 2020 General Election'' report commissioned by the EAC.

Agenda: The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Commissioners will lead the discussion with two panels of speakers. The first panel will provide an overview of the 2020 EAVS and Policy Survey and the data outcomes. The second panel will include the authors of EAC commissioned ''Lessons Learned from the 2020 General Election'' report.

Previous EAVS reports are available on the EAC's studies and report web page: *https://www.eac.gov/research-and-data/studies-and-reports.* The 2020 EAVS will be available on that web page once it is finalized. The ''Lessons Learned from the 2020 General Election'' report will also be available on the EAC's website: *https://www.eac.gov.*

The full agenda will be posted in advance on the EAC website: *https://www.eac.gov.*

Background

Since 2004, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has conducted the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) following each federal general election. The EAVS asks all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories—American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—to provide data about the ways Americans vote and how elections are administered. Since 2008, this project has included a separate survey collecting information about state election laws, policies, and practices.

The EAVS provides the most comprehensive source of state and local jurisdiction-level data about election administration in the United States. Topics covered through EAVS data collection relate to voter registration and list maintenance, voting practices for overseas citizens and members of the armed forces serving away from home and other important issues related to voting and election administration.

The EAC commissioned Charles Stewart from MIT and John Fortier from the American Enterprise Institute to develop the ''Lessons Learned from the 2020 General Election'' report. This report draws on a wide variety of evidence and statistical sources to review a variety of topics that inform our understanding of how well the election was run: Shifting from in-person to mail balloting; managing mail and in-person voting; counting votes; paying for the election; voting technology; voter registration; and voter confidence.

Status

This roundtable discussion will be open to the public.

Amanda Joiner,

Associate Counsel, U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

[FR Doc. 2021–16874 Filed 8–3–21; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP21–476–000]

West Texas Gas, Inc.; West Texas Gas Utility, LLC; Notice of Applications and Establishing Intervention Deadline

Take notice that on July 20, 2021, West Texas Gas, Inc. (WTGI) and West Texas Gas Utility, LLC (WTGU–LLC), both located at 211 North Colorado, Midland, TX 79701, filed an application under sections 7(b) and 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA) and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations requesting authorization for: (1) WTGI to abandon approximately 152 miles of 12, 10, 6, and 4-inch diameter pipeline located in Texas and New Mexico; (2) WTGI to abandon the blanket certificate it was issued pursuant to Part 157, Subpart F of the Commission's regulations; (3) WTGU–LLC to acquire, own, and operate the existing pipeline facilities that are to be abandoned by WTGI; and (4) WTGU–LLC a blanket certificate pursuant to Part 157, Subpart F of the Commission's regulations. The applicants state that the requested authorizations are designed to facilitate an internal reorganization that will have no effect on existing customers, landowners, or the environment, and is otherwise required by the public convenience and necessity, all as more fully set forth in the application which is on file with the Commission and open for public inspection.

In addition to publishing the full text of this document in the **Federal Register**, the Commission provides all interested persons an opportunity to view and/or print the contents of this document via the internet through the Commission's Home Page (*http://ferc.gov*) using the ''eLibrary'' link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document. At this time, the Commission has suspended access to the Commission's Public Reference Room, due to the proclamation declaring a National Emergency concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID–19), issued