

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**

AGENCY: DOE.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 1996.

SUMMARY: This notice provides closing dates and other information regarding the transmittal of applications for fiscal year 1996 competitions under two programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

This notice supports the National Education Goals by improving understanding of how to enable children and youth with disabilities to reach higher levels of academic achievement. [CFDA No. 84.029A]

Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals With Disabilities Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program—Grants for Personnel Training is to increase the quantity and improve the quality of personnel available to serve infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, and appropriate nonprofit agencies.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR Part 318.

Priority

Absolute Priority 1—Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel To Serve Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth With Low-Incidence Disabilities (84.029A)

The priority for Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel to Serve Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth with Low-Incidence Disabilities in the notice of final priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register, applies to this competition.

Applications Available: May 10, 1996.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 19, 1996.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: August 19, 1996.

Estimated Average Size of Award: \$150,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 47.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.
Available Funds: In fiscal year 1996, approximately \$7,000,000 will be available to support an estimated 47 projects (grant awards) under this absolute priority (competition) for the first 12 months (year) of the projects. The total average award is estimated at approximately \$150,000. Multi-year projects will be level funded unless there are increases in costs attributable to significant changes in activity level, and funds are available.

For Applications and General Information Contact: Ernestine Jefferson, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Switzer Building, Room 3072, Washington, DC 20202-2651. Telephone: (202) 205-8761. FAX: (202) 205-9070. Internet: Ernestine_Jefferson@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953. Applications are available in alternative formats upon request.

For Technical Information Contact: Verna Hart, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3519, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-5392. FAX: (202) 205-9070. Internet: Verna_Hart@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-7381.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1431. [CFDA No. 84.237T]

Program for Children and Youth With Serious Emotional Disturbance

Purpose of Program: To support projects designed to improve special education and related services to children and youth with serious emotional disturbance. Types of projects that may be supported under the program include, but are not limited to, research, development, and demonstration projects. Funds may also be used to develop and demonstrate approaches to assist and prevent children with emotional and behavioral problems from developing serious emotional disturbance.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and other appropriate public and nonprofit private institutions or agencies.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR Part 328.

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

Priority

Absolute Priority—Center To Promote Collaboration and Communication of Effective Practices for Children With, or At Risk of Developing, Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) (84.237T)

The priority Center to Promote Collaboration and Communication of Effective Practices for Children with, or At Risk of Developing, Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) in the notice of final priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register, applies to this competition.

Applications Available: May 10, 1996.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 19, 1996.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: August 19, 1996.

Estimated Average Size of Award: \$500,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Available Funds: In fiscal year 1996, approximately \$500,000 will be available to support one project (award) for the first 12 months (year) of the project. It is anticipated that the project will be level funded in years two through five, unless there are increases in costs attributable to significant changes in activity level, and funds are available.

For Applications and General Information Contact: Claudette Carey, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., room 3525, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-9864. FAX: (202) 20508105. Internet: Claudette_Carey@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953. Applications are available in alternative formats upon request.

For Technical Information Contact: Tom V. Hanley, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3526, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-8110. FAX: (202) 205-8105. Internet: Tom_Hanley@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953.

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

Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary

grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases); or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ed.gov/money.html>. However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the Federal Register.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1426.

Dated: May 3, 1996.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 96-11472 Filed 5-8-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priorities.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces final priorities for two programs administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Secretary may use these priorities in Fiscal Year 1996 and subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal assistance on identified needs to improve results for children with disabilities. These final priorities are intended to ensure wide and effective use of program funds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities take effect on June 10, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The name, address, and telephone number of the person at the Department to contact for information on each specific final priority is listed under that priority.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains three final priorities under two programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as follows: Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program (two final priorities); and the Program for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance (one final priority). The purpose of each program is stated separately under the title of that program.

On February 21, 1996, the Secretary published a notice of proposed priorities for these programs in the Federal Register (61 FR 6754-6758).

These final priorities support the National Education Goals by improving understanding of how to enable children and youth with disabilities to reach higher levels of academic achievement.

The publication of these priorities does not preclude the Secretary from proposing additional priorities, nor does it limit the Secretary to funding only these priorities, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements. Funding of particular projects depends on the availability of funds, and the quality of the applications received. Further, FY 1996 priorities could be affected by enactment of legislation reauthorizing these programs.

Note: This notice of final priorities does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under these competitions is published in a separate notice in this issue of the Federal Register.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed priority, fifty-six parties submitted comments. An analysis of the comments and of the changes in the proposed priorities follows. Technical and other minor changes—as well as suggested changes the Secretary is not legally authorized to make under the applicable statutory authority—are not addressed.

Priority—Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel To Serve Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth With Low-Incidence Disabilities

Comment: Forty-two commenters expressed concern about the severe shortage of personnel specifically prepared to work with children and youth who are deaf-blind. The commenters felt that the priority should place more emphasis on preparing personnel to work with children and youth with deaf-blindness by specifically identifying deaf-blindness as a low-incidence disability. Identification of deaf-blindness, the commenters note, is necessary to preserve the uniqueness of this disability and to address the lack of qualified personnel who have the specialized skills to effectively work with deaf-blind children.

Discussion: The proposed priority defined the term "low-incidence disability" to include a "visual or hearing impairment, or simultaneous visual and hearing impairments." The proposed definition did not specifically identify deaf-blindness as a low incidence disability, although deaf-blindness clearly satisfies the definition. The Secretary agrees with the

commenters that there is a need to train additional personnel to work with the deaf-blind and notes that the Office of Special Education Programs currently funds seven programs that prepare personnel to work with this population. Projects proposing to prepare special education, related service, and early intervention personnel to work with children who are deaf-blind are eligible to receive an award under the final priority and are encouraged to apply.

Changes: The proposed priority has been amended to clarify that children with deaf-blindness would be considered individuals with "low-incidence" disabilities.

Comment: Four commenters expressed concern that there is a shortage of teachers of blind and visually impaired children. The commenters recommended that the Department establish a separate priority for the training of personnel to work with blind and visually impaired children since training programs for teachers of the visually impaired are highly specialized and rigorous.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that there is a shortage of teachers of the visually impaired and blind. The Secretary emphasizes that the final priority, like the proposed priority, authorizes funding of projects designed to train teachers to work with the blind and visually impaired.

Changes: None.

Comment: Five commenters questioned the collaborative, multi-disciplinary aspects of the priority. Two commenters expressed concern that the priority required projects to demonstrate collaboration between their project and other departments and suggested that such collaboration is beyond the capability of most programs. In particular, one commenter stated that the complexity and intensity of training programs that prepare individuals to work with the visually impaired would make collaboration between these and other programs (e.g., nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and psychology) impossible. Other commenters mentioned the difficulty of an over-crowded curriculum and a lack of time and personnel as additional reasons for opposing the development of collaboration among programs. However, one commenter recommended that projects demonstrate partnerships with rehabilitation programs, independent living centers, employers, and other community resources that become critical as youth with low-incidence disabilities transition to employment.

Discussion: The priority encourages, but does not require, collaboration