

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Grant Applications under Part D, Subpart 2 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997**

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2000.

SUMMARY: This notice provides closing dates and other information regarding the transmittal of applications for FY 2000 competitions under five programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended. The five programs are: (1) Special Education—Research and Innovation to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (seven priorities); (2) Special Education—Personnel Preparation to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (four priorities); (3) Special Education—Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (two priorities); (4) Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities (five priorities); and (5) Special Education—Training and Information for Parents of Children with Disabilities (one priority).

This notice supports the National Education Goals by helping to improve results for children with disabilities.

Waiver of Rulemaking

It is generally the practice of the Secretary to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities. However, section 661(e)(2) of IDEA makes the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) inapplicable to the priorities in this notice.

General Requirements

(a) Projects funded under this notice must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in project activities (see section 606 of IDEA);

(b) Applicants and grant recipients funded under this notice must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see section 661(f)(1)(A) of IDEA);

(c) Projects funded under these priorities must budget for a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, D.C. during each year of the project;

(d) In a single application, an applicant must address only one absolute priority in this notice; and (e)

Part III of each application submitted under a priority in this notice, the application narrative, is where an applicant addresses the selection criteria that are used by reviewers in evaluating the application. An applicant must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than the number of pages listed in the "Page Limits" section under the applicable priority in this notice. An applicant must use the following standards: (1) A "page" is 8½" × 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). (2) All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs, must be double-spaced (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch). If using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch.

The page limit does not apply to Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); Part IV—the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, and letters of support. However, all of the application narrative must be included in Part III. If an application narrative uses a smaller print size, spacing, or margin that would make the narrative exceed the equivalent of the page limit, the application will not be considered for funding.

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

Information collection resulting from this notice has been submitted to OMB for review under the Paperwork Reduction Act and has been approved under control number 1820-0028, expiration date July 31, 2000.

Research and Innovation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities*Purpose of Program*

To produce, and advance the use of, knowledge to: (1) Improve services provided under IDEA, including the practices of professionals and others involved in providing those services to children with disabilities; and (2) improve educational and early intervention results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.

Eligible Applicants

State and local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, and; (b) The selection criteria for the priorities under this program are drawn from the EDGAR general selection criteria menu. The specific selection criteria for each priority are included in the funding application packet for the applicable competition.

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

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet one of the following priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Student—Initiated Research Projects (84.324B)

This priority provides support for short-term (up to 12 months) postsecondary student-initiated research projects focusing on special education and related services for children with disabilities and early intervention services for infants and toddlers, consistent with the purposes of the program, as described in Section 672 of the Act.

Projects must—

(a) Develop research skills in postsecondary students; and (b) Include a principal investigator who serves as a mentor to the student researcher while the project is carried out by the student.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded

up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 12 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$20,000 for the entire project period. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 25 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 2—Field-Initiated Research Projects (84.324C)

This priority provides support for a wide range of field-initiated research projects that support innovation, development, exchange, and use of advancements in knowledge and practice as described in section 672 of the Act including the improvement of early intervention, instruction, and learning for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.

Projects must—

(a) Prepare their procedures, findings, and conclusions in a manner that informs other interested researchers and is useful for advancing professional practice or improving programs and services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families; and

(b) Disseminate project procedures, findings, and conclusions to appropriate research institutes and technical assistance providers.

Invitational Priorities:

Within absolute priority 2 for FY 2000, we are particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities.

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give to an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

(a) Projects to address the specific problems of over-identification and under-identification of children with disabilities. (See section 672(a)(3) of the Act).

(b) Projects to develop and implement effective strategies for addressing inappropriate behavior of students with disabilities in schools, including strategies to prevent children with emotional and behavioral problems from developing emotional disturbances

that require the provision of special education and related services. (See section 672(a)(4) of the Act).

(c) Projects studying and promoting improved alignment and compatibility of general and special education reforms concerned with curriculum and instruction, evaluation and accountability, and administrative procedures. (See section 672(b)(2)(D) of the Act).

(d) Projects that advance knowledge about the coordination of education with health and social services. (See section 672(b)(2)(G) of the Act).

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: The majority of projects will be funded for up to 36 months. Only in exceptional circumstances—such as research questions that require repeated measurement within a longitudinal design—will projects be funded for more than 36 months, up to a maximum of 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$180,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 3—Initial Career Awards (84.324N)

Background:

There is a need to enable individuals in the initial phases of their careers to initiate and develop promising lines of research that would improve early intervention services for infants and toddlers, and special education and related services for children with disabilities. Support for research activities among individuals in the initial phases of their careers is intended to develop the capacity of the special education research community. This priority would address the additional need to provide support for a broad range of field-initiated research projects—focusing on the special education and related services for children with disabilities and early intervention for infants and toddlers—consistent with the purpose of the program as described in section 672 of the Act.

Priority: The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for the purpose of awarding grants to eligible applicants for the support of individuals in the initial phases of their careers to initiate and develop promising lines of research consistent with the purposes of the program. For purposes of this priority, the initial phase of an individual's career is considered to be the first three years after completing a doctoral program and graduating (e.g., for fiscal year 2000 awards, projects may support individuals who completed a doctoral program and graduated no earlier than the 1996–1997 academic year).

Projects must—

(a) Pursue a line of inquiry that reflects a programmatic strand of research emanating either from theory or a conceptual framework. The line of research must be evidenced by a series of related questions that establish directions for designing future studies extending beyond the support of this award. The project is not intended to represent all inquiry related to the particular theory or conceptual framework; rather, it is expected to initiate a new line or advance an existing one;

(b) In addition to involving individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project, as required by the Act, include, in design and conduct, sustained involvement with one or more nationally recognized experts having substantive or methodological knowledge and expertise relevant to the proposed research. The experts do not have to be at the same institution or

agency at which the project is located, but the interaction with the project must be sufficient to develop the capacity of the initial career researcher to effectively pursue the research into mid-career activities. At least 50 percent of the researcher's time must be devoted to the project;

(c) Prepare their procedures, findings, and conclusions in a manner that informs other interested researchers and is useful for advancing professional practice or improving programs and services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families; and

(d) Disseminate project procedures, findings, and conclusions to appropriate research institutes and technical assistance providers.

Invitational Priority:

Within absolute priority 3 for FY 2000, we are particularly interested in applications that meets the following invitational priority.

Projects that include in the design and conduct of the research project, a practicing teacher or clinician, in addition to the required involvement of nationally recognized experts.

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give to an application that meets the priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$75,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a

notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 30 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 4—Model Demonstration Projects for Children with Disabilities (84.324M)

This priority supports model demonstration projects that develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new or improved approaches for providing early intervention, special education, and related services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities, and students with disabilities who are pursuing post-school employment, postsecondary education or independent living goals. Projects supported under this priority are expected to be major contributors of models or components of models for service providers and for outreach projects funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Requirements for All Demonstration Projects:

A model demonstration project must—

(a) Develop and implement the model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data;

(b) Evaluate the model by using multiple measures of results to determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies; and

(c) Produce detailed procedures and materials that would enable others to replicate the model.

Federal financial participation for a project funded under this priority will not exceed 90 percent of the total annual costs of development, operation, and evaluation of the project (see section 661(f)(2)(A) of IDEA).

In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC mentioned in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, projects must budget for another meeting in Washington, DC to collaborate with the Federal project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, to share information and discuss model development, evaluation, and project implementation issues.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to

applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$150,000 (exclusive of any matching funds) for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limit: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 5—Outreach Projects for Children with Disabilities (84.324R)

This priority supports projects that will assist educational and other agencies in replicating proven models, components of models, and other exemplary practices that improve services for infants, toddlers, children with disabilities, and students with disabilities who are pursuing post-school employment, postsecondary education or independent living goals.

For the purposes of this priority, a "proven model" is a comprehensive description of a theory or system that, when applied, has been shown to be effective. "Exemplary practices" are effective strategies and methods used to deliver education, related or early intervention services. The models, components of models, or exemplary practices selected for outreach may include these developed for pre-service and in-service personnel preparation, and do not need to have been developed through projects funded under IDEA, or by the applicant.

Important elements of an outreach project include but are not limited to:

(a) Providing supporting data or other documentation in the application regarding the effectiveness of the model, components of a model, or exemplary practices selected for outreach;

(b) Selecting implementation sites in multiple regions within one State or multiple States and describing the criteria for their selection;

(c) Describing the expected costs, needed personnel, staff training, equipment, and sequence of implementation activities associated with the replication efforts, including a description of any modifications to the model or practice made by the sites;

(d) Including public awareness, product development and dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities as part of the implementation of the project; and

(e) Coordinating dissemination and replication activities conducted as part of outreach with dissemination projects, technical assistance providers, consumer and advocacy organizations, State and local educational agencies, and the lead agencies for Part C of IDEA, as appropriate.

Projects must prepare products from the project in formats that are useful for specific audiences, including parents, administrators, teachers, early intervention personnel, related services personnel, and individuals with disabilities. (See section 661(f)(2)(B) of IDEA).

Federal financial participation for a project funded under this priority will not exceed 90 percent of the total annual costs of development, operation, and evaluation of the project (see section 661(f)(2)(A) of IDEA).

In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC mentioned in the General Requirements section of this notice, projects must budget annually for another meeting in Washington, DC to collaborate with the Federal project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, to share information and discuss project implementation issues.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In

determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$150,000 (exclusive of any matching funds) for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 6—Research Institute To Enhance the Role of Special Education and Children With Disabilities in Education Policy Reform (84.324P)

Education reforms are often leveraged through enhanced accountability for students outcomes, school improvement, and personnel performance. Findings from the Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform indicate that inclusion of students with disabilities in these general accountability efforts is one of the major forces shaping reform of special education. IDEA reflects an increased emphasis on including students with disabilities in accountability systems by requiring their participation in general State and district-wide assessments. IDEA also requires States to establish indicators to use in assessing progress toward achieving goals that address the performance of children with disabilities on assessments, drop-out rates, and graduation rates.

Priority:

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for a research institute to study the role of special education and children with disabilities in educational policy reform, specifically initiatives designed to improve student performance through increased

accountability. A project funded under this priority must—

(a) Identify and review critical gaps in the current knowledge in the following areas:

(1) How broad education policy reforms that incorporate high-stakes accountability mechanisms include consideration of children with disabilities;

(2) The criteria for which special education has historically been held accountable and how these criteria have been assessed;

(3) How traditional education accountability mechanisms at both the systems level (e.g., State improvement planning and compliance monitoring, due process, and judicial resolution) and the individual child or student level (e.g., large-scale assessments provided with accommodations, alternate assessments, individualized education programs, individualized family services plans) have impacted outcomes for children with disabilities;

(4) How students with disabilities are affected by the recent large-scale, high stakes State and national accountability-based education policy reforms (e.g., State and district assessments, enhanced graduation and exiting requirements, governance and professional preparation and development reforms and other standards-based reform initiatives), including consideration of developed models of inclusive special education accountability (e.g., models developed by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and the National Center for Educational Outcomes); and

(5) How changes and reforms in special education might better align with and support such large-scale, high stakes State and national accountability-based education policy reforms.

(b) In consultation with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), design and conduct a strategic program of research that addresses knowledge gaps identified in paragraph (a) by:

(1) Conducting a rigorous research program that builds upon recent and current research on broad education policy reforms that incorporate high-stakes accountability mechanisms, including research by the recent Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform;

(2) Using a variety of methodologies designed to comprehensively examine the breadth of accountability mechanisms including how such mechanisms impact academic, functional, vocational, social, emotional and other outcomes for children and youth with disabilities;

(3) Conducting the program of research in settings that ensure that the impact of accountability-based education policy reforms on disabled minority, rural, low income, urban, limited English proficiency, immigrant, and migrant populations, will be examined; and

(4) Collaborating with other research institutions and studies and evaluations supported under IDEA, including the national assessment of special education activities (section 674(b) of IDEA).

(c) Design, implement, and evaluate a dissemination approach that links research to practice and promotes the use of current knowledge and ongoing research findings. This approach must:

(1) Develop linkages with Education Department technical assistance providers including the IDEA Linking Partnership technical assistance projects supported by OSEP to communicate research findings and distribute products; and

(2) Prepare the research findings and products from the project in formats that are useful for specific audiences, including general education researchers; and local, State, and national policymakers; as well as education practitioners.

(d) Fund at least five graduate students per year as research assistants who have concentrations in either education policy or disability issues.

(e) Meet with the OSEP project officer in the first four months of the project to review the program of research and dissemination approaches.

(f) In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC listed in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, budget for another annual two-day trip to Washington, DC to collaborate with the OSEP project officer by sharing information and discussing implementation and dissemination issues.

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

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of three experts selected by the Secretary. The services of the review team, including a two-day site visit to the grantee, are to be performed during the last half of the project's second year and may be included in that year's evaluation required under 34 CFR 75.590. Costs associated with the services to be performed by the review team must also be included in the project's budget for year two. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$6,000;

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

(c) The degree to which the project's design and methodology demonstrates the potential for advancing significant new knowledge.

Under this priority, the Secretary will make one award for a cooperative agreement with a project period of up to 60 months subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$700,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 70 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 7—Improving Post-School Outcomes: Identifying and Promoting What Works (84.324W)

Background:

With the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1983, a Federal initiative was begun to assist high school youth with disabilities in achieving their goals for adult life, including postsecondary

education, continuing education, competitive employment, and independent living. This initiative has continued to be defined and developed in legislation, research and practice; and to a large extent, has been the impetus for the shift in special education from an emphasis on process to one of achieving better results for children with disabilities. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded approximately 500 secondary transition, postsecondary education, and dropout prevention and intervention projects since 1984 to develop, refine, and validate effective programs and practices.

The purpose of this priority is to fund one project that will —

(a) Synthesize the professional literature on improving academic results, secondary transition practice, postsecondary educational supports, and dropout prevention and intervention;

(b) Analyze important features, findings and outcomes of projects in these areas, including but not limited to, projects funded by OSEP, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR); and

(c) Summarize, proactively disseminate, and publicize the results of the synthesis and analysis in an effort to inform policy and practice.

Priority:

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority to support a project that will identify and promote effective policy and practice that will improve results for secondary-aged youth and young adults with disabilities. At a minimum, this project must—

(a) Synthesize the extant professional knowledge base in each of four areas:

- Improving academic results
- Secondary transition practice
- Postsecondary educational supports, and
- Dropout prevention and intervention, including factors associated with early school exit for students with disabilities. Each synthesis must:

(1) Develop a conceptual framework around which research questions will be posed and the synthesis conducted.

Develop these research questions with input from potential consumers of the synthesis to enhance the usability and validity of the findings. Consumers include technical assistance providers, policymakers, educators, other relevant practitioners, individuals with disabilities, and parents;

(2) Identify and implement rigorous social science methods for synthesizing the professional knowledge base (including but not limited to, integrative reviews (Cooper, 1982), best-evidence synthesis (Slavin, 1989), meta-analysis (Glass, 1977), multi-vocal approach (Ogawa & Malen, 1991), and National Institute of Mental Health consensus development program (Huberman, 1977));

(3) Implement procedures for locating and organizing the extant literature and ensure that these procedures address and guard against potential threats to the integrity of each synthesis, including the generalization of findings;

(4) Establish criteria and procedures for judging the appropriateness of each synthesis;

(5) Meet with OSEP to review the project's methodological approach for conducting the synthesis prior to initiating the synthesis;

(6) Analyze and interpret the professional knowledge base, including identification of general trends in the literature, points of consensus and conflict among the findings, and areas of evidence where the literature base is lacking. The interpretation of the literature base must address the contributions of the findings for improving policy, transition practice and drop out prevention and intervention, and research priorities in the four focus areas; and

(7) Submit a draft report of the synthesis in each of the focus areas, and based on reviews by OSEP staff and potential consumers, revise and submit a final report.

(b) Conduct an analysis to identify effective approaches and practices of the important features, findings and outcomes of projects (including, but not limited to, projects funded by OSEP, RSA, NIDRR, OVAE and OPE) in each of four areas:

- Improving academic results
- Secondary transition practice
- Postsecondary educational supports, and
- Dropout prevention and intervention, incorporating the following activities in each analysis:

(1) Identify the relevant projects for each analysis. Describe and implement procedures for locating and organizing relevant information on the individual projects, including sampling techniques, if appropriate;

(2) Articulate a research-based conceptual framework to guide the selection of variables to be examined within and across projects, including demographics, target population, purpose, activities, outcomes, and

barriers. Pose research questions around which the analysis will be conducted. Develop these research questions with input from potential consumers of the information to enhance the usability and validity of the research findings. Consumers include technical assistance providers, policymakers, educators, other relevant practitioners, individuals with disabilities, and parents;

(3) Identify and implement rigorous methods for conducting each analysis;

(4) Meet with OSEP to review the project's research questions and methodological approach for conducting the analysis prior to initiation;

(5) Analyze and interpret the findings of the analysis, including similarities and differences among project goals, activities, staffing and costs; points of consensus and conflict among the findings or outcomes of the demonstrations, and the characteristics of model programs that hold significant promise for the field based upon outcome data. In addition, the analysis must link to the synthesis on this topic and provide direction for future policy formulation, practice implementation, and research priorities; and

(6) Submit a draft report of the analysis in each of the focus areas, and based on reviews by OSEP staff and potential consumers, revise and submit a final report.

(c) Summarize, proactively disseminate, and publicize the results of this analysis to inform policy and practice, incorporating the following activities into the project design:

(1) Develop and implement a communication plan that includes the types of products to be created, proposed audiences, procedures for adapting the form and content of the products based upon the audience or audiences, vehicles for dissemination, and timelines. In particular, address how the project will provide updated information at regular intervals to each of the following audiences: OSERS-funded technical assistance and dissemination projects, the Parent Training and Information Centers; and the State Improvement program grantees. The project may propose collaborative dissemination activities with one or more of these projects; and

(2) Meet with OSEP to review the project's communication plan prior to implementation.

In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC listed in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, projects must budget for another meeting each year in Washington, DC with OSEP to share information and discuss project implementation issues.

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

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of three experts selected by the Secretary. The services of the review team, including a two-day site visit to the grantee, are to be performed during the last half of the project's second year and may be included in that year's evaluation required under 34 CFR 75.590. Costs associated with the services to be performed by the review team must also be included in the project's budget for year two. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$6,000;

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

(c) The degree to which the project's design and methodology demonstrates the potential for advancing significant new knowledge.

Under this priority, the Secretary will make one award for a cooperative agreement with a project period of up to 60 months subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards.

Competitive Preferences: Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$500,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum

amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 60 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Special Education—Personnel Preparation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities (CFDA 84.325)

Purpose of Program

The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for qualified personnel in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education, to work with children with disabilities; and (2) to ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful, that are needed to serve those children.

Eligible Applicants

Institutions of higher education.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, and 97; (b) The selection criteria for the priorities under this program are drawn from the EDGAR general selection menu. The specific selection criteria for each priority are included in the funding application packet for the applicable competition.

Additional Requirement for All Personnel Preparation Program Priorities

Student financial assistance is authorized only for the preservice preparation of special education and related services personnel who serve children ages 3 through 21, early intervention personnel who serve infants and toddlers, and leadership personnel who work in these areas.

Priority

Under section 673 of the Act and 34 CFR 75.105 (c)(3) we consider only applications that meet one of the following priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel To Serve Infants, Toddlers, and Children With Low-Incidence Disabilities (84.325A)

Background:

The national demand for educational, related services, and early intervention personnel to serve infants, toddlers, and children with low-incidence disabilities exceeds available supply. However, because of the small number of these personnel needed in each State, institutions of higher education and individual States have not given priority to programs that train personnel to work with those with low-incidence disabilities. Moreover, of the programs that do exist, many are not producing graduates with the prerequisite skills needed to meet the needs of the low-incidence disability population. Thus, Federal support is required to ensure an adequate supply of personnel to serve children with low-incidence disabilities and to improve the quality of appropriate training programs so that graduates possess necessary prerequisite skills.

Priority: The Secretary establishes an absolute priority to support projects that increase the number and quality of personnel to serve children with low-incidence disabilities. This priority supports projects that provide preservice preparation of special educators, early intervention personnel, and related services personnel at the associate, baccalaureate, master's, or specialist level.

A preservice program is a program that leads toward a degree, certification, or professional licence or standard and may include the preparation of currently employed personnel who are seeking additional degrees, certifications, endorsements, or licences.

The term "low-incidence disability" means a visual or hearing impairment, or simultaneous visual and hearing impairments, a significant cognitive impairment, or any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed in order for children with that impairment to receive early intervention services or a free appropriate public education.

Applicants may propose to prepare one or more of the following types of personnel:

(a) Special educators, including early childhood, speech and language, adapted physical education, and assistive technology personnel that work with children with low-incidence disabilities;

(b) Related services personnel who provide developmental, corrective, and other support services that assist children with low-incidence disabilities to benefit from special education. Both comprehensive programs, and specialty components within a broader discipline,

that prepare personnel for work with the low-incidence population may be supported; or

(c) Early intervention personnel who serve children birth through age 2 (until the third birthday) with low-incidence disabilities and their families. For the purpose of this priority, all children who require early intervention services are considered low-incidence. Early intervention personnel include persons who train, or serve as consultants to, service providers and case managers.

The Secretary particularly encourages projects that address the needs of more than one State, provide multi-disciplinary training, and provide for collaboration among several training institutions and between training institutions and public schools. In addition, projects that foster successful coordination between special education and regular education professional development programs to meet the needs of children with low-incidence disabilities in inclusive settings are encouraged.

Each project funded under this absolute priority must—

(a) Prepare personnel to address the specialized needs of children with low-incidence disabilities from different cultural and language backgrounds by:

(1) Determining the additional competencies needed for personnel to understand and work with culturally diverse populations; and

(2) Infusing those competencies into early intervention, special education and related services training programs.

(b) Incorporate research-based practices in the design of the program and the curricula;

(c) Incorporate curricula that focus on improving results for children with low-incidence disabilities;

(d) Promote high expectations for students with low-incidence disabilities and foster access to the general curriculum in the regular classroom, wherever appropriate; and

(e) If the project prepares personnel to provide services to visually impaired or blind children that can be appropriately provided in Braille, prepare those individuals to provide those services in Braille.

To be considered for an award, an applicant must satisfy the following requirements contained in section 673(f)–(h) of the Act—

(a) Demonstrate, with letters from one or more States that the project proposes to serve, that States need personnel in the area or areas in which the applicant proposes to provide preparation, as identified in the States' comprehensive systems of personnel development (CSPD) under Parts B and C of the Act;

(b) Demonstrate that it has engaged in a cooperative effort with one or more State educational agencies or, if appropriate, lead agencies for providing early intervention services, to plan, carry out, and monitor the project;

(c) Provide letters from one or more States stating that they intend to accept successful completion of the proposed personnel preparation program as meeting State personnel standards for serving children with disabilities or serving infants and toddlers with disabilities;

(d) Meet State and professionally-recognized standards for the preparation of special education, related services, or early intervention personnel; and

(e) Ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project will subsequently provide, special education and related services to children with disabilities, or early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities, for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received or repay all or part of the cost of that assistance. Applicants must describe how they will notify scholarship recipients of this work or repay requirement, which is specified under section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1473(h)(1)). The requirement must be implemented consistent with section 673(h)(1) of the Act and with applicable regulations in effect prior to the awarding of grants under this priority. Applicants must designate at least 55 percent of the budget for student support or provide sufficient justification for any designation less than 55 percent for student support.

Under this absolute priority, the Secretary plans to award approximately:

- 60 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in special education, including early childhood educators;
- 10 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in educational interpreter services for hearing impaired individuals;
- 15 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in related services, other than educational interpreter services; and
- 15 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in early intervention.

Competitive Priority:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for recruiting

students from underrepresented populations. Up to five (5) of these 10 points would be based on the extent to which the application includes effective strategies for recruiting students with disabilities.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 20 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 120 points.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$300,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 2—Preparation of Leadership Personnel (84.325D)

This priority supports projects that conduct the following preparation activities for leadership personnel:

(a) Preparing personnel at the doctoral, and postdoctoral levels of training to administer, enhance, or to provide special education, related or early intervention services for children with disabilities; or

(b) Masters and specialist level programs in special education administration.

Projects funded under this absolute priority must—

Prepare personnel to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations by;

(a) Determining the additional competencies for personnel needed to understand and work with culturally diverse populations; and

(b) Infusing those competencies into early intervention, special education and related services training programs.

To be considered for an award, an applicant must satisfy the following requirements contained in section 673(f)–(h) of the Act—

(a) Demonstrate, with letters from one or more States that the project proposes to serve, that States need personnel in the area or areas in which the applicant proposes to provide preparation, as identified in the States' comprehensive systems of personnel development under Parts B and C of the Act;

(b) Demonstrate that it has engaged in a cooperative effort with one or more State educational agencies or, if appropriate, lead agencies for providing early intervention services, to plan, carry out, and monitor the project;

(c) Meet State and professionally-recognized standards for the preparation of leadership personnel in special education, related services or early intervention fields; and

(d) Ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project will subsequently perform work related to their preparation for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received or repay all or part of the cost of that assistance. Applicants must describe how they will notify scholarship recipients of this work or repay requirement, which is specified under section 673(h)(2) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1473(h)(2)). The requirement must be implemented consistently with section 673(h)(2) of the Act and with applicable regulations in effect prior to the awarding of grants under this priority. Applicants must designate at least 65 percent of the budget for student support or provide sufficient justification for any designation less than 65 percent for student support.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for recruiting students from underrepresented populations. Up to five (5) of these 10 points would be based on the extent to which the application includes effective strategies for recruiting students with disabilities.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section

606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 20 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 120 points.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 3—Preparation of Personnel in Minority Institutions (84.325E)

This priority supports awards to institutions of higher education with minority student enrollments of at least 25 percent, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, for the purpose of preparing personnel to work with children with disabilities. Awards must be made consistent with the objectives in section 673(a) of the Act.

Projects funded under this absolute priority must —

Prepare personnel to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations by;

(a) Determining the additional competencies needed for personnel to understand and work with culturally diverse populations; and

(b) Infusing those competencies into early intervention, special education, and related services training programs.

The Secretary particularly encourages projects that:

(a) Have effective strategies for recruiting and retraining students from

culturally and linguistically diverse populations;

(b) Focus on providing student financial support; and

(c) Include student support systems such as tutors, mentors, and other innovative practices.

This program supports projects at all levels, from the associate degree through the post-doctoral level.

To be considered for an award, an applicant must satisfy the following requirements contained in section 673(f)-(h) of the Act—

(a) Demonstrate, with letters from one or more States that the project proposes to serve, that States need personnel in the area or areas in which the applicant proposes to provide preparation, as identified in the States' comprehensive system of personnel development under Parts B and C of the Act;

(b) Demonstrate that it has engaged in a cooperative effort with one or more State educational agencies or, if appropriate, lead agencies for providing early intervention services, to plan, carry out, and monitor the project;

(c) Provide letters from one or more States stating that they intend to accept successful completion of the proposed personnel preparation program as meeting State personnel standards for serving children with disabilities or serving infants and toddlers with disabilities;

(d) Meet State and professionally-recognized standards for the preparation of special education, related services, or early intervention personnel, if the purpose of the project is to assist personnel in obtaining degrees; and

(e) Ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project will subsequently provide special education and related services to children with disabilities, or early intervention services for infants and toddlers, for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received or repay all or part of the cost of that assistance. Applicants must describe how they will notify scholarship recipients of this work or repay requirement, which is specified under section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1473(h)(1)). The requirement must be implemented consistently with section 673(h)(1) of the Act and with applicable regulations in effect prior to the awarding of grants under this priority. Applicants must designate at least 55 percent of the budget for student support or provide sufficient justification for any designation less than 55 percent for student support.

Competitive Preference: Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under

34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) to applicant institutions that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

(a) Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for recruiting students from underrepresented populations. Up to five (5) of these 10 points would be based on the extent to which the application includes effective strategies for recruiting students with disabilities.

(b) Up to ten (10) points to applicant institutions that have not received an FY 1999 or FY 2000 award under the IDEA personnel preparation program.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences applicants can be awarded up to a total of 30 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting all of these competitive preferences could earn a maximum total of 130 points.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 4—Improving the Preparation of Personnel To Serve Children With High-Incidence Disabilities (84.325H)

Background: State agencies, university training programs, local schools, and other community-based agencies and organizations confirm both the importance and the challenge of improving training programs for

personnel to serve children with high-incidence disabilities and of meeting the staffing needs of localities experiencing chronic shortages of these personnel.

This priority is intended to improve personnel preparation programs throughout the Nation and help meet shortages in particular areas. The project requirements, in conjunction with the identified competitive priorities, also reflect a number of important factors that are common to effective personnel preparation programs. These factors are:

(a) Collaboration among governmental, educational and community-based organizations on the Federal, State, and local levels in meeting personnel needs;

(b) Field-based training opportunities for students to use acquired knowledge and skills in schools reflecting wide contextual student diversity, and high poverty schools;

(c) Multi-disciplinary training of teachers, including regular and special education teachers, and related services personnel;

(d) Coordinating personnel preparation programs aimed at addressing chronic personnel shortages with State practices for addressing such needs;

(e) Addressing shortages of teachers in particular geographic and content areas;

(f) Integration of research based curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and practices; and

(g) Meeting the needs of trainees, and of children with disabilities, from diverse backgrounds.

Priority: Consistent with section 673(e) of the Act, the purpose of this priority is to develop or improve, and implement, programs that provide preservice preparation for special and regular education teachers and related services personnel in order to meet the diverse needs of children with high incidence disabilities (such as mild or moderate mental retardation, speech or language impairments, emotional disturbance, or specific learning disability) and to enhance the supply of well-trained personnel to serve these children in areas of chronic shortage. Training of para-professionals to serve children with high-incidence disabilities is authorized under this priority. (Training of early intervention personnel is addressed under the preparation of personnel to serve children with low-incidence disabilities, and therefore, is not included as part of this priority).

A preservice program is defined as one that leads toward a degree, certification, or professional licence or standard, and may be supported at the associate, baccalaureate, master's or

specialist level. A preservice program may include the preparation of currently employed personnel who are seeking additional degrees, certifications, endorsements, or licences.

Projects funded under this priority must—

(a) Develop or improve, and implement, partnerships that are mutually beneficial to grantees and LEAs in order to promote continuous improvement of preparation programs;

(b) Use research-based curriculum and pedagogy to prepare personnel who are able to assist students with disabilities in achieving in the general education curricula and able to improve student outcomes;

(c) Utilize effective instructional strategies and provide practice opportunities for students on how special education, related services, and regular education personnel can collaborate to improve results for children with disabilities;

(d) Include field-based training opportunities for students in schools reflecting wide contextual and student diversity, including high poverty schools; and

(e) Prepare personnel to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations by:

(1) Determining the additional competencies needed for personnel to understand and work with culturally diverse populations; and

(2) Infusing those competencies into special education and related services training programs.

An applicant must satisfy the following requirements contained in section 673(f)-(h) of the Act:

(a) Demonstrate, with letters from one or more States that the project proposes to serve, that States need personnel in the area or areas in which the applicant proposes to provide preparation, as identified in the States' comprehensive systems of personnel development (CSPD) under Part B of the Act;

(b) Demonstrate that it has engaged in a cooperative effort with one or more State educational agencies to plan, carry out, and monitor the project;

(c) Provide letters from one or more States stating that they intend to accept successful completion of the proposed personnel preparation program as meeting State personnel standards for serving children with disabilities;

(d) Meet State and professionally-recognized standards for the preparation of special education and related services personnel; and

(e) Ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project will subsequently

provide special education and related services to children with disabilities, for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received or repay all or part of the cost of that assistance. Applicants must describe how they will notify scholarship recipients of this work or repay requirement, which is specified under section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1473(h)(1)). The requirement must be implemented consistently with section 673(h)(1) of the Act and with applicable regulations in effect prior to the awarding of grants under this priority. Applicants must designate at least 65 percent of the budget for student support or provide sufficient justification for any designation less than 65 percent for student support.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority we will give the following competitive preferences under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority.

(a) Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for recruiting students from underrepresented populations. Up to five (5) of these ten points would be based on the extent to which the application includes effective strategies for recruiting students with disabilities.

(b) Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application demonstrates that the majority of the graduates of its program consistently enter jobs in which they serve children with disabilities in high poverty—rural or inner city—areas.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences applicants can be awarded up to a total of 30 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting all of these competitive preferences could earn a maximum total of 130 points.

Project Period: The maximum funding period for awards is 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 in Federal funding for any single budget period of twelve months.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Special Education—Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities

Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and information through such mechanisms as institutes, regional resource centers, clearinghouses and programs that support States and local entities in building capacity, to improve early intervention, educational, and transitional services and results for children with disabilities and their families, and address systemic-change goals and priorities.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, and 97; (b) The selection criteria for the priorities under this program are drawn from the EDGAR general selection criteria menu. The specific selection criteria for each priority are included in the funding application packet for the applicable competition.

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

Eligible Applicants

State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, other public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, outlying areas, freely associated States, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, and for-profit organizations.

Priority:

Under section 685 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet the following priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Projects for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind (84.326C)

Background: IDEA includes provisions designed to ensure that each child with a disability is provided a

high-quality individual program of services to meet his or her developmental and educational needs. For children who are deaf and blind to receive those services, intensive technical assistance must be afforded State and local educational agencies regarding appropriate educational placements, accommodations, environmental adaptations, support services and other matters.

In addition, given the severity of deaf-blindness and the low-incidence nature of this population, many early intervention programs or local school districts lack personnel with the training or experience to serve children who are deaf-blind. For these reasons, the following priority supports projects that provide specialized technical assistance regarding the provision of early intervention, special education, related, and transitional services to children who are deaf-blind.

In FY 1999, 48 awards were made under this priority. Of the 48 awards issued, 43 were authorized for a 48-month project period; the remaining 5 awards, which serve Nebraska, Oregon, New York, Rhode Island and South Dakota, were authorized for a 12-month period. The purpose of this notice is to invite applications for FY 2000 awards to support projects which will serve one or more of these 5 States and be authorized for up to 36 months.

Priority:

(a) This priority supports projects that build the capacity of State and local agencies to facilitate the achievement of improved outcomes by children who are deaf-blind, and their families. This priority specifically supports State and Multi-State Projects.

(b) State and Multi-State Projects provide technical assistance, information, and training that address the early intervention, special education, related services, and transitional service needs of children with deaf-blindness and enhance State capacity to improve services and outcomes for those children and their families. Projects must:

- (1) Identify specific project goals and objectives in providing an appropriate array of technical assistance services;
- (2) Facilitate systemic-change goals and school reform;
- (3) Enhance State capacity to improve services and outcomes for deaf-blind children and their families;
- (4) Provide technical assistance, information, and training that:

- (i) Focus on implementation of research-based, effective practices that result in appropriate assessment, placement, and support services to all children who are deaf-blind in the State;

- (ii) Help administrators develop and operate effective State and local programs for serving children who are deaf-blind;

- (iii) Ensure that service providers have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve children who are deaf-blind; and

- (iv) Address the needs of families of children who are deaf-blind;

- (5) Maintain basic demographic information on children with deaf-blindness in the State for program planning and evaluation purposes. The data should include hearing, vision, etiology, educational placement, living arrangement, and other information necessary to ensure a high quality program that meets the needs of the State or States served by the project;

- (6) Maintain an assessment of current needs of the State and utilize data to determine State-wide priorities for technical assistance services across all age ranges;

- (7) Develop and implement procedures to evaluate the impact of program activities on services and outcomes for children with deaf-blindness and their families, and on increasing State and local capacity to provide services and facilitate improved outcomes. The procedures must provide for—

- (i) Evaluating project goals and objectives, and the effectiveness of project strategies relative to those goals and objectives; and

- (ii) Including measures of change in outcomes for children with deaf-blindness and other indicators that document actual benefits of conducting the project;

- (8) Facilitate ongoing coordination and collaboration with State and local educational agencies, as well as other relevant agencies and organizations responsible for providing services to children who are deaf-blind by —

- (i) Promoting service integration that enables children with deaf-blindness to receive services in natural environments and inclusive settings, as appropriate; and

- (ii) Encouraging systemic change efforts for addressing the needs of children with deaf-blindness by improving education opportunities and inter-agency cooperation, and reducing duplication of effort;

- (9) Establish and maintain an advisory committee to assist in promoting project activities. Each committee must include at least one individual with deaf-blindness, a parent of a child with deaf-blindness, a representative of each State educational agency and each State lead agency under Part C of IDEA in the State (or States) served by the project, and a

limited number of professionals with training and experience in serving children with deaf-blindness; and

(10) In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC listed in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, budget for another annual two-day trip to Washington, DC to collaborate with the OSEP project officer by sharing information and discussing implementation issues.

The Secretary may make awards under this priority to support single or multi-State projects. A State may be served by only one supported project.

The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the funding level for each award for a single or multi-State project award:

- (i) The total number of children birth through age 21 in the State;
- (ii) The number of children with deaf-blindness in the State;
- (iii) The State per pupil cost; and
- (iv) The quality of the application submitted.

Funds awarded under this priority may not be used for direct early intervention, special education, or related services provided under Parts B and C of IDEA.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Estimated Range: The estimated range of awards for State and Multi-State projects is \$40,000–\$550,000.

Maximum Project Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application for a State and Multi-State project that proposes a budget exceeding \$550,000 for any single

budget period of 12 months. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 2—Outreach Services to Minority Entities To Expand Research Capacity (84.326M)

Background:

The Congress has found that the Federal Government must be responsive to the growing needs of an increasingly more diverse society and that a more equitable distribution of resources is essential for the Federal Government to meet its responsibility to provide an equal educational opportunity for all individuals.

The opportunity for full participation in awards for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other institutions of higher education with minority enrollments of at least 25 percent (OMIs) is essential if we are to take full advantage of the human resources we have to improve results for children with disabilities.

This priority focuses on assisting HBCUs and OMIs to prepare scholars for careers in research on early intervention, special education, and related services for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities, consistent with the purposes of the program, described in section 672 of the Act. This preparation must consist of engaging both faculty and students at HBCUs and OMIs in special education research activities. The activities focus on an area of critical need that has material application in today's changing environment and will likely be the subject of future research efforts—the *special education of children in urban and high poverty schools*. By building a cadre of experienced researchers on this important topic, the chances for increased participation in awards for grants, cooperative agreements and contracts by HBCUs and OMIs will be more likely.

The association between socioeconomic status and enrollment in special education has been well-documented. Available data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) show that 68 percent of students in special education live in a household where the income is less than \$25,000

per year versus 39 percent of the general youth population.

This association is heightened in urban school districts and, to a lesser extent, rural districts. NLTS data reveal that only 34 percent of students in special education live in suburban school districts compared to 48 percent of all students. Data from the Office for Civil Rights indicate that 30 percent of all inner-city students live in poverty compared to 18 percent of students in non-inner-city areas.

Urban school districts face a variety of unique challenges in meeting the educational needs of their students. Their schools often have high per student costs and limited financial resources. Their students are disproportionately poor and the population of individuals with limited English proficiency is among the fastest growing populations with special needs in some of these districts. This disproportionate representation of poor children in special education is also likely to be uniquely influenced by culturally diverse and urban settings, posing both opportunities and problems in the provision of special education services.

Priority:

This priority supports a project whose purpose is to increase the participation of HBCUs and OMIs in discretionary research and development grant activities authorized under IDEA, and to increase the capacity of individuals at these institutions to conduct research and development activities in early intervention, special education, and related services. The project must implement Congress' direction in section 661(d)(2)(A)(i) to provide outreach and technical assistance to these institutions to increase their participation in competitions for research, demonstration and outreach grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts funded under the IDEA. Activities must include:

(a) Conducting research activities at HBCUs and OMIs as explained later in this notice that link scholars at HBCUs and OMIs with researchers at institutions with an established research capacity in a mentoring relationship to develop both individual and institutional research capacity at those HBCUs and OMIs with a demonstrated need for capacity development.

(b) Providing linkages between HBCUs and OMIs with a demonstrated need for capacity development and institutions with an established research capacity to provide opportunities for researchers at those HBCUs and OMIs to develop first-hand experience in the

grants and contracts application process.

(c) Providing outreach and technical assistance to doctoral students at HBCUs and OMIs to increase their participation in competitions for grant awards to support student-initiated research in early intervention, special education, and related services.

(d) Establishing a cooperative partnership with the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project (CFDA 84.133A-15) funded under section 21(b)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. This project awarded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, was established to improve the quality and utility of research related to minority individuals with disabilities by (1) building capacity of researchers, especially those from minority backgrounds, to conduct disability research, especially related to rehabilitation of minorities, and (2) enhancing knowledge and awareness of issues related to minority individuals with disabilities among disability and rehabilitation researchers generally.

All research activities must be conducted for the purpose of capacity building. The research project must include one or more components focused on issues related to improving the delivery of special education services to, and educational results for, children with disabilities in urban and high poverty schools. Other possible research topics may include:

(a) Effective intervention strategies that make a difference in the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities;

(b) Practices to promote the successful inclusion of children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;

(c) Strategies for establishing high expectations for children with disabilities and increasing their participation in the general curriculum provided to all children;

(d) Strategies for promoting effective parental participation in the educational process, especially among parents who have difficulty in participating due to linguistic, cultural, or economic differences;

(e) Effective disciplinary approaches, including behavioral management strategies, for ensuring a safe and disciplined learning environment;

(f) Strategies to improve educational results for students with disabilities in secondary education settings and promote their successful transition to postsecondary settings; or

(g) Effective practices for promoting the coordination of special education services with health and social services

for children with disabilities and their families.

The project must ensure that findings are communicated in appropriate formats for researchers. The project must also ensure that findings of importance to other audiences, such as teachers, administrators, and parents, are made available to the Department of Education's technical assistance, training, and dissemination projects for distribution to those audiences.

The project must demonstrate experience and familiarity in research on children with disabilities in urban and high poverty schools with predominantly minority enrollments. The project must also demonstrate experience in capacity development in special education research, as well as a thorough understanding of the strengths and needs of HBCUs and OMIs.

In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC listed in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, the project must budget for another annual two-day trip to Washington, DC to collaborate with the Federal project officer and other projects funded under this priority by sharing information and discussing implementation, and dissemination issues, including the carrying out of cross-project dissemination activities.

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

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of three experts selected by the Secretary. The services of the review team, including a two-day site visit to the grantee, are to be performed during the last half of the project's second year and may be included in that year's evaluation required under 34 CFR 75.590. Costs associated with the services to be performed by the review team must also be included in the project's budget for year two. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$6,000;

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

(c) The degree to which the project's design and methodology demonstrates the potential for advancing significant new knowledge.

Under this priority, the Secretary will make one award for a cooperative agreement with a project period of up to 60 months subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a) for continuation awards.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Awarded: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$1,000,000 for any single budget period of 12 months to support one cooperative agreement. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 75 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Technology and Media Services for Individuals With Disabilities (CFDA 84.327)

Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to promote the development, demonstration, utilization of technology and to support educational media activities designed to be of educational value to children with disabilities. This program also provides support for some captioning, video description, and cultural activities.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, and 97; (b) The selection criteria for the priorities under this program are drawn from the EDGAR general selection criteria menu. The specific selection criteria for each priority are

included in the funding application packet for the applicable competition.

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

Eligible Applicants

State and local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Priority

Under section 687 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the following priority:

Absolute Priority 1—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities (84.327A)

The purpose of this priority is for the support of projects that—

(a) Select and describe a technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the following purposes for early intervention, preschool, elementary, middle school or high school students with disabilities: (1) Improving the results of education or early intervention; (2) improving access to and participation in the general curriculum, or appropriate activities for preschool children; and (3) improving accountability and participation in educational reform. The technology-based approach must be an innovative combination of a new technology and additional materials and methodologies that enable the technology to achieve educational purposes for students with disabilities;

(b) Justify the approach on the basis of research or theory that supports the effectiveness of the technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (a);

(c) Clearly identify and conduct work in *ONE* of the following phases:

(1) *Phase 1—Development:* Projects funded under Phase 1 must develop and refine a technology-based approach, and test its feasibility for use with students with disabilities. Activities may include development, adaptation, and refinement of technology, curriculum materials, or instructional methodologies. Activities must include formative evaluation. The primary product of Phase 1 should be a promising technology-based approach that is suitable for field-based evaluation of effectiveness.

(2) *Phase 2—Research on Effectiveness:* Projects funded under Phase 2 must select a promising

technology-based approach that has been developed in a manner consistent with Phase 1, and subject the approach to rigorous field-based research and evaluation to determine effectiveness and feasibility in educational or early intervention settings. Approaches studied in Phase 2 may have been developed with previous funding under this priority or with funding from other sources. Products of Phase 2 include a further refinement and description of the technology-based approach, and sound evidence that, in a defined range of real world contexts, the approach can be effective in achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (a).

(3) *Phase 3—Research on*

Implementation: Projects funded under Phase 3 must select a technology-based approach that has been evaluated for effectiveness and feasibility in a manner consistent with Phase 2, and must study the implementation of the approach in multiple, complex settings to acquire an improved understanding of the range of contexts in which the approach can be used effectively, and the factors that determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach in this range of contexts. Approaches studied in Phase 3 may have been developed and tested with previous funding under this priority or with funding from other sources. Factors to be studied in Phase 3 include factors related to the technology, materials and methodologies that constitute the technology-based approach. Also to be studied in Phase 3 are contextual factors associated with students, teacher attitudes and skills, physical setting, curriculum and instruction or early intervention approaches, resources, and professional development and policy supports, etc. Phases 2 and 3 can be contrasted as follows: Phase 2 studies the effectiveness the approach can have, while Phase 3 studies the effectiveness the approach is likely to have in sustained use in a range of typical educational settings. The primary product of Phase 3 should be a set of research findings that can be used to guide dissemination and utilization of the technology-based approach;

(d) In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC mentioned above in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, budget for another annual trip to Washington, DC to collaborate with the Federal project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, and to share information and discuss findings and methods of dissemination; and

(e) Prepare products from the project in formats that are useful for specific

audiences as appropriate, including parents, administrators, teachers, early intervention personnel, related services personnel, researchers, and individuals with disabilities.

Projects on Children From Birth to 3: The Secretary intends to fund at least two projects focusing on technology-based approaches for children with disabilities, ages birth to 3.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: The Secretary intends to fund at least three projects in each phase. Projects funded under Phase 1 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 2 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 3 will be funded for up to 36 months. During the final year of projects funded under Phase 3, the Secretary will determine whether or not to fund an optional six-month period for additional dissemination activities.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for any single budget period of 12 months for projects in Phases 1 and 2, and \$300,000 for projects in Phase 3. The Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 40 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 2—Dramatic and Theatrical Experiences for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (84.327D)

Background:

The National Theatre of the Deaf's Professional Training Program for Deaf Theatre Personnel was established through a grant from the former Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1967. The U.S. Department of Education, when established, continued to fund this training program, along with other programs conducted by the National Theatre of the Deaf. These programs have been key sources for the recruitment and training of deaf and, in some instances, hearing individuals in a variety of theatrical and production areas. These training and production projects are intended to promote cross-cultural understanding and to help enable deaf and hearing populations explore ways to overcome communication barriers. This, in turn, will provide opportunities for deaf individuals to participate in and contribute to society as a whole. This priority proposes to continue such activities.

Priority:

This priority supports, on a national level, a series of programs that will provide for the development and will broaden the theatrical and general cultural experience of the deaf and hard of hearing populations in the United States. This priority will enable individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate in specialized professional actor's training and theatrical production that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Specifically, this priority will support—

- (a) The provision of training in drama and theatrical production to actors and artists who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- (b) The promotion of awareness of the artistic and intellectual achievement of people who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- (c) The provision of outreach activities including professional and technical assistance to regional and local cultural programs; and
- (d) The production of video-taped performances for distribution and, whenever possible, national and regional television broadcast.

To be considered for funding under this priority, a project must:

- (a) Describe the training program(s), including curriculum and length and duration of the training periods;
- (b) Identify the type of theatrical productions that will take place;
- (c) Identify outreach activities that will be conducted; and
- (d) Ensure that at least one major production will be videotaped for later

use on television or through duplicated cassettes.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$800,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding these maximum amounts. The Secretary may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 3—Research on Educational Captioning (84.327H)

This priority supports research on captioning of educational media and materials. Research can be based on the instructional use of captioning or the use of captioning as a language development tool for enhancing the reading and literacy skills of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Media and technologies explored or used by projects funded under this priority may include, but are not limited to (1) Television—including high-definition television; (2) videos; and (3) other media and multi-media technologies such as interactive videodiscs and CD-ROMs.

Under this competition, projects must—

(a) Identify specific technological approaches that would be investigated;

(b) Carry out the research within a conceptual framework, based on previous research or theory, that provides a basis for the strategies to be studied, the research design, and target population;

(c) Collect, analyze and report (1) characteristics and outcome data (actual rather than expected results), including the settings, the service providers, and the individuals targeted by the project; and (2) multiple, functional outcome data on the individuals who are the focus of the technological approaches;

(d) Conduct the research in realistic settings such as residential or integrated schools or colleges, or in community settings, as appropriate; and

(e) Conduct the research using methodological procedures that will: (1) Produce unambiguous findings regarding the effects of approaches and effects of the interaction among particular approaches and particular groups of individuals or particular settings; and (2) permit use of the findings in policy analyses.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$125,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding these maximum amounts. The Secretary may change the

maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 4—Video Description (84.327J)

Background:

This priority supports cooperative agreements to provide video description in two areas: (1) Broadcast and cable television programs; and (2) home video. The purpose of this activity will be to describe television programs and videos to make television programming and home videos more accessible to children and adults with visual disabilities. The intent of this priority is to enable children, and adults who are blind or have low vision to have access to television programming and home videos in order to enhance shared educational, social, and cultural experiences for children and adults with visual disabilities.

Note: In accordance with section 687(c)(2) of IDEA, funds from an award made under this priority may only be used for video descriptions of educational, news, and informational television programs beginning October 1, 2001. This may require a grantee to change some or all of the programming that it describes under this award as of this date.

Priority:

To be considered for funding under this priority, a project must —

(a) Include criteria that take into account the preference of consumers for particular topics of interest, the diversity of programs or videos available, and the contribution of these programs or videos to the general educational, social, and cultural experiences of individuals with visual disabilities;

(b) Identify the total number of hours and cost for each program to be described;

(c) Identify for each program to be described, the source, and amount of any private or other public support, if any;

(d) Demonstrate the willingness of program or video producers to permit video description and distribution of their program or video; and

(e) Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods and technologies used in providing this service and the impact on intended populations.

Competitive Preferences:

Within this absolute priority, we will give the following competitive

preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to

applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of this competitive preference, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 10 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting this competitive preference could earn a maximum total of 110 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding these maximum amounts. The Secretary may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Absolute Priority 5—Closed Captioned Sports Programs (84.327P)

Background:

This priority supports cooperative agreements to continue and expand closed-captioning of major national sports programs shown on national commercial broadcast or basic cable television networks. Captioning provides a visual representation of the audio portion of the programming and enables children, young adults, and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate in the shared experience of national sporting events. Funds provided under this priority may be used to support no more than fifty percent of the captioning costs.

Note: In accordance with section 687(c)(2) of IDEA, funds from an award made under this priority may only be used for captioning educational, news, and informational television programs beginning October 1, 2001. This may require a grantee to change

some or all of the programming that it captions under this award as of this date.

Priority:

To be considered for funding under this competition, a project must—

(a) Include procedures and criteria for selecting programs for captioning that take into account the preference of consumers for particular sports programs;

(b) Provide a back-up system that will ensure quality captioning service;

(c) Identify and support a consumer advisory group that would meet at least annually;

(d) Identify the total number of hours and the cost per program hour for each of the programs captioned;

(e) Identify for each program to be captioned, the source, and amount of any private or other public support, if any;

(f) Demonstrate the willingness of major national commercial broadcast or basic cable networks to permit captioning of their programs; and

(g) Implement procedures for monitoring the extent to which full and accurate captioning is provided and use this information to make refinements in captioning operations.

Captions produced under these awards may be reformatted or otherwise adapted by owners or rights holders of programming, including networks or syndicators, for future airings or other distributions.

Competitive Preference: Within this absolute priority, we will award the following competitive preference, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i): An additional 10 points to an applicant that proposes to include in the range of programs to be captioned at least 52 hours a year of sports programming originally broadcast in Spanish.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 20 points in addition to those awarded under the published

selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting these competitive preferences could earn a maximum total of 120 points.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$100,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding these maximum amounts. The Secretary may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 50 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

Special Education—Training and Information for Parents of Children With Disabilities [CFDA No. 84.328]

Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to ensure that parents of children with disabilities receive training and information to help improve results for their children.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 97; and (b) The selection criteria for this priority are drawn from the EDGAR general selection criteria menu. The specific selection criteria for this priority are included in the funding application packet for this competition.

Priority

Under sections 661(e)(2) and 683 of the Act, and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we will give an absolute preference to applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Community Parent Resource Centers (84.328C)

The purpose of this statutory priority is to support local parent training and information centers that will help ensure that underserved parents of children with disabilities, including low-income parents, parents of children with limited English proficiency, and parents with disabilities, have the training and information they need to enable them to participate effectively in helping their children with disabilities to—

(a) Meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, those

challenging standards that have been established for all children; and

(b) Be prepared to lead productive independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible.

Each community parent training and information center supported under this priority must—

(a) Provide training and information that meets the training and information needs of parents of children with disabilities proposed to be served by the project;

(b) Assist parents to understand the availability of, and how to effectively use, procedural safeguards under section 615 of the Act, including encouraging the use, and explaining the benefits, of alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as the mediation process described in the Act;

(c) Serve the parents of infants, toddlers, and children with the full range of disabilities by assisting parents to—

(1) Better understand the nature of their children's disabilities and their educational and developmental needs;

(2) Communicate effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention, and related services;

(3) Participate in decision making processes and the development of individualized education programs and individualized family service plans;

(4) Obtain appropriate information about the range of options, programs, services, and resources available to assist children with disabilities and their families;

(5) Understand the provisions of the Act for the education of, and the provision of early intervention services to, children with disabilities; and

(6) Participate in school reform activities;

(d) Contract with the State education agencies, if the State elects to contract with the community parent resource centers, for the purpose of meeting with parents who choose not to use the mediation process, to encourage the use and explain the benefits of mediation, consistent with sections 615(e)(2)(B) and (D) of the Act;

(e) In order to serve parents and families of children with the full range of disabilities, network with appropriate clearinghouses, including organizations conducting national dissemination activities under section 685(d) of the Act, and with other national, State, and local organizations and agencies, such as protection and advocacy agencies;

(f) Establish cooperative partnerships with the parent training and information centers funded under section 682 of the Act;

(g) Be designed to meet the specific needs of families who experience significant isolation from available sources of information and support; and

(h) Annually report to the Secretary on—

(1) The number of parents to whom it provided information and training in the most recently concluded fiscal year; and

(2) The effectiveness of strategies used to reach and serve parents, including underserved parents of children with disabilities.

The Secretary intends to fund a maximum of ten awards.

Competitive Priorities: Within this absolute priority, we will give preference to applications under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) that meet one or both of the following competitive priorities:

The Secretary awards 20 points to an application submitted by a local parent organization that has a board of directors, the majority of whom are parents of children with disabilities, from the community to be served.

The Secretary awards 5 points to an application that proposes to provide services to one or more Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities that are designated within the areas served by projects. To meet this priority an applicant must indicate that it will:

(a) Design a program that includes special activities focused on the unique needs of one or more Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities; or

(b) Devote a substantial portion of program resources to providing services within, or meeting the needs of residents of these zones and communities.

As appropriate, the proposed project under IDEA must contribute to the strategic plan of the Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities and be made an integral component of the Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community activities. A list of areas that have been selected as Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities is included in the application package.

In addition, we will give the following competitive preference under section 606 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), to applications that are otherwise eligible for funding under this priority:

Up to ten (10) points based on the extent to which an application includes effective strategies for employing and advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in projects awarded under this absolute priority. In determining the effectiveness of such strategies, the Secretary will consider the applicant's success, as described in the application, in employing and

advancing in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in the project.

For purposes of these competitive preferences, applicants can be awarded up to a total of 30 points in addition to those awarded under the published selection criteria for this priority. That is, an applicant meeting all of these competitive preferences could earn a maximum total of 130 points.

Eligible Applicants: Local parent organizations are defined in section 682(g) and 683(c) of IDEA. According to section 682(g), a parent organization is a private nonprofit organization (other than an institution of higher education) that (a) has a board of directors, (1) the parent and professional members of which are broadly representative of the population to be served, (2) the majority of whom are parents of children with disabilities, and (3) that includes individuals with disabilities and individuals working in the fields of special education, related services, and early intervention; or (b) has a membership that represents the interests of individuals with disabilities and has established a special governing committee that meets requirements of paragraph (a) and a memorandum of understanding between this special governing committee and the board of directors of the organization that clearly outlines the relationship between the board and the committee and the decision making responsibilities and authority of each. According to section 683(c), local parent organizations are parent organizations that must meet one of the following criteria—

(a) Have a board of directors the majority of whom are from the community to be served; or

(b) Have as part of its mission, serving the interests of individuals with disabilities from such community; and have a special governing committee to administer the project, a majority of the members of which are individuals from such community.

Examples of administrative responsibilities include controlling the use of the project funds, and hiring and managing project personnel.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Project Award: Projects will not be funded in excess of \$100,000 for any single budget period of 12 months.

Page Limits: The maximum page limit for this priority is 30 double-spaced pages.

Note: Applications must meet the required page limit standards that are described in the "General Requirements" section of this notice.

For Applications Contact

Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), PO Box 1398, Jessup, Maryland 20794-1398. Telephone (toll free): 1-877-4ED-Pubs (1-877-433-7827). FAX: 301-470-1244. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call (toll free) 1-877-576-7734.

You may also contact Ed Pubs via its Web site (<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>) or its E-mail address (edpubs@inet.ed.gov).

For Further Information Contact: Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C.

20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 205-9817.

If you use a TDD you may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternate format by contacting the Department as listed above. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternate format the standard forms included in the application package.

Intergovernmental Review

All programs in this notice (except for Research and Innovative) are subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, we intend this document to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for those programs.

Available Funds

The Administration has requested funds for these programs for Fiscal Year 2000. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process before the end of the fiscal year, if Congress appropriates funds for these programs.

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT
APPLICATION NOTICE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

CFDA No. and Name	Applications Available	Application Deadline Date	Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	Maximum Award (per year)*	Project Period	Page Limit**	Estimated Number of Awards
84.324B Student Initiated Research Projects	09/13/99	02/04/00	11/13/00	\$20,000	Up to 12 mos.	25	12
84.324C Field Initiated Research Projects	09/13/99	12/10/99	02/08/00	\$180,000	***Up to 60 mos.	50	14
84.324N Initial Career Awards	09/13/99	12/10/99	02/08/00	\$75,000	Up to 36 mos.	30	4
84.324M Model Demonstration Projects for Children with Disabilities	09/13/99	11/29/99	01/28/00	\$150,000	Up to 48 mos.	40	14
84.324R Outreach Projects for Children with Disabilities	09/13/99	12/03/99	02/01/00	\$150,000	Up to 36 mos.	40	21
84.324P Research Institute to Enhance the Role of Special Education and Children with Disabilities in Education Policy Reform	09/13/99	05/19/00	07/18/00	\$700,000	Up to 60 mos.	70	1
84.324W Improving Post-School Outcomes: Identifying and Promoting What Works	09/13/99	11/13/99	01/12/00	\$500,000	Up to 60 mos.	60	1
84.325A Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel to Serve Infants, Toddlers, and Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities	09/03/99	10/15/99	12/14/99	\$300,000	Up to 60 mos.	40	33
84.325D Preparation of Leadership Personnel	09/03/99	10/15/99	12/14/99	\$200,000	Up to 48 mos.	40	13
84.325E Preparation of Personnel in Minority Institutions	09/03/99	10/15/99	12/15/99	\$200,000	Up to 48 mos.	40	16
84.325H Improving the Preparation of Personnel to Serve Children with High-Incidence Disabilities	09/03/99	11/12/99	01/11/00	\$200,000	Up to 36 mos.	40	31
84.326C Projects for Children Who are Deaf-Blind	09/13/99	01/07/00	03/07/00	\$550,000	Up to 36 mos.	50	1
84.326M Outreach Services to Minority Entities to Expand Research Capacity	09/13/99	01/07/00	03/07/00	\$1,000,000	Up to 60 mos.	75	1

CFDA No. and Name	Applications Available	Application Deadline Date	Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	Maximum Award (per year)*	Project Period	Page Limit**	Estimated Number of Awards
84.327A Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities Phase 1 and 2 Phase 3	09/13/99	12/10/99	02/08/00	\$200,000 \$300,000 \$800,000	Up to 24 mos. Up to 36 mos. Up to 60 mos.	40 40 50	11
84.327D Dramatic and Theatrical Experiences for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	09/13/99	11/13/99	01/12/00	\$125,000	Up to 36 mos.	50	2
84.327H Research on Educational Captioning	09/13/99	12/03/99	02/08/00	\$200,000	Up to 36 mos.	50	4
84.327J Video Description	09/13/99	02/18/00	04/18/00	\$100,000	Up to 36 mos.	50	5
84.327P Closed Captioned Sports Programs	09/13/99	02/11/00	04/11/00	\$100,000	Up to 36 mos.	50	5
84328C Community Parent Resource Centers	09/13/99	03/03/00	05/02/00	\$100,000	Up to 36 mos.	30	10

*The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding the amount listed for each priority for any single budget period of 12 months. ** Applicants must limit

the Application Narrative, Part III of the Application, to the page limits noted above. Please refer to the "Page Limit" requirements included under each priority in this notice. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that does not adhere to this requirement. ***The majority of projects will be funded for up to 36 months. Only in exceptional circumstances will projects be funded for more than 36 months, up to a maximum of 60 months.

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Dated: August 23, 1999.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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