

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****[CFDA No.: 84.029J]****Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals With Disabilities—Grants for Personnel Training; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 1996**

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAM:** The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recommends that the Secretary develop and implement a plan for providing outreach services to minority entities and underrepresented populations to assist them in participating more fully in the discretionary programs under the Act (section 610(j)(2)(C)).

This final priority supports the National Education Goals by improving understanding of how to enable children and youth with disabilities to reach higher levels of academic achievement.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, State agencies, and other appropriate nonprofit agencies.

**APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:** The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86.

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

Priority—Absolute Priority—Outreach Services to Minority Entities To Expand Research Capacity (84.029J)

The priority Outreach Services to Minority Entities to Expand Research Capacity in the notice of final priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register, applies to this competition.

**SELECTION CRITERIA:** In evaluating applications for grants under this program, the Secretary uses the EDGAR selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210.

*Applications Available:* May 31, 1996.  
*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* July 16, 1996.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* September 16, 1996.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 1.  
*Project Period:* Up to 36 months.  
*Available Funds:* In FY 1996, approximately \$996,000 will be available to support 1 project (cooperative agreement) under this absolute priority (competition). A multi-year project will be level funded unless there is an increase in costs attributable to significant changes in activity level, and funds are available.

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

**FOR APPLICATIONS AND GENERAL**

**INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for applications and general information should be addressed to: Claudette Carey, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Switzer Building, Room 3525, Washington, DC. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-9864. FAX: (202) 205-8105. Internet: Claudette\_Carey@ed.gov

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

**FOR TECHNICAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Scott Brown, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 3522, Switzer Building, Washington, DC. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-5509. FAX: (202) 205-8117. Internet: Scott\_Brown@ed.gov

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

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1431.

Dated: May 23, 1996.

Howard R. Moses,

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

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**BILLING CODE 4000-01-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals With Disabilities—Grants for Personnel Training**

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of Final Priority.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary announces a final priority for the Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities—Grants for Personnel Training program administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Secretary may use this priority in Fiscal Year 1996 and subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal assistance on identified needs to improve

outcomes for children with disabilities. This final priority is intended to ensure wide and effective use of program funds.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This priority takes effect on June 28, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Scott Brown, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Room 3522, Switzer Building, Washington, DC. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-8117. FAX: (202) 205-8105. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205-8953. Internet: Scott\_Brown@ed.gov

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) directs the Secretary to develop and implement a plan for providing outreach services to minority entities and underrepresented populations to assist them in participating more fully in the discretionary programs under the Act (section 610(j)(2)(C)).

On March 26, 1996, the Secretary published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the Federal Register (61 FR 13376-13377).

This final priority supports the National Education Goals by improving understanding of how to enable children and youth with disabilities to reach higher levels of academic achievement.

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

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

**Analysis of Comments and Changes**

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

**Priority—Outreach Services to Minority Entities To Expand Research Capacity**

*Comment:* One commenter requested that the priority clarify whether the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), other minority institutions (OMIs), and other eligible institutions as defined under section 312 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (OEIs) that are the target of the linkage activities specified in the priority need to be doctoral-degree granting institutions or providers of Ph.D.'s in joint programs with other universities. The commenter stated that, for a national effort whose major goal is to prepare scholars for careers in research on special education and related services, the focus should be on the doctoral-level programs since they are the ones that typically apply for and receive grants and contracts for research activities.

*Discussion:* The Secretary agrees that recipients of awards for research activities are predominantly institutions of higher education with doctoral-degree level programs. However, although many HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs do not have doctoral-level programs for students, the project's linkage activities are also expected to target institutional faculty members. Many of the faculty at these institutions are very capable and experienced in conducting research. Strengthening the capacity of these individuals, and thereby that of institutions, is considered a useful component of strategies developed under the priority.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter requested clarification as to the priority's relative emphasis on building the capacity of individual minority researchers as opposed to entire faculties of HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs.

*Discussion:* The purpose of the project is two-fold. The priority is intended to increase the participation of HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs in discretionary research and development grant programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and to increase the capacity of individuals at these institutions to conduct research and development activities in special education and related services. The dual emphasis is important, since the ability of individual students and faculty members to conduct research is a key contributing factor in an institution's capacity to successfully compete for IDEA research grants. The priority does not require the project to focus on entire faculties at these institutions. The priority is intended to allow the project

to identify appropriate faculty members that will enhance the ability of HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs to compete for grants.

*Changes:* The priority has been revised to clarify that its purpose is to increase the participation of HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs in discretionary research and development grant programs under the IDEA consistent with Congress' direction, and to increase the capacity of individuals at these institutions to conduct research and development activities.

*Comment:* One commenter stated the an HBCU, OMI, or an OEI was the only appropriate institution to conduct the type of project required by the priority and suggested that eligibility for the grant award be restricted to minority institutions. The commenter also recommended that the language of the priority be strengthened to require the project to have actual experience and knowledge of how to identify and work with the strengths as well as overcome the barriers inherent in the infrastructure. The commenter stated that a project designed to recruit minority researchers and generate research in minority communities would be received more favorably and responded to more rapidly if conducted by a minority institution.

*Discussion:* The Secretary believes that limiting eligibility under the priority to minority institutions would be unduly restrictive. The critical factors that the performing entity must have are: (1) Experience and familiarity in research on children with disabilities in urban and high-poverty schools with predominately minority enrollment; (2) experience in capacity development in special education research; and, (3) a thorough understanding of the strengths and needs of HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs with respect to carrying out research programs. These factors are included in the priority. Any advantage that a minority institution can demonstrate in these areas may be considered in the evaluation of applications.

*Change:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter recommended that the priority be revised to strengthen the requirement that findings, results, and/or products be communicated directly to SEAs with significant minority populations and to educational decision makers in urban areas.

*Discussion:* The Secretary believes that dissemination of findings should be carried out by the Department of Education's technical assistance, training, and dissemination projects that have been established specifically to accomplish this important task. To require this project to conduct

dissemination activities would unnecessarily diffuse the project's focus, and would require it to conduct activities that are not necessarily compatible with research and capacity building activities.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter stated that the research agenda developed for the project's workscope must be relevant to local communities and address problems of real need. The commenter felt that needs assessments must be developed with the local communities' (LEAs, SEAs, and IHEs) participation, and complete articulation of research findings with these stakeholders should be guaranteed. Another commenter recommended that the project conduct a national assessment of needs and convene an Advisory Panel with representation from in-service and Comprehensive System for Personnel Development planning components with appropriate State educational agencies.

*Discussion:* The priority requires that the project conduct research on one or more specified issues. The Secretary believes that each of the suggested research topics are particularly relevant to the overall objectives of improving the delivery of special education services and educational results for children with disabilities in urban and high-poverty schools with predominately minority enrollments. The Department of Education has collected sufficient data to warrant the focus of research on these topics. Furthermore, the selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications require applicants to describe the needs addressed by the project; how those needs were identified; and how the needs will be met by the project. In view of these factors, the Secretary believes that to require this project to conduct a national assessment of needs would be unnecessary, would diffuse the project's focus, and would impose requirements that are not necessarily compatible with research and capacity building activities.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* Two commenters requested that the priority specify the applicable indirect cost rate, and questioned whether the indirect cost rate would be that of a training or a research grant. Both commenters recommended that the project be considered personnel preparation and carry an 8 percent indirect cost rate.

*Discussion:* Because the priority is primarily a research training project, the grantee's negotiated cost rate applies to the priority. Although the Education Department General Administrative

Regulations (EDGAR) at § 75.562 authorizes an 8 percent cap on indirect costs for educational training grants, "research training programs" were specifically excluded from the scope of educational training grants under that section. Furthermore, the Secretary believes that the amount of the project budget that is devoted to direct grant activities will reflect the level of commitment and effort offered by each applicant, and will be considered in determining the relative merit of applications. For these reasons, the grantee's negotiated indirect cost rate used for research programs applies to the final priority.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter stated that the balance between urban and rural research agenda seems weighted toward inner city challenges. The commenter recommended that the priority should place equal emphasis on urban and rural problems.

*Discussion:* The priority requires that the project focus on issues related to improving the delivery of special education services and educational results for children with disabilities in urban and high poverty schools with predominantly minority enrollments. Relevant research indicates that approximately 47 percent of urban youth with disabilities live in households with an annual income of less than \$12,000, compared to 34 percent of rural and 19 percent of suburban youth with disabilities. Consequently, the Secretary expects the project to emphasize the needs of children with disabilities in urban areas given the disproportionate representation of special education students who live in poverty and the high percentage of poor children in urban settings.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter suggested that the project demonstrate the high quality of its research through a peer or internal review, and through mentoring during implementation.

*Discussion:* The Secretary believes that the methods suggested by the commenter are two potentially useful approaches that a research project might employ to ensure high quality of research results. However, because there may be a variety of viable methodologies that may ensure high quality research, the Secretary believes that identifying two such methodologies would be unduly restrictive.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter noted that the priority does not mention the importance of linking research findings to application and practice at minority

IHEs, and suggested that applicants describe the systems to be used to translate research to practice and to infuse new knowledge into existing personnel preparation programs.

*Discussion:* The priority requires that findings of importance to audiences other than researchers be made available to the Department of Education's technical assistance training and dissemination projects for distribution to those audiences. The Secretary believes that this approach, as opposed to requiring the grantee to undertake the entire process of translating research to practice, will allow for a more coherent research-to-practice effort, and a potentially larger, more inclusive audience.

*Changes:* None.

*Comment:* One commenter requested that a single existing policy research center for coordination or collaboration be omitted from the priority or, in the alternative, that the role of such a center be clearly defined.

*Discussion:* The Secretary agrees that it is not necessary to single out a specific policy research center for collaboration or coordination since the priority requires that the project collaborate with other relevant OSEP-funded projects. Also, the Secretary is concerned that referencing a specific policy coordination center could discourage the project from coordinating directly with other relevant projects.

*Changes:* The reference in the proposed priority to coordination with the ongoing Policy Research Institute has been deleted.

#### Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary will fund under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority.

**Absolute Priority—Outreach Services to Minority Entities To Expand Research Capacity**

*Background:* The Congress has found that the Federal Government must be responsive to the growing needs of an increasingly 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 Congress has concluded that the opportunity for full participation in awards for grants, cooperative agreements and contracts by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), other institutions of higher education whose minority enrollment is at least 25 percent (OMIs)

and other eligible institutions as defined under section 312 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (OELs) is essential if we are to obtain greater success in the education of children from diverse backgrounds in special education.

This priority focuses on assisting HBCUs, OMIs and OELs to prepare scholars for careers in research on special education and related services. This preparation shall consist of engaging both faculty and students at HBCUs, OMIs and OELs in special education research activities. The activities focus on an area of critical emerging need which 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 with predominantly minority enrollments*. By building a cadre of experienced researchers on this important topic, the chances for full participation in awards for grants, cooperative agreements and contracts by HBCUs, OMIs and OELs will be increased.

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 population of youth.

The problem of 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 youth. 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. Moreover, findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study indicate that 47 percent of urban youth with disabilities live in households with an annual income of less than \$12,000 (in 1986 dollars) compared to 34 percent of rural and 19 percent of suburban youth with disabilities (Valdes et al., 1990).

Urban school districts face a variety of 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

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for a project whose purpose is to increase the participation of HBCUs, OMIs, and OEIs in discretionary research and development grant programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and to increase the capacity of individuals at these institutions to conduct research and development activities in special education and related services. Each research activity of the program must implement the Congress' direction in section 610(j)(2) to support outreach activities to HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs to increase their participation in competitions for research, demonstration and outreach grants, cooperative agreements and contracts funded under the IDEA. Activities shall include:

(1) Conducting research activities at HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs as explained below that link scholars at HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs with researchers at institutions with an established research capacity in a mentoring relationship to develop both individual and institutional research capacity at those HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs with a demonstrated need for capacity development; and

(2) Providing linkages between HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs with a demonstrated need for capacity development and institutions with an established research capacity to provide opportunities for researchers at those

HBCUs, OMIs and OEIs to develop first hand experience in the grants and contracts application process.

All research activities must be conducted for the purpose of capacity building. The research program must include one or more projects that are focused on issues related to improving the delivery of special education services and educational results for children with disabilities in urban and high poverty schools with predominantly minority enrollments. The program must examine the association between minority status and identification for, evaluation for and placement in special education. Other possible research topics may include:

(1) Effective intervention strategies that make a difference in the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE);

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

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

(4) Increasing effective parental participation in the educational process, especially for poor parents, minority parents, and parents with limited English proficiency;

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

(6) The effect of school-wide projects conducted under Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on the delivery of special education; or

(7) Effective practices for promoting the coordination of special education

services with health and social services for children with disabilities and their families.

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

Projects 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, OMIs and OEIs.

The project must budget for two trips annually to Washington, D.C. for: (1) A two-day Research Project Directors' meeting; and (2) an additional meeting to meet and collaborate with the project officer of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and with other relevant OSEP funded projects.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1431.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.029, Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program)

Dated: May 23, 1996.

Howard R. Moses,

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

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