

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Proposed Priorities****AGENCY:** Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice of proposed priorities.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary proposes priorities for three programs administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Secretary may use these priorities in Fiscal Year 1997 and subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal assistance on identified needs to improve results for children with disabilities. These proposed priorities are intended to ensure wide and effective use of program funds.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before December 9, 1996 for the Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program; for the Educational Media Research, Production, Distribution, and Training Program and the Technology, Educational Media, and Materials Program.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments concerning proposed priorities under the Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program (CFDA 84.023), and the Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program (CFDA 84.180) should be addressed to Linda Glidewell, U.S. Department of Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. All comments concerning proposed priorities under the Educational Media Research, Production, Distribution, and Training Program (CFDA 84.026) should be addressed to Joseph Clair, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 4622, Switzer Building, Washington D.C., 20202-2644. Internet: NPP—Research@ed.gov

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice contains six proposed priorities under three programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as follows: Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program (one proposed priority); Educational Media Research, Production, Distribution, and Training Program (four proposed priorities) and Technology,

Education Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program (one proposed priority). The purpose of each program is stated separately under the title of that program.

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

The Secretary will announce the final priorities in a notice in the Federal Register. The final priorities will be determined by responses to this notice, available funds, and other considerations of the Department. Funding of particular projects depends on the availability of funds, the content of the final priorities, and the quality of the applications received. Further, priorities could be affected by enactment of legislation reauthorizing these programs. The publication of these proposed priorities does not preclude the Secretary from proposing additional priorities, nor does it limit the Secretary to funding only these priorities, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

These proposed priorities may also be found on the Internet by accessing the World Wide Web at <http://www.ed.gov/news.html>

Note: This notice of proposed priorities does *not* solicit applications. Notices inviting applications under these competitions will be published in the Federal Register concurrent with or following publication of the notices of final priorities.

**Research in Education of Individuals With Disabilities Program**

**Purpose of Program:** To advance and improve the knowledge base and improve the practice of professionals, parents, and others providing early intervention, special education, and related services—including professionals in regular education environments—to provide children with disabilities effective instruction and enable these children to learn successfully.

**Priority:** Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary proposes to fund under this competition only those applications that meet this absolute priority:

**Proposed Absolute Priority—Initial Career Awards**

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 four years after completing a doctoral program and graduating (e.g., for fiscal year 1997 awards, projects may support individuals who completed a doctoral program and graduated no earlier than the 1991-92 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) Include, in its design and conduct, sustained involvement with nationally recognized experts having substantive or methodological knowledge and expertise relevant to the proposed research. Experts do not have to be at the same institution or agency at which the project is located, but the interaction must be sufficient to develop the capacity of the researcher to pursue effectively the research into mid-career activities. At least 50 percent of the researcher's time must be devoted to the project;

(c) Prepare its 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, children, and youth with disabilities and their families; and

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

A project's budget must include funds to attend the two-day Research Project Directors' meeting to be held in Washington, D.C. each year of the project.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Doris Andres, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3526, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641.

Telephone: (202) 205-8125. FAX: (202) 205-8105. Internet: Doris—

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

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1441.

**Educational Media Research, Production, Distribution, and Training Program**

*Purpose of Program:* To promote the general welfare of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with visual disabilities, and to promote the educational advancement of individuals with disabilities.

*Priorities:* Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet one or more of the following priorities. The Secretary proposes to fund under these competitions only applications that meet one or more of these absolute priorities:

*Proposed Absolute Priority 1—Closed-Captioned Sports Programs:*

*Background:* This priority supports cooperative agreements to continue and to 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 individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate in the shared educational, social, and cultural experiences of national supporting events. Funds provided under this priority may be used to support no more than sixty percent of the captioning costs for the first year of the project, fifty-five percent of the second year, and fifty percent for the third year.

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

(1) Include criteria for selecting programs for captioning that take into account the preference of consumers for particular sports programs, the diversity of programming available, and the contribution of programs to the general educational, social, and cultural experiences of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;

(2) Provide a flexible plan, including back-up systems, to ensure closed-captioning of sports programs without interruption, while accommodating last-minute program substitutions and new programs;

(3) Identify the total number of hours and the projected cost per hour for each of the programs to be captioned;

(4) Identify for each proposed program to be captioned the source of private or other public support and the projected dollar amount of that support;

(5) Identify the methods of captioning to be used for each program—indicating whether captioning is provided in realtime, live display, offline, or

reformatted—and the projected cost per hour for each method used;

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

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

*Proposed Absolute Priority 2—Video Description*

*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 provide access to described television programming and home videos in order to enhance shared educational, social, and cultural experiences for children and adults with visual disabilities.

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

(1) Include criteria for selecting programs and videos 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;

(2) Identify the total number of hours to be described and the projected cost per hour for each program or video to be described;

(3) Identify the source of private or public support, if any, for each program or video to be described, and the projected dollar amount of that support;

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

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

*Proposed Absolute Priority 3—Educational Video Selection and Captioning*

*Background:* This priority supports one cooperative agreement that would screen, evaluate, obtain, caption, and make available educational videos, including classics and general interest titles, for use by students and other individuals who are deaf or hard of

hearing, parents of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and other individuals directly involved in activities promoting the advancement of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. This activity includes the preparation of captions on computer diskettes or CD-ROM, as appropriate, and the preparation of lesson guides for educational videos. This priority would ensure that students and other individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may benefit from the same educational and general interest videos used to enrich the educational experiences of students and other individuals without hearing disabilities.

*Priority:* To be considered for funding under this priority, the project must—

(1) Develop strategies and procedures to be used in determining curricular needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in all types of school settings for captioned videos;

(2) Develop and implement an on-going evaluation program for incorporating the reaction and suggestions of users into the selection and captioning process;

(3) Develop and implement criteria and procedures for screening, evaluating, and captioning selected videos;

(4) Obtain videos from film and video distributors for screening, evaluation, and possible captioning. Select from among video titles submitted by evaluators those that closely match the curricular needs identified under paragraph (1) of this proposed priority, taking into account the videos most commonly used in school districts across the Nation for all students;

(5) Make arrangements with respective producers and distributors to have selected videos captioned and made available through general distribution mechanisms (such as video sales catalogues), as well as through the captioned film and video loan service authorized under Part F of IDEA and 34 CFR Part 330 (by purchasing up to 100 copies of each captioned title, which must be open-captioned. Closed-captioned masters must be made available to producers and distributors in an effort to promote the use of captioned videos.

(6) For selected titles, prepare captions on computer diskettes or CD-ROM, as appropriate, and check for accuracy. These captions would take into account the age and reading levels of the likely target audience;

(7) For selected educational videos, prepare lesson guides;

(8) Identify, select, and, if necessary, provide training or technical assistance

to video evaluators, caption checkers, and captioning service providers; and

(9) Develop and implement quality control guidelines and procedures for checking videocassettes after they are captioned.

*Proposed Absolute Priority 4—Research on Educational Captioning*

**Background:** 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.

**Priority:** Under this competition, projects must—

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

(2) 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;

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

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

(5) Conduct the research using methodological procedures that would: (a) 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 (b) permit use of the findings in policy analyses.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ernest Hairston, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 4629, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-9172. FAX: (202) 205-8971. Internet: Ernest\_Hairston@ed.gov

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8169.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1451, 1452.

Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program

**Purpose of Program:** To support projects and centers for advancing the availability, quality, use, and effectiveness of technology, educational media, and materials in the education of children and youth with disabilities and the provision of related services and early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Priority:** Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary proposes to fund under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority:

*Proposed Absolute Priority—Technology, Educational Media, and Materials Projects That Create Innovative Tools for Students With Disabilities*

This priority provides support for development projects that design or adapt technology, assistive technology, educational media, or materials to improve the education of children and youth with disabilities.

**Invitational Priority:** Within the absolute priority specified in this notice, the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priorities. However, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

The Secretary is particularly interested in projects that—

(a) *Create Innovative Tools*—by encouraging development of varied and integrated technologies, media, and materials that open up and expand the lives of those with disabilities. This work should enable individuals with disabilities to achieve the outcomes expected of all students, such as independence, productivity and an improved quality of life, that promote equity in opportunity; or

(b) *Foster the Creation of State-of-the-Art Instructional Environments*—both in and out of school. These environments should use technology, educational media, and materials to enable students

with disabilities to access knowledge, develop skills and problem-solving strategies, and engage in educational experiences necessary for their success as adults who are fully included in our society.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jane Hauser, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 3521, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 205-8126. FAX: (202) 205-8105. Internet: Jane\_Hauser@ed.gov

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

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1461.

**Intergovernmental Review**

The programs (except for Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities program) included in this notice 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, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

**Invitation To Comment**

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding these proposed priorities.

All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Room 3524, 300 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers: Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program, 84.023; Media Research, Production, Distribution, and Training Program, 84.026; and Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program, 84.180)

Dated: August 12, 1996.

Judith E. Heumann,

*Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

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