

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 1998

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 1998.

SUMMARY: On June 4, 1997, the President signed into law Pub. L. 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments, amending the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This notice provides closing dates and other information regarding the transmittal of applications for fiscal year 1998 competitions under four programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (the Act, as amended by the 1997 amendments). The priorities under these programs are based on the statutory provisions in the Act or on previously published priorities, as indicated in each priority. Only changes authorized by the 1997 Amendments to IDEA were made to priorities previously published. For example, the Act no longer refers to "youth with disabilities". "Youth with disabilities" is no longer distinguished from "children with disabilities" under the Act; therefore, all references to "youth with disabilities" have been deleted from the priorities. Also, the types of entities eligible to apply for grants under these programs have been changed where necessary to reflect changes in the Act.

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

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

Research and Innovation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities (CFDA No. 84.023)

Purpose of Program: To produce, and advance the use of, knowledge to (1) improve services provided under the Act, 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, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The selection criteria included in regulations in 34 CFR 324.31.

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

Priorities: Under sections 661(e)(2) and 672 of the Act and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priorities. The Secretary funds under these competitions only those applications that meet these absolute priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Field-Initiated Research Projects (84.023C). This statutory 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 designed to contribute to the improvement of early intervention, instruction and learning of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities as described in section 672 of the Act.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

A project must budget for a trip to Washington, DC. for the annual two-day Research Project Directors' meeting.

Invitational Priorities

Within Absolute Priority 1 the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of 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:

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

(2) 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).

(3) Projects studying and promoting improved alignment and compatibility of general and special education reforms concerned with curricular and

instructional reform, evaluation and accountability of those reforms, and administrative procedures. (See section 672(b)(2)(D) of the Act).

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

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. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit the Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 50 double-spaced 8 1/2 x 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Absolute Priority 2—Student-Initiated Research Projects (84.023B). This absolute priority was published in the **Federal Register** on November 21, 1994 (59 FR 60054).

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—

(1) Develop research skills in postsecondary students; and

(2) Include a principal investigator who serves as a mentor to the student researcher while the project is carried out by the student.

A project must budget for a trip to Washington, DC for the annual two-day Research Project Directors' meeting.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

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. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 25 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Absolute Priority 3—Initial Career Awards (84.023N). This absolute priority was published in the **Federal Register** on March 5, 1996 (61 FR 8810).

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 1998 awards, projects may support individuals who completed a doctoral program and graduated no earlier than the 1994–95 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 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, and children 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, DC each year of the project.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

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. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 30 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All

Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Program Authority: Section 672 of the Act.

Personnel Preparation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities (CFDA No. 84.029)

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 and private nonprofit organizations.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; (b) The selection criteria included in regulations in 34 CFR 318.22; and (c) 34 CFR 318.31–33.

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

Priorities: Under section 661(e)(2) and 673 of the Act and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priorities. The Secretary funds under these competitions only those applications that meet these absolute priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel to Serve Infants, Toddlers, and Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities (84.029A). This absolute priority was published in the **Federal Register** on May 9, 1996 (61 FR 21230).

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 are reluctant to support the needed professional development programs. Of the programs that are available, not all are producing graduates with the prerequisite skills needed to meet the needs of the low-incidence disability population. 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.

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:

(1) Special educators including early childhood, speech and language, adapted physical education, and assistive technology personnel;

(2) Related services personnel who provide developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that assist children with low-incidence disabilities to benefit from special education. Both comprehensive programs and specialty components within a broader discipline that prepares personnel for work with the low-incidence population may be supported; or,

(3) Early intervention personnel who serve children birth through age 2 with low-incidence disabilities and their families. Early intervention personnel include persons prepared to provide training for, or be 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 include collaboration among several 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.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the

project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

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 State's comprehensive system 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 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 and related services personnel (See section 673(g)(2) of the Act); and

(e) Ensure that individuals who receive a scholarship 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, in accordance with regulations to be issued by the Secretary.

The application requirement described in paragraph (e) is required by section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1474(h)(1)). Because this provision was added to the Act during the recent reauthorization, the Secretary has not had the opportunity to promulgate regulations, but expects to do so before grant awards are made. In order for an applicant to provide the assurances required by statute, the applicant must, at a minimum, describe:

(1) How it will notify trainees of the work or repay requirement; and (2) How it will notify trainees when the regulations are finalized. The Secretary encourages applicants to award stipends and scholarships that last at least for one-year. By having at least one-year stipends and scholarships, it would be less likely that any trainee would enter work or repay status before the regulations are in effect.

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;

(b) Incorporate best 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) Develop linkages with Education Department technical assistance providers to communicate information on program models used and program effectiveness;

(f) 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 (See section 673(b)(5) of the Act);

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

- 55 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in special education, including early childhood educators;
- 30 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in related services; and
- 15 percent of the available funds for projects that support careers in early intervention.

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

Competitive Priority

Within this absolute priority, the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii), and section 673(g)(3)(B) of the Act will select an application from an institution of higher education that is successfully recruiting and preparing individuals with disabilities and individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the profession for which they are preparing individuals over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority.

Project Period: Up to 36 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. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 40 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top,

bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Absolute Priority 2—Preparation of Leadership Personnel (84.029D).

This statutory priority supports projects that support leadership activities such as: (a) Preparing personnel at the advanced graduate, doctoral, and postdoctoral levels of training to administer, enhance, or provide services for children with disabilities; or (b) providing interdisciplinary training for various types of leadership personnel, including teacher preparation faculty, administrators, researchers, supervisors, principals, and other persons whose work affects early intervention, educational, and transitional services for children with disabilities.

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 State's comprehensive system of personnel development under Parts B and C of the Act, if the purpose of the project is to assist personnel in obtaining a degree;

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

(d) Ensure that individuals who receive a scholarship 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, in accordance with regulations to be issued by the Secretary.

The application requirement described in paragraph (d) is required by section 673(h)(2) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1474(h)(2)). Because this provision was added to the Act during the recent reauthorization, the Secretary has not had the opportunity to promulgate regulations, but expects to do so before grant awards are made. In order for an applicant to provide the assurances required by statute, the applicant must, at a minimum, describe:

(1) How it will notify trainees of the work or repay requirement; and (2) How it will notify trainees when the regulations are finalized. The Secretary encourages applicants to award stipends and scholarships that last at least for one-year. By having at least one year stipends and scholarships, it would be less likely that any trainee would enter work or repay status before the regulations are in effect.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

A project's budget must include funds to attend a two-day Project Director's meeting to be held in Washington, DC each year of the project.

Invitational Priorities

Within Absolute Priority 2 the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of 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:

(a) Projects designed to foster successful coordination between special education and regular education teachers, administrators, related services personnel, infant intervention specialists, and parents.

(b) Projects that coordinate their professional development programs for regular and special education personnel.

(c) Projects that include recruitment of leadership personnel from groups that are underrepresented, including individuals with disabilities, in educational leadership positions.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$225,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 40 double-spaced 8½×11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Absolute Priority 3—Preparation of Personnel in Minority Institutions (84.029E).

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

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 State's 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 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 and related services personnel; and

(e) Ensure that individuals who receive a scholarship 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, in accordance with regulations to be issued by the Secretary.

The application requirement described in paragraph (e) is required by section 673(h)(1) of the Act (20 U.S.C. 1474(h)(1)). Because this provision was added to the Act during the recent reauthorization, the Secretary has not had the opportunity to promulgate regulations, but expects to do so before grant awards are made. In order for an applicant to provide the assurances required by statute, the applicant must, at a minimum, describe: (1) How it will notify trainees of the work or repay requirement; and (2) How it will notify trainees when the regulations are finalized. The Secretary encourages applicants to award stipends and scholarships that last at least for one-

year. By having at least one-year stipends and scholarships, it would be less likely that any trainee would enter work or repay status before the regulations are in effect.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

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

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. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 40 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Program Authority: Section 673 of the Act.

Training and Information for Parents of Children With Disabilities (CFDA No. 84.029)

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this statutory priority is to ensure that children with disabilities, and their parents, receive training and information on their rights and protections under this Act, in order to develop the skills necessary to effectively participate in planning and decisionmaking relating to early intervention, educational, and transitional services and in systemic-change activities.

Eligible Applicants: Parent organizations, as defined in section 682(g) of the Act.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, and 85; and (b) the selection criteria included in 34 CFR 316.22.

Supplementary Information: Under sections 682 (e)(1) and (e)(2), the Secretary is required to: (1) Make at least one award to a parent organization in each State, unless the Secretary does

not receive an application from such an organization in each State of sufficient quality to warrant approval; and (2) select among applications submitted by parent organizations in a State in a manner that ensures the most effective assistance to parents, including parents in urban and rural areas, in the State. If there is more than one parent center in a particular State, the Secretary expects that the parent center projects will coordinate activities to ensure the most effective assistance to parents in that State.

Priority: Under sections 661(e)(2) and 682 of the Act, and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary funds under these competitions only those applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Parent Training and Information Centers (84.029M).

Each parent training and information center funded under this absolute priority must satisfy the following requirements contained in Section 682(b) and (c) of the Act—

(1) Provide training and information that meets the training and information needs of parents of children with disabilities in the area served by the center, particularly underserved parents and parents of children who may be inappropriately identified;

(2) Assist parents to understand the availability of, and how to effectively use procedural safeguards under 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;

(3) Serve the parents of infants, toddlers, and children with the full range of disabilities;

(4) Assist parents to—

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

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

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

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

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

(F) Participate in school reform activities.

(5) In States where the State elects to contract with the parent training and information center, contract with the State education agencies to provide, consistent with sections 615(e)(2)(B) and (D) of the Act, individuals who meet with parents to explain the mediation process to them;

(6) 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, that serve parents and families of children with the full range of disabilities;

(7) Upon request from a Community Parent Resource Center, establish a cooperative partnership in accordance with section 683(b)(3) of the Act; and

(8) Annually report to the Secretary on—

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

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

A parent training and information center that receives assistance under this absolute priority may also conduct the following activities—

(1) Provide information to teachers and other professionals who provide special education and related services to children with disabilities;

(2) Assist students with disabilities to understand their rights and responsibilities on reaching the age of majority, as included under section 615(m) of the Act; and

(3) Assist parents of children with disabilities to be informed participants in the development and implementation of the State's State improvement plan under the Act.

An applicant must identify special efforts it will undertake—

(A) To ensure that the needs for training and information of underserved parents of children with disabilities in the area to be served are effectively met; and

(B) To work with community-based organizations.

Applicants and resulting projects 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 the Act).

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

Competitive Priority:

Within this absolute priority, the Secretary, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), gives preference to applications that meet the following competitive priority:

Providing parent training and information in one or more Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities. The Secretary awards 5 points to an application that meets the competitive priority relating to Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities published in the **Federal Register** on November 7, 1994 (59 FR 55544). These points are in addition to any points the application earns under the selection criteria for the program.

A list of areas that have been selected as Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities is included in an appendix to a notice published in the **Federal Register** on December 6, 1995 (60 FR 62699).

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$400,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding this maximum amount. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 40 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Program Authority: Section 682 of the Act.

Technology And Media Services For Individuals With Disabilities [CFDA No. 84.026]

Purpose Of Program: The purpose of this program is to promote the development, demonstration, and utilization of technology and to support educational media activities designed to be of educational value to children with disabilities. This program supports providing free educational materials, including textbooks, in accessible media for visually impaired and print disabled

students in elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and graduate schools.

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.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The selection criteria included in regulations for these programs in 34 CFR 332.32.

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

Priority: Under sections 661(e)(2) and 687 and 34 CFR 75.105 (c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition only those applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Recorded Audio Cassettes for Visually and Print Disabled Students (84.026K). This absolute priority was published in the **Federal Register** on November 7, 1994 (59 FR 55544).

Background: This priority would support recording, producing, duplicating, and distributing 15/16 ips (inch per second) four-track cassette versions of textbooks and other educational reading materials for students (elementary, secondary, postsecondary and graduate) who are visually or print disabled. These cassette tapes will help provide equal educational opportunities to target students and lessen some of the barriers they face in the classroom.

Priority:

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

- (1) Handle all requests for materials, including confirmation of eligibility by disability;
- (2) Ensure the project activities are conducted in compliance with section 121 of the Copyright Act, as amended.
- (3) Record or duplicate the books on 15/16 ips (inch per second), four-track cassettes of one hour per track recording time. (Publishers must be provided rights to copies of the master tape and rights to market the cassettes as they see fit);
- (4) Mail the cassettes on a free-loan, postage paid basis;
- (5) Handle returned cassettes, preservative re-recording, and all other associated administrative and circulation functions; and
- (6) To the extent that funds are not sufficient to meet the demand for free

materials, place a priority on providing free materials that are not otherwise required to be provided by educational agencies or institutions.

Applicants and resulting projects must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. (See section 661(f)(1)(A) of the Act).

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

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Maximum Award: The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$4,500,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding this maximum amount. However, because of budgetary considerations contingent upon congressional action, the Secretary may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Page Limits: The applicant must limit Part III of its application—Application Narrative, to no more than 40 double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). Please refer to the "Page Limit Requirements for All Applications" section of this notice for more specific information on this page limit requirement.

Program Authority: Section 687 of the Act.

Page Limit Requirements For All Applications: Part III of the application, the Application Narrative, requires applicants to address the selection criteria that will be used by reviewers in evaluating individual proposals. Applicants must limit the Part III—Application Narrative, to the specific page limit requirement listed under each priority. The Application Narrative must be double-spaced 8½ × 11" pages (on one side only) with one inch margins (top, bottom, and sides). This page limitation applies to all material presented in the application narrative—including, for example, any charts, tables, figures, and graphs. The application narrative page limit does not apply to: Part I—the cover sheet; Part II—the budget section (including the narrative budget justification); and Part IV—the assurances and certifications. Also, the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, or letters of support, while considered part of the application, are not subject to the page limitation. Applicants should note that reviewers

are not required to review any information provided in addition to the application information listed above. All sections of text in the application narrative 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 14 characters per inch. If using a nonproportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters to the inch. Double-spacing and font requirements do not apply within charts, tables, figures, and graphs, but the information presented in those formats should be easily readable. The

Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that does not adhere to these requirements.

For Applications and General Information Contact: Requests for applications and general information should be addressed to the Grants and Contracts Services Team, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2641. The preferred method for requesting information is to FAX your request to: (202) 205-8717. Telephone: (202) 260-9182.

Inergovernmental Review

Except for the Research and Innovation to Improve Services and

Results for Children with Disabilities, all other programs 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 those program.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT APPLICATION NOTICE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

CFDA No. and name	Applications available	Application deadline date	Deadline for intergovernmental review	Maximum award (per year) ¹	Page limit ²	Estimated number of awards
84.023C Field-Initiated Research Projects	08/08/97	10/01/97	.....	\$180,000	50	14
84.023B Student-Initiated Research Projects	8/08/97	2/06/98	.....	20,000	25	12
84.023N Initial Career Awards	8/08/97	10/01/97	.....	75,000	30	4
84.029A Preparation of Special Education, Related Services, and Early Intervention Personnel to Serve Infants, Toddlers, and Children with Low-Incidence Disabilities	8/08/97	10/01/97	12/01/97	300,000	40	16
84.029D Preparation of Leadership Personnel	8/08/97	9/26/97	11/25/97	225,000	40	6
84.029E Preparation of Personnel in Minority Institutions	8/8/97	9/26/97	11/25/97	200,000	40	16
84.029M Parent Training and Information Centers	8/08/97	10/17/97	12/14/97	400,000	40	13
84.026K Recorded Audio Cassettes for Visually and Print Disabled Students	8/08/97	9/12/97	11/10/97	4,500,000	40	1

¹ 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.

² Applicants must limit the Application Narrative, Part III of the Application, to the page limits noted above. Please refer to the "Page Limit" section of this notice for the specific requirements. The Secretary rejects and does not consider an application that does not adhere to this requirement.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205-8953. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of this notice or the application packages referred to in this notice in an alternate format (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Department as listed above.

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://gcs.ed.gov); or on the World Wide Web (at <http://gcs.ed.gov>). However, the official application notice

for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: July 30, 1997.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 97-20454 Filed 8-1-97; 8:45 am]

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