

Summary of Potential Costs and Benefits

The Assistant Secretary has determined this project to be beneficial to the ongoing research and further assistance of VR customers. No other direct financial contribution is expected of the grantee.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program. *Applicable Program Regulations:* 34 CFR part 373.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.235P Special Demonstration Programs—Model Demonstration Projects to Improve the Literacy and Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Disabilities)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 773(b).

Dated: July 22, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No. 84.235P]

Special Demonstration Programs—Model Demonstrations To Improve the Literacy and Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Disabilities; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

Purpose of Program: Special Demonstration Programs support projects that expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation and other services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act), or further the purposes of the Act in empowering individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society. This competition focuses attention on the adult literacy needs of individuals with learning disabilities pursuing employment under the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. We intend that projects funded under these priorities will demonstrate that certain specific literacy services may raise the literacy levels and earnings of individuals with disabilities compared to individuals who receive the usual vocational rehabilitation (VR) services.

Eligible Applicants: State VR agencies.

Applications Available: July 28, 2003.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 27, 2003.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 26, 2003.

Estimated Available Funds: \$1,600,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$200,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 8. Eight projects will be funded in total. Four projects will be funded under each of the two reading curricula described in the Background section of the notice of proposed priorities published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. It is suggested that you limit Part III to 35 pages.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 97, and 99. (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 373.

Priorities

Model Demonstrations To Improve the Literacy and Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Disabilities

It is the policy of the Department of Education not to solicit applications before the publication of final priorities. However, in this case it is essential to solicit applications on the basis of the notice of proposed priorities published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**, because the Department's authority to obligate these funds will expire on September 30, 2003. Applicants should base their applications on the proposed priorities. If changes are made in the final notice in response to public comments or other considerations, applicants will be given an opportunity to revise or resubmit their applications.

For FY 2003, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

Invitational Priority

The invitational priority in the notice of proposed priorities published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register** also applies to this competition.

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

Application Procedures

Note: Some of the procedures in these instructions for transmitting applications differ from those in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (34 CFR 75.102). Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, these amendments make procedural changes only and do not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), the Secretary has determined that proposed rulemaking is not required.

Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. The Special Demonstration Programs—CFDA number 84.235P is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the Special Demonstration Programs, you may submit your application to us in either electronic or paper format.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-Application). Users of e-Application will be entering data on-line while completing their applications. You may not e-mail a soft copy of a grant application to us. If you participate in this voluntary pilot project by submitting an application electronically, the data you enter on-line will be saved into a database. We request your participation in e-Application. We shall continue to evaluate its success and solicit suggestions for improvement.

If you participate in e-Application, please note the following:

- Your participation is voluntary.
- You will not receive any additional point value because you submit a grant application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit an application in paper format. When you enter the e-Application system, you will find information about its hours of operation.

- You may submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).

- Within 3 working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

1. Print ED 424 from e-Application.
2. The institution's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.
3. Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.
4. Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349.

- We may request that you give us original signatures on all other forms at a later date.

- *Closing Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability:* If you elect to participate in the e-Application pilot for the Special Demonstration Programs and you are prevented from submitting

your application on the closing date because the e-Application system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of 1 business day in order to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery. For us to grant this extension—

1. You must be a registered user of e-Application, and have initiated an e-Application for this competition; and

2. (a) The e-Application system must be unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date; or

- (b) The e-Application system must be unavailable for any period of time during the last hour of operation (that is, for any period of time between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time) on the deadline date.

The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension you must contact either (1) the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or (2) the e-GRANTS help desk at 1-888-336-8930.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Special Demonstration Programs at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

We have included additional information about the e-Application pilot project (see Parity Guidelines between Paper and Electronic Applications) in the application package.

For Applications Contact: Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Telephone (toll free): 1-877-433-7827. FAX (301) 470-1244. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call (toll free): 1-877-576-7734.

You may also contact ED Pubs at its Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>.

Or you may contact ED Pubs at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.235P.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team,

U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 205-8207. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternative format the standard forms included in the application package.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susan-Marie Marsh, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3316, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2650. Telephone: (202) 358-2796, or via Internet: susan-marie.marsh@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD, you may call FIRS at 1-800-877-8339. Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed in the preceding paragraph.

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Dated: July 22, 2003.

Loretta Petty Chittum,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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