

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Personnel Development To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—Preparation of Leadership Personnel; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.325D.

DATES: Applications Available: June 5, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: July 5, 2006.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 5, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education.

Estimated Available Funds: \$4,800,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$171,969–\$200,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$196,200.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 24.

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

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Full Text of Announcement**I. Funding Opportunity Description**

Purpose of Program: The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for highly qualified personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with infants or toddlers with disabilities, or children with disabilities; and (2) 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.

Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662(d) and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2006 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is: *Preparation of Leadership Personnel*.

This priority supports and is limited to projects that train personnel at the preservice doctoral or post-doctoral level in early intervention, special education or related services and at the advanced graduate level (masters and specialists) in special education administration/supervision. In order to be eligible under this priority, programs must provide training and support for scholars to complete their training, within the performance period of the grant.

Therefore, only the following types of programs of study will meet the requirements of the priority:

1. A major in special education, related services or early intervention at the doctoral or post-doctoral level; and
2. Training at the advanced graduate level (masters and specialists programs) in special education administration/supervision.

Note: Training that leads to a Doctor of Audiology (D Aud) degree is not included as part of this priority.

Projects funded under this absolute priority must—

(a) Demonstrate in the narrative section of the application under “Quality of Project Services” how—

(1) The program prepares personnel to address the specialized needs of children with disabilities from diverse cultural and language backgrounds by—

(i) Identifying the competencies needed by leadership personnel to understand and work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations (the competencies identified should reflect the current knowledge base); and

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

(2) All relevant coursework for the proposed program reflects current research and pedagogy on—

(i) Participation and achievement in the general education curriculum and improved outcomes for children with disabilities; and

(ii) The provision of coordinated services in natural environments to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

(3) The program offers integrated training and practice opportunities that will enhance the collaborative skills of all personnel who share responsibility for providing effective services for children with disabilities.

(4) For programs that train personnel in early intervention, special education or related services, the program ensures that scholars are knowledgeable about:

(i) The provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) that relate

to students with disabilities; (ii) the IDEA and NCLB requirement that teachers be highly qualified; and (iii) the need to foster collaboration between regular and special education teachers.

(5) The proposed training program is aligned with State learning standards for children, if appropriate;

(b) Submit annual data on each scholar who receives grant support. Projects funded under this priority must submit this scholar data electronically within 60 days after the end of each grant budget year. Applicants are encouraged to visit the Personnel Prep Data (PPD) Web site at <http://www.osepppd.org> for further information. This data collection is in addition to and does not supplant the annual grant performance report required of each grantee for continuation funding (see 34 CFR 75.590);

(c) Budget for a three-day Project Director’s meeting in Washington, DC, during each year of the project;

(d) If the project maintains a Web site, include relevant information and documents in a format that meets a government or industry-recognized standard for accessibility;

(e) Provide a detailed description of the program, including the sequence of the courses offered in the program that describe the comprehensive curriculum designed to meet program goals and obtain mastery of the following required professional domains—

- (1) Research methodology;
- (2) Personnel preparation;
- (3) Policy/advocacy or professional practice.

(f) Include in the application narrative under “Quality of Project Evaluation,” a clear, effective plan for evaluating the extent to which graduates of the training program have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide research-based instruction and services that result in improved outcomes for children with disabilities;

(g) Communicate student evaluation results to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in required annual performance reports for continuation funding and the project final performance report;

(h) Certify that all scholars will be recruited into the program with the intention of graduating from the program during the program performance period;

(i) Certify that the institution will not require scholars recruited into the program to work as a condition of receiving a scholarship, e.g., as graduate assistants, unless the work is required to complete their training program;

(j) If the program is addressing national or regional needs, demonstrate the existence of the needs through appropriate research data; and

(k) Designate at least 65 percent of the total requested budget for scholarship support or provide justification for any designation less than 65 percent. Examples of sufficient justification for proposing less than 65 percent of the budget for scholarship support might include:

- A project servicing rural areas that provides long distance training, and that may require Web Masters, adjunct professors, or mentors to operate effectively.
- A project that is expanding or adding a new emphasis area to the program, and as a result of this expansion, may need additional faculty or other resources such as expert consultants, additional training supplies, or equipment that would enhance the program.

Please note, projects that are funded to develop, expand, or add a new area of emphasis to special education or related services programs must provide information on how these new areas will be sustained once Federal funding ends.

Statutory Requirements: To be considered for an award, an applicant must also satisfy the following requirements contained in section 662(e) through (h) of the IDEA—

(a) Demonstrate that the activities described in the application will address needs identified by the State or States the applicant proposes to serve and that the State or States intend to accept successful completion of the proposed personnel preparation program as meeting State personnel standards or other requirements in State law or regulation for serving children with disabilities or serving infants and toddlers with disabilities (see sections 662(e)(2)(A) and 662(f)(2) of IDEA). Letters from the State or States that the project proposes to serve could be one method for addressing this requirement;

(b) Demonstrate that the applicant and one or more State educational agencies—or, if appropriate, State appointed lead agencies responsible for providing early intervention services—or local educational agencies will cooperate in carrying out and monitoring the proposed project (see section 662(e)(2)(B) of IDEA);

(c) Meet State and professionally recognized standards for the preparation of leadership personnel in special education, related services, or early intervention fields (see section 662(f)(2) of IDEA); and

(d) Provide an assurance that the applicant will ensure that individuals who receive financial assistance under the proposed project agree to subsequently work in the appropriate field, for a period of 2 years for every year for which the scholarship was received, or repay all or part of the amount of the scholarship, in accordance with section 662(h)(1) of IDEA and 34 CFR part 304. Applicants must describe how they will inform scholarship recipients of this service obligation requirement.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities and requirements. Section 681(d) of the IDEA makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 1481.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, 99; and 34 CFR part 304.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$4,800,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$171,969–\$200,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$196,200.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$200,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 24.

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

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. **Eligible Applicants:** Institutions of higher education.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** This program does not involve cost sharing or matching.

3. **Other: General Requirements—**(a) The projects funded under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Applicants and grant recipients funded under this competition must

involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26 in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. **Address to Request Application Package:** 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 84.325D.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII of this notice.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission:** Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition. 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. You must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 50 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” x 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

The page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, the references, or the letters of support. However, you must include all of the application narrative in Part III.

We will reject your application if—

- You apply these standards and exceed the page limit; or
- You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:*

Applications Available: June 5, 2006.
Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: July 5, 2006.

Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov), or in paper format by mail or hand delivery. For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or by mail or hand delivery, please refer to section IV. 6. *Other Submission Requirements* in this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 5, 2006.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically or in paper format by mail or hand delivery.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications*

We have been accepting applications electronically through the Department's e-Application system since FY 2000. In order to expand on those efforts and comply with the President's Management Agenda, we are continuing to participate as a partner in the new government wide Grants.gov Apply site in FY 2006. Preparation of Leadership Personnel—CFDA Number 84.325D is one of the competitions included in this project. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must use the Grants.gov Apply site at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Preparation of Leadership Personnel—CFDA Number 84.325D competition at: <http://www.grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in Grants.gov is voluntary.
- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.
- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.
- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

• To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see <http://www.Grants.gov/GetStarted>). These steps include (1) registering your organization, (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step

Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/assets/GrantsgovCoBrandBrochure8X11.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to successfully submit an application via Grants.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit your application in paper format.

- You may submit all documents electronically, including all information typically included on the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text) or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. The Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you a second confirmation by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

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

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice. If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, please contact the person listed elsewhere in this notice

under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number (if available). We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center,
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.325D),
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.,
Washington, DC 20202-4260, or

By mail through a commercial carrier:

U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center—Stop
4260, Attention: (CFDA Number
84.325D), 7100 Old Landover Road,
Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark, or
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery

If you submit your application in paper format by hand delivery, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.325D), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays. *Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications:* If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 4 of ED 424 the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118. In addition, to satisfy the requirements of the priority in this notice, you must submit annual data on each scholar who receives grant support through this program.

4. Performance Measures: Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), the Department has established a set of performance measures that are designed to yield information on the effectiveness of the Personnel Preparation program. These measures include: (1) The extent to which projects incorporate scientifically- or evidence-based practices; (2) the extent to which scholars exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance; (3) the extent to which degree/certification recipients are employed upon program completion in the area(s) for which they were trained; and (4) the extent to which degree/certification recipients are employed in the area(s) for which they were trained and are fully qualified under IDEA.

If funded, applicants will be required to collect and report data on grant-supported scholars through the PPD Web site at <http://www.oespppd.org> (see paragraph (b) under the Absolute Priority section of this notice).

Beyond the performance measures specifically described in this notice, the Department has also developed long-term measures that are designed to yield information on various aspects of program quality (e.g., the extent to which scholars trained under IDEA-funded training programs are knowledgeable and skilled in scientifically- or evidence-based practices for children with disabilities; and the extent to which program graduates maintain employment for three or more years in the area(s) for which they were trained). Grantees may be asked to participate in assessing and providing information on such long-term aspects of program quality.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Gilmore Ph.D., U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 4083, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2600. Telephone: (202) 245-7354.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) 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 by contacting the following office: The Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363.

VIII. Other Information

Electronic Access to This Document: You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>.

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Dated: May 30, 2006.

John H. Hager,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 06-5110 Filed 6-2-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities—Combined Priority for Personnel Preparation; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.325K.

Note: This notice includes one priority with five focus areas, and funding information for each focus area of the competition.

DATES: *Applications Available:* June 5, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: July 5, 2006.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 5, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Estimated Available Funds: \$13,750,000. For funding information regarding each of the specific focus areas of the priority, see the chart in the Award Information section of this notice.

Estimated Range of Awards: See chart.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: See chart.

Maximum Awards: See chart.

Estimated Number of Awards: See chart.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for highly qualified personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with children with disabilities; and (2) 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.

The Secretary is particularly interested in supporting high quality training programs that are preparing occupational therapists to provide services to infants, toddlers, children and youth who are served under IDEA.

Priority: In this competition, we are establishing one absolute priority (with five focus areas), a competitive preference priority within one of these five focus areas, and one separate competitive preference priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), these priorities are from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662 and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2006 this priority is, except as otherwise specified, an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is: *Combined Priority for Personnel Preparation.*

Background: State agencies, university training programs, local

schools, and other community-based entities confirm the importance and difficulty of improving training programs for personnel to serve children with disabilities or infants and toddlers with disabilities.

The national demand for fully credentialed special education, related services and early intervention personnel to serve children with disabilities also exceeds available supply. Thus, Federal support is required to improve both the quality and supply of personnel who serve children with disabilities.

Priority: The purpose of this priority is to increase the number and quality of personnel who are fully credentialed to serve children with disabilities especially in areas of chronic shortage, by supporting projects that prepare special education, early intervention, and related services personnel at the associate, baccalaureate, master's and specialist levels. In order to be eligible under this priority, programs must provide training and support for students to complete, within the term of the project, a degree, State certification, professional license, or State endorsement in early intervention, special education or related services. Programs preparing students to be special education paraprofessionals, related services assistants or educational interpreters are also eligible under this priority. The Secretary is particularly interested in programs that prepare special educators who provide instruction in core academic areas to children with disabilities to be highly qualified under section 602(10) of IDEA, in accordance with State requirements. The Secretary is also particularly interested in programs that provide enhanced support for beginning special educators (see section 662(b)(3) of IDEA).

Absolute Priority Requirements: To be considered for an award under this priority, applicants must—

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of Project Services," how—

(1) Training requirements and required coursework for the proposed training program incorporate research-based practices that improve outcomes for children with disabilities (including relevant research citations);

(2) The program is designed to offer integrated training and practice opportunities that will enhance the skills of appropriate personnel who share responsibility for providing effective services to children with disabilities;

(3) The program prepares personnel to address the specialized needs of