



4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind--Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind Training and Technical Assistance

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2020 for the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program--Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Training and Technical Assistance, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.177Z. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820-0018.

DATES: Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: September 3, 2020.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant

Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768) and available at [www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf](http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Williams, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 5100, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-5176. Telephone: (202) 245-7586. Email: [mary.williams@ed.gov](mailto:mary.williams@ed.gov).

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is to provide training and technical assistance to designated State agencies (DSAs)--the State agencies that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind--that receive grant funding under the OIB program and to other service providers that receive OIB program funding from DSAs to provide services to consumers. The training and technical assistance are designed to improve the operation and performance of programs and services for

older individuals who are blind resulting in their enhanced independence and self-sufficiency.

Priorities: This notice includes one absolute priority and one competitive preference priority. These priorities are from the notice of final priorities and definitions for this program published elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register* (NFP).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2020, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Training and Technical Assistance.

This priority supports a cooperative agreement to establish an OIB Training and Technical Assistance Center (Center) to provide universal, targeted, and intensive training and technical assistance to designated State agencies (DSAs) funded under the OIB program and to any service providers that DSAs fund to provide services directly to consumers. The Center will develop and provide training and technical assistance in the following general topic areas:

(a) Community outreach methods and strategies to identify potential recipients of services.

(b) Promising practices, based on "promising evidence" as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c), including the development and dissemination of relevant materials to facilitate the delivery of high-quality services.

(c) Program performance, including data reporting and analysis.

(d) Financial and management practices, including practices to ensure compliance with grant administration requirements.

To meet the requirements of this priority, the Center must, at a minimum, conduct the following activities:

(a) Annually provide intensive training and technical assistance to a minimum of three DSAs or other service providers on the four general topic areas in this priority. Intensive training and technical assistance may be provided through remote delivery as appropriate. The technical assistance must be--

(1) Consistent with the project activities and tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the DSA or other service provider receiving intensive training and technical assistance;

(2) Provided under an agreement with each DSA or other service provider that, at a minimum, details the purpose, intended outcomes, and requirements for subsequent

evaluation of the training and technical assistance; and

(3) Assessed 90 days after completion to ensure that the DSAs and other service providers receiving intensive training and technical assistance are applying it effectively, and to address any issues or challenges in its implementation.

(b) Provide a range of targeted training and technical assistance and universal training and technical assistance products and services on the four general topic areas in this priority. The training and technical assistance must include, at a minimum, the following activities:

(1) In each year of the project, provide a minimum of 10 webinars, podcasts, video conferences, teleconferences, or other virtual methods of dissemination of information and training and technical assistance on the four general topic areas in this priority to describe and disseminate information about emerging promising practices.

(2) Develop new information technology (IT) platforms or systems, or modify existing platforms and systems, as follows:

(i) Develop or modify, and maintain, a state-of-the-art IT platform sufficient to support webinars, podcasts, video conferences, teleconferences, and other virtual

methods of dissemination of information and training and technical assistance; and

(ii) Develop or modify, and maintain, a state-of-the-art archiving and dissemination system that is open and available to the public, at no cost, and that provides a central location for later use of training and technical assistance products, including course curricula, audiovisual materials, webinars, examples of emerging and promising practices related to the four general topic areas in this priority, and any other training and technical assistance products developed by the grantee and others.

Note: All products produced by the Center must meet government and industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

(c) Conduct outreach to DSAs so that they are aware of, and can participate in, training and technical assistance activities.

(d) Establish a community of practice<sup>1</sup> that will act as a vehicle for communication, an exchange of information among DSAs and other service providers, and a forum for sharing the results of training and technical assistance activities that are in progress or that have been

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<sup>1</sup> See: [www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/dis104.html](http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/dis104.html).

completed.

(e) Facilitate annually a minimum of one in-person conference, or, if health and safety reasons make an in-person conference infeasible, a virtual conference, for the purpose of dissemination of information related to emerging promising practices and ongoing technical assistance needs and activities.

(f) Communicate and coordinate, on an ongoing basis, with other federally funded training and technical assistance projects, particularly Department-funded projects, to ensure that training and technical assistance activities are complementary and non-duplicative.

(g) Conduct an evaluation to determine the impact of the Center's training and technical assistance on the DSAs and other service providers that received the Center's services.

Competitive Preference Priority: For FY 2020, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional 5 points to an application, depending on how well the application meets the competitive preference priority.

This priority is:

Identify and Demonstrate how Specific Technical Assistance Strategies Provided to OIB Grantees will

Facilitate Collaboration and Leveraging of Resources at the State and Local Level.

To meet the requirements of this priority, the Center must, at a minimum, develop technical assistance focused on partnerships to facilitate the sharing of information and leveraging of resources from other systems that work with aging individuals and individuals with disabilities.

These technical assistance strategies must be designed to improve the capacity of OIB grantee staff, and staff from other service providers that receive OIB program funding from DSAs to provide services to the OIB population, to acquire and develop the skills and tools they need to help the OIB population sustain and increase their ability to live independently in their homes and communities.

Definitions:

For FY 2020, the following definitions from the NFP apply to this competition:

*Intensive training and technical assistance* means training and technical assistance provided to a DSA, or other service provider that receives OIB program funding from a DSA to provide services, primarily on-site or through remote delivery, as needed and appropriate, over an extended period. Intensive training and technical

assistance is based on an ongoing relationship between the training and technical assistance center staff and a DSA, or other service provider that receives OIB program funding from a DSA to provide services, under the terms of a signed intensive training and technical assistance agreement.

*Targeted training and technical assistance* means training and technical assistance based on needs common to one or more DSAs, or other service providers that receive OIB program funding from DSAs to provide services, on a time-limited basis and with a limited commitment of training and technical assistance center resources. Targeted training and technical assistance are delivered through virtual or in-person methods tailored to the identified needs of the participating DSAs, or other service providers that receive OIB program funding from DSAs to provide services.

*Universal training and technical assistance* means training and technical assistance broadly available to DSAs, or other service providers that receive OIB program funding from DSAs to provide services, and other interested parties resulting in minimal interaction with training and technical assistance center staff. Universal training and technical assistance includes generalized presentations, products, and related activities available through a

website or through brief contact with the training and technical assistance center staff.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 796j-1.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 367. (e) The NFP.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

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

## II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: \$596,956.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$596,956 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

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

Note: Under 34 CFR 75.562(c), an indirect cost reimbursement on a training grant is limited to the recipient's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. Indirect costs in excess of the limit may not be charged directly, used to satisfy matching or cost-sharing requirements, or charged to another Federal award.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

### III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: State and public or non-profit agencies and organizations and institutions of higher education that have the capacity to provide training and technical assistance in the provision of independent living services for older individuals who are blind and have demonstrated through their application a capacity to provide the level of training and technical assistance as indicated in the priority section of this notice.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768) and available at [www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf](http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf), which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. Submission of Proprietary Information: Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the OIB Training and Technical Assistance competition, your application may include business information that you consider proprietary. In 34 CFR 5.11 we define "business information" and describe the process we use in determining whether any of that information is proprietary and, thus, protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended).

Because we plan to make successful applications available to the public, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information.

Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you believe is exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4. In the appropriate Appendix section of your application, under "Other Attachments Form," please list the page number or numbers on which we can find this information. For additional information please see 34 CFR 5.11(c).

3. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. However, under 34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to make an award by the end of FY 2020.

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

5. Recommended 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. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 45 pages and (2) use 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).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended 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, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative.

## V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed below:

(a) Significance (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses;

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project;

(iii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the OIB population; and

(iv) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in independent living services.

(b) Quality of project design (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance;

(iii) The extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population; and

(iv) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

(c) Quality of project services (25 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

(ii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services;

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services; and

(iv) The extent to which the technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(d) Quality of the project evaluation (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project;

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates;

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(e) Adequacy of resources (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the

applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;  
and

(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(f) Quality of project personnel (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel;

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors;  
and

(iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(g) Quality of the management plan (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project;

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project;  
and

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this competition, the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or

other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2

CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

## 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); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

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. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant

deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works.

Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) 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 multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance

report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to [www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

5. Performance Measures: The goal of this grant is to provide training and technical assistance designed to improve the operation and performance of programs and services for older individuals who are blind resulting in their enhanced independence and self-sufficiency.

The cooperative agreement will specify the measures that will be used to assess the grantee's performance against the goals and objectives of the project, including outcome measures and measures that reflect the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the training and technical assistance products developed by the Center. Such measures will include, at a minimum, (1) the improved administration, operation, and performance of the DSAs or other service providers as measured through the attainment of goals established in the intensive training and technical assistance agreements; and (2) the number and percentage of DSAs or other service providers receiving intensive training and technical assistance that report

that the training and technical assistance they received was of high quality, relevant, and useful.

Other specific measures related to the priority areas for training and technical assistance will be determined on an annual basis and specified in the cooperative agreement.

In its annual and final performance reports to the Department, the grantee will be expected to report the data outlined in the cooperative agreement that is needed to assess its performance. The annual performance reports must include both quantitative and qualitative information necessary to assess the Center's performance on the outcome measures established in the cooperative agreement. The data used must be valid and verifiable.

The annual performance reports must provide, at a minimum, specific information on the number of training and technical assistance activities, the topics of such activities, the type of training and technical assistance provided (i.e., intensive, targeted, universal), the number and types of participants served (i.e., DSAs or other providers of services under the OIB program), and summary data from participant evaluations.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial

progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

#### VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at

www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at [www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov). Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

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Mark Schultz  
*Commissioner, Rehabilitation  
Services Administration,  
Delegated the Authority to Perform  
the Functions and Duties of the  
Assistant Secretary for the Office  
of Special Education and  
Rehabilitative Services.*

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