



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and
Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children
with Disabilities and Demonstration and Training Programs--
National Technical Assistance Center on Transition for
Students and Youth with Disabilities**

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is
issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for
fiscal year (FY) 2025 for the National Technical Assistance
Center on Transition for Students and Youth with
Disabilities.

DATES:

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 30
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 90
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Pre-Application Webinar Information: No later than [INSERT
DATE 5 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL
REGISTER], the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will post details on

pre-recorded informational webinars designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to interested applicants. Links to the webinars may be found at www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/osers/osep/new-osep-grant-competitions.

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 December 23, 2024 (89 FR 104528) and available at www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-30488.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Guardino, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-6403. Email: David.Guardino@ed.gov or Tara Jordan, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202. Email: Tara.Jordan@ed.gov.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for

children with disabilities by providing TA, supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The purpose of the Demonstration and Training program is to provide competitive grants, including cooperative agreements to, or enter into contracts with, eligible entities to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), or to further the purposes and policies in sections 2(b) and (c) of the Rehabilitation Act by supporting activities that increase the provision, extent, availability, scope, and quality of rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act, including related research and evaluation activities.

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.326E.

OMB Control Number: 1820-0028.

Priorities: This competition includes two absolute priorities. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), Absolute Priority 1 is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 663 and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1463 and 1481(d)). In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv), Absolute Priority 2 is from section 303(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; 29 U.S.C. 773(b).

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2025 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet both priorities.

Background:

IDEA has specific requirements that individualized education program (IEP) teams must follow related to transition services. Local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools report that they need support in how to provide age-appropriate transition assessments, work experiences, and transition services, and in how to obtain the necessary collaborating partners to attend IEP meetings to effectively meet IDEA requirements. States report data annually on the percentage of youth ages 16 and above with IEPs that meet the transition requirements under IDEA. Data for FY 2022 showed that only 14 States reported 100 percent compliance.

VR agencies also indicate that they need support in implementing transition services, including pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). Under the Rehabilitation Act, VR agencies must reserve and expend not less than 15 percent of the Federal VR grant award for the provision of pre-ETS to all students and youth with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for services under the VR program. States continue to

request TA on the most effective use of funds reserved for pre-ETS and ways to implement pre-ETS in a variety of settings that will lead to improved outcomes for youth. Recent Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring reports¹ also identified information sharing, coaching, strategic planning, navigating regulations, and strengthening partnerships with State educational agencies (SEAs), LEAs, and families to effectively deliver pre-ETS as areas of greatest need.

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition for Students and Youth with Disabilities.

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a National Technical Assistance Center on Transition for Students and Youth with Disabilities (Center). The Center will assist SEAs, LEAs, State VR agencies, and other VR and special education and related service providers to implement effective practices and strategies that ensure students and youth with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills, and supports needed for postsecondary education,

¹ Recent RSA monitoring reports can be found at <https://rsa.ed.gov/about/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-state-grants/monitoring-of-vocational-rehabilitation-program>.

training, and employment. The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Increased SEA and VR agency capacity to collect valid and reliable data (i.e. absentee rates, State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) indicators B1 (graduation rates), B2 (dropout rates), B13 (compliance with IDEA IEP transition requirements), B14 (post-school outcomes), and RSA-911 (Case Service Reports)) for decision making and program improvement at State and local levels, and share these data across agencies and with constituents, including OSERS-funded parent centers and career and technical education (CTE) providers;

(b) Increased SEA and VR agency capacity to deliver professional development and TA to LEAs (including public charter schools that are LEAs); to carry out IDEA and VR transition service requirements; to reduce student absenteeism and drop out; and to improve access to CTE, credential attainment, high school completion, postsecondary education, competitive integrated employment (CIE), and independent living for students and youth with disabilities;

(c) Improved SEA and VR agency methods and strategies for engaging students and youth with disabilities and their families at the local level, working with LEAs (including public charter schools that are LEAs), as partners to

improve the delivery of transition services including pre-ETS and VR transition services; and

(d) Increased SEA, LEA (including public charter schools that are LEAs), and VR agency capacity to implement career pathways including work-based learning experiences, internships, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship activities for students and youth with disabilities.

In addition, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the following requirements:

(a) Describe, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance," how the proposed project will--

(1) Address training and information needs and gaps identified by SEAs, LEAs (including public charter schools that are LEAs), State VR agencies, and other VR service providers, including those located in rural areas, to implement practices and strategies that will promote collaboration among agency personnel; prevent students with disabilities from dropping out of school; and facilitate the transition from secondary school to college and careers. To meet this requirement, the applicant must:-

(i) Demonstrate knowledge of new and emerging issues, and present applicable national and State data on TA and training needs of SEAs, LEAs (including public charter schools that are LEAs), and VR agencies related to meeting IDEA transition service requirements; reducing student

absenteeism and drop out; and improving access to CTE, credential attainment, high school completion, postsecondary education, CIE, and independent living for students and youth with disabilities;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of exemplary career pathway models, including work-based learning experiences, internships, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship activities, that will assist SEAs, LEAs (including public charter schools that are LEAs), and VR agencies in improving post-school outcomes for students and youth with disabilities;

(iii) Demonstrate knowledge of VR agencies' current efforts to improve engagement and promote collaboration with secondary schools, public charter schools, youth programs, and other programs that provide services to students and youth with disabilities for the purpose of providing pre-ETS; and

(2) Demonstrate understanding of the need for and value of secondary transition planning, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills at an early age, and the types of support needed by elementary and secondary general and special education and related services personnel, and families to support secondary transition planning, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills;

(3) Demonstrate knowledge of effective means to improve communication and engagement among students in

public and nonpublic schools, parents, families, education professionals, employers, and SEA, LEA (including public charter schools that are LEAs), and VR personnel to enhance collaboration, and encourage states to take the lead in advocating for and implementing policies that will best serve and improve the post-school outcomes of students and youth with disabilities and their families; and

(4) Demonstrate knowledge of required federal data collections and how States use the data for decision making and program improvement at State and local levels to reduce student absenteeism and drop out, and support secondary transition services, high school completion, and post-school outcomes.

(b) Describe, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project design," how the proposed project will--

(1) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(2) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

(3) Be based on current research and make use of evidence-based² practices (EBPs). To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) The current research on the most effective ways to prepare students and youth with disabilities to engage in transition services including pre-ETS and VR services, CTE, credential attainment, high school completion, postsecondary school, CIE, and independent living;

(ii) The current research about adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed TA; and

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research and EBPs in the development and delivery of its products and services to improve systems that serve students and youth with disabilities and their families;

(4) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to

² For the purposes of this priority, "evidence-based" means, at a minimum, evidence that demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1), where a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How it proposes to further the knowledge base for State and local systems on the most effective systems and the critical components needed to prepare students and youth with disabilities to engage in transition services including pre-ETS and VR services, CTE, credential attainment, high school completion, postsecondary school, CIE, and independent living;

(ii) The proposed approach to universal, general TA,³ which must describe--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services;

(B) The products and services that the project proposes to make available;

(C) The development and maintenance of a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets or exceeds government- or industry-recognized standards for accessibility for individuals with disabilities; and

³ "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA project staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA project staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA project's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA project staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

(D) The expected reach and impact of universal, general TA;

(iii) The proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,⁴ which must describe--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services;

(B) The products and services that the project proposes to make available;

(C) The proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, including, at a minimum, an assessment of potential recipients' current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(D) The expected impact of targeted, specialized TA;

(iv) The proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,⁵ which must describe--

⁴ "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA project staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

⁵ "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA project staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients from a variety of settings and geographic distribution, that will receive the products and services designed to improve post-school outcomes;

(B) The proposed approach to measure the readiness of SEAs, LEAs (including public charters schools that are LEAs), and VR agencies to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, their ability to build capacity, and their ability to implement and sustain TA at the local, district, or State level; and

(C) The expected impact of intensive, sustained TA;

(5) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate, including the Parent Training and Information centers and Community Parent Resource Centers funded under sections 671, 672, and 681(d) of IDEA and the regional and national Parent Information and Training centers funded under section 303(c) of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as other Department-funded projects and those supported by other Federal agencies, including those funded by the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Community

Living, and the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, as appropriate, and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources, such as non-Federal funds and in-kind contributions, to achieve the intended project outcomes; and

(6) Systematically disseminate information, products, and services to varied intended audiences. To address this requirement the applicant must describe--

(i) The variety of dissemination strategies the project will use throughout the five years of the project to promote awareness and use of its products and services;

(ii) How the project will tailor dissemination strategies across all planned levels of TA to ensure that products and services reach intended recipients, and those recipients can access and use those products and services;

(iii) How the project's dissemination plan is connected to the proposed outcomes of the project; and

(iv) How the project will evaluate and correct all digital products and external communications to ensure they meet or exceed government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation or other evidence-building," describe how the project will develop an

evaluation plan in consultation with, and to be implemented by, a third-party evaluator.⁶ The evaluation plan must--

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions must be related to the project's proposed logic model required under paragraph (b) (1) (ii);

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. This description must specify the measures and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to the evaluation questions and include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The

⁶ A "third-party" evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, nor have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the Annual Performance Report (APR); and

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a third-party evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Describe, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources," how--

(1) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(2) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits, and funds will be spent in a way that increases their efficiency and cost-effectiveness, including by reducing waste or achieving better outcomes.

(e) Describe, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how--

(1) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(2) The proposed project will make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities, as appropriate, to carry out the proposed activities;

(3) The proposed project will implement project management techniques to ensure the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget; and

(4) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients.

(f) Address the following application requirements.
The applicant must--

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, after receipt of the award, and an annual one and one-half day planning meeting in Washington, DC, with the OSEP project officer, RSA project officer, and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer, the RSA project officer, and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two-day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period; and

(iii) Two annual two-day trips to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP;

(3) Provide an assurance that the project will reallocate unused travel funds no later than the end of the third quarter if the kick-off or planning meetings are conducted virtually;

(4) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(5) Describe how it will engage doctoral students or post-doctoral fellows in the project to increase the number of future leaders in the field who are knowledgeable about exemplary systems, practices, and strategies that will reduce student absenteeism and drop out, and improve access to CTE, credential attainment, high school completion, postsecondary education, CIE, and independent living for students and youth with disabilities; and

(6) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products

and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to a new award at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances, a failure to make substantial progress, or a failure to maintain financial and administrative management systems that meet the requirements in 2 CFR 200.302, Financial management, and 200.303, Internal controls. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

Absolute Priority 2: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition for Students and Youth with Disabilities--Vocational Rehabilitation Demonstration and Training Program.

Projects that are designed to include initiatives focused on improving transition from education, including postsecondary education, to employment, particularly in competitive integrated employment, for youth who are individuals with significant disabilities and address the needs of underserved populations, unserved and underserved areas, individuals with significant disabilities, low-incidence disability population or individuals residing in federally designated empowerment zones and enterprise

communities.

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. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to Absolute Priority 1; Absolute Priority 2 is from the program statute.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1463, 1481, and-1482.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

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 (OMB) 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 Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The Rehabilitation National Activities Program regulations at 34 CFR 373.

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 (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: \$4,099,988.

Rehabilitation Act funds: \$2,000,000.

IDEA funds: \$2,099,988.

Note: Applicants must address regulations outlining funding restrictions referenced in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice, in Part III Eligibility Information, and in Part IV Application and Submission Information of this notice. Applicants must submit an ED-524 budget form and include a budget narrative in the application specific to IDEA funding. Applicants must also submit an ED-524 budget form and include a budget narrative in the application specific to Rehabilitation Act funding.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$4,099,998 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.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Public or nonprofit agencies or organizations; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Note: SEAs, State lead agencies under Part C of the IDEA, State vocational rehabilitation agencies, LEAs (including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law), IHEs, and community rehabilitation programs are eligible to apply as public or nonprofit agencies or organizations.

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

b. *Indirect Cost Rate Information:* This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/foi#Indirect-Cost-Division.

c. *Administrative Cost Limitation:* This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance.

3. *Subgrantees:* Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c), a grantee under this competition may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its application under Absolute Priority 1--to the following types of entities: IHEs, nonprofit organizations suitable to carry out the activities proposed in the application,

and other public agencies. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the grantee, consistent with 34 CFR 75.708(b)(2).

A grantee may not make a subgrant to carry out project activities described in its application under Absolute Priority 2. However, a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services, in accordance with 2 CFR part 200 (Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance) as adopted at 2 CFR part 3474, consistent with 34 CFR 373.23(b).

4. Other General Requirements:

(a) Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to Absolute Priority 1, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

(c) Recipients of funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to Absolute Priority 2, (1) advise individuals with disabilities who

are applicants for or recipients of the services, or the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, of the availability and purposes of the Client Assistance Program, including information on means of seeking assistance under that program; and (4) provide, through a careful appraisal and study, an assessment and evaluation of the project that indicates the significance or worth of processes, methodologies, and practices implemented by the project. (34 CFR 373.23(a)).

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 December 23, 2024 (89 FR 104528), and available at www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-30488, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. *Intergovernmental Review:* This competition 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.

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

4. *Recommended Page Limit:* The application narrative 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 70 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, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are as follows:

(a) *Significance (10 points).*

The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The likely utility of the resources (such as materials, processes, techniques, or data infrastructure) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for effective use in a variety of conditions, populations, or settings.

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

(3) The potential contribution of the proposed project to improve the provision of rehabilitative services, increase the number or quality of rehabilitation counselors, or develop and implement effective strategies for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

(b) *Quality of the project design (35 points).*

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the

design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program.

(2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project demonstrates meaningful community engagement and input to ensure that the project is appropriate to successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs and will be used to inform continuous improvement strategies.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will include coordination with other Federal investments, as well as appropriate agencies and organizations providing similar services to the target population.

(4) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to build recipient and project capacity in ways that lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(c) *Quality of the project evaluation or other evidence-building (20 points).*

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are thorough, feasible, relevant, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building will provide performance feedback and provide formative, diagnostic, or interim data that is a periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quality data that are quantitative and qualitative.

(4) The extent to which the evaluator has the qualifications, including the relevant training, experience, and independence, required to conduct an evaluation of the proposed project, including experience conducting evaluations of similar methodology as proposed and with evaluations for the proposed population and setting.

(d) *Adequacy of resources (10 points).*

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

(1) The adequacy of support for the project, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(2) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) *Quality of the management plan (25 points).*

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the key personnel in the project, when hired, have the qualifications required for the proposed project, including formal training or work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project, and represent or have lived experiences of the target population.

(4) The adequacy of plans for ensuring the use of quantitative and qualitative data, including meaningful community member and partner input, to inform continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

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).

In the event there are two or more applications with the same final score, and there are insufficient funds to fully support each of these applications, the score under selection criterion (b) *Quality of the project design* will be used as a tiebreaker. If the scores remain tied, then the score under selection criterion (d) *Adequacy of resources* will be used to break the tie.

3. *Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:*

In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process.

4. *Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:*

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under

this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, under 2 CFR 3474.10, 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.

5. *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), 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 System for Award Management's (SAM) Responsibility / Qualification reports (formerly referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)). You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in the Responsibility / Qualification reports in SAM.

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 SAM semiannually. Please review these requirements 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 also may 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. *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 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.

5. *Performance Measures:* For the purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, the Department has established a set of performance measures including long-term measures that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program. These measures are:

- Program Performance Measure #1: The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.

- Program Performance Measure #2: The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #3: The percentage of all Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #4: The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.

- Long-term Program Performance Measure (applies to absolute priority 1 only): The percentage of States receiving Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination services regarding scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that successfully promote the implementation of those practices in school districts and service agencies.

The measures apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP and RSA.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the project

meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the project to report on such alignment in its annual and final performance reports.

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award, 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; if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application; and whether the continuation of the project is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

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: On request to the program contact persons listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and

a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, compact disc, or other accessible format.

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 Department documents 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 Department documents published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Diana Díaz,

Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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