

(a) The qualifications and relevant training of key staff, including time commitments, and experience in mentoring services and case management. (10 points)

(5) *Quality of the Project Evaluation.* (15 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback to the Department, grantees, and mentors, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes, including the GPRA performance measures for the Mentoring Program grant competition. (5 points)

(b) 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 on the GPRA performance measures for the Mentoring Program grant competition. (10 points)

Executive Order 12866

This notice of proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12866. Under the terms of the order, we have assessed the potential costs and benefits of this regulatory action.

The potential costs associated with the notice of proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering this program effectively and efficiently.

In assessing the potential costs and benefits—both quantitative and qualitative—of this notice of proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria, we have determined that the benefits of the proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria justify the costs.

Summary of potential costs and benefits: The potential cost associated with these proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria is minimal while the benefits are significant. Grantees may anticipate costs related to completing the application process in terms of staff time, copying, and mailing or delivery. The use of E-Application technology may significantly reduce mailing and copying costs.

The primary benefit of these proposed priorities, requirements and selection criteria is that grantees can support school-based mentoring programs that

address the academic and social needs of at-risk youth.

Intergovernmental Review

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

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 7140.

Electronic Access to This Document

You may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents 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 the 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 (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/index.html>.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.184B Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools—Mentoring Programs)

Dated: March 9, 2004.

Deborah A. Price,

Deputy Under Secretary for Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

[FR Doc. 04-5820 Filed 3-12-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Technology and Media Services For Individuals With Disabilities—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.327A

DATES:

Applications Available: March 16, 2004.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 23, 2004.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 22, 2004.

Eligible Applicants: State educational agencies (SEAs); local educational agencies (LEAs); institutions of higher education (IHEs); other public agencies; nonprofit private organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Estimated Available Funds: \$2,900,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: Phases 1 and 2—\$100,000–\$200,000; Phase 3—\$200,000–\$300,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: Phases 1 and 2—\$199,000; Phase 3—\$299,000.

Maximum Award: Phases 1 and 2: \$200,000 and Phase 3: \$300,000. We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the maximum award for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 13. We intend to fund, at a minimum, three projects in each phase.

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

Project Period: Projects funded under Phase 1 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 2 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 3 will be funded for up to 36 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: To: (1) Improve results for children with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) support educational media activities designed to be of educational value to children with disabilities; and (3) provide support for some captioning, video description, and cultural activities.

Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (*see* sections 661(e)(2) and 687 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2004 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

The purpose of this priority is to support projects that—

(a) Develop or conduct research on a technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the following purposes for early intervention, or preschool, elementary, middle school, or high school students with disabilities: (1) Improving the results of education or early intervention; (2) improving access to and participation in the general curriculum, or developmentally appropriate activities for preschool children; and (3) improving accountability and participation in statewide assessment and accountability systems. The technology-based approach must be an innovative combination of a new technology and additional materials and methodologies that enable the technology to improve educational or early intervention results for children with disabilities;

(b) Present a justification on the basis of scientifically rigorous research or theory that supports the effectiveness of the technology-based approach for achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (a);

(c) Clearly identify and conduct work in *ONE* of the following phases:

(1) *Phase 1—Development*: Projects funded under Phase 1 must develop and refine a technology-based approach, and test its feasibility for use with children with disabilities. Activities may include development, adaptation, and refinement of technology, curriculum materials, or instructional methodologies. Activities must include formative evaluation. The primary product of Phase 1 should be a promising technology-based approach that is suitable for field-based evaluation of effectiveness in improving results for children with disabilities.

(2) *Phase 2—Research on Effectiveness*: Projects funded under Phase 2 must select a promising technology-based approach that has been developed and tested in a manner consistent with Phase 1, and subject the approach to rigorous field-based research and evaluation to determine effectiveness and feasibility in educational or early intervention settings. Approaches studied in Phase 2 may have been developed with previous funding under this priority or with funding from other sources. Products of Phase 2 include a further refinement and description of the technology-based approach, and sound evidence that, in a defined range of real world contexts, the approach can be effective in achieving one or more of the purposes presented in paragraph (a) of this priority.

(3) *Phase 3—Research on Implementation*: Projects funded under

Phase 3 must select a technology-based approach that has been evaluated for effectiveness and feasibility in a manner consistent with Phase 2. Projects must study the implementation of the approach in multiple, complex settings to acquire an improved understanding of the range of contexts in which the approach can be used effectively, and the factors that determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach in this range of contexts.

Approaches studied in Phase 3 may have been developed, tested, researched, and evaluated with previous funding under this priority or with funding from other sources. Factors to be studied in Phase 3 include factors related to the technology, materials, and methodologies that constitute the technology-based approach. Also to be studied in Phase 3 are contextual factors associated with students, teacher attitudes and skills, physical setting, curricular and instructional or early intervention approaches, resources, professional development, policy supports, etc.

Phases 2 and 3 can be contrasted as follows: Phase 2 studies the effectiveness of the approach, while Phase 3 studies the effectiveness the approach is likely to have in sustained use in a range of typical educational settings. The primary product of Phase 3 must be a set of research findings that provide evidence of improved results for children with disabilities and that can be used to guide dissemination and utilization of the technology-based approach;

(d) In addition to the annual two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC mentioned in section III. Eligibility Information, 3. *Other: General Requirements* elsewhere in this notice, budget for another annual trip to Washington, DC to collaborate with the Federal project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, and to share information and discuss findings and methods of dissemination; and

(e) Prepare products from the project in formats that are useful for specific audiences as appropriate, including parents, administrators, teachers, early intervention personnel, related services personnel, researchers, and individuals with disabilities.

Within the absolute priority, we intend to fund at least two projects focusing on technology-based approaches for children with disabilities, ages birth to age 3.

Also, within this priority, we intend to fund at least two projects for which the project director or principal investigator is in the initial phase of his

or her career. For purposes of this priority, the initial phase of an individual's career is considered to be the first three years after completing a doctoral program and graduating (*i.e.*, for FY 2004 awards, projects may support individuals who completed a doctoral program and graduated no earlier than the 2000–2001 academic year). To qualify for this consideration, the applicant must explicitly state and document that the project director or principal investigator is in the initial phase of his or her career. At least 50 percent of the initial career researcher's time must be devoted to the project.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities. However, section 661(e)(2) of IDEA makes the public comment requirements inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1487.

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

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: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$2,900,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: Phases 1 and 2—\$100,000–\$200,000; Phase 3—\$200,000–\$300,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: Phases 1 and 2—\$199,000; Phase 3—\$299,000.

Maximum Award: Phases 1 and 2—\$200,000 and Phase 3: \$300,000. We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the maximum award for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 13. We intend to fund, at a minimum, three projects in each phase.

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

Project Period: Projects funded under Phase 1 will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 2

will be funded for up to 24 months. Projects funded under Phase 3 will be funded for up to 36 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* SEAs; LEAs; IHEs; other public agencies; nonprofit private organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

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

3. *Other: General Requirements—(a)* The projects funded under this notice 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 notice must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see section 661(f)(1)(A) of IDEA).

(c) The projects funded under these priorities must budget for a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC during each year of the project.

(d) If a project maintains a Web site, it must include relevant information and documents in an accessible form.

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 84.327A.

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 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 in evaluating 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, the letters of support, or the appendix. 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: March 16, 2004.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 23, 2004. The dates and times for the transmittal of applications by mail or by hand (including a courier service or commercial carrier) are in the application package for this competition. The application package also specifies the hours of operation of the e-Application Web site.

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

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 22, 2004.

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 additional regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Instructions and requirements for the transmittal of applications by mail or by hand (including a courier service or

commercial carrier) are in the application package for this competition.

Application Procedures

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

Government-Wide Grants.gov Project for 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 participating as a partner in the new government-wide Grants.gov Apply site in FY 2004. The Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities competition—CFDA Number 84.327A is one of the competitions included in this project. If you are an applicant under the Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities competition, you may submit your application to us in either electronic or paper format.

The project involves the use of the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). If you use Grants.gov, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

If you participate in Grants.gov, please note the following:

- Your participation 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. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.
- To use Grants.gov, you, as the applicant, must have a D-U-N-S Number

and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You should allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration.

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

- 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.

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

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

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

- If you experience technical difficulties on the application deadline date and are unable to meet the 4:30 p.m. (Washington, DC time) deadline, print out your application and follow the instructions included in the application package for the transmittal of paper applications.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Special Education—Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program—Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities competition at: <http://www.grants.gov>.

Note: Please note that 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.

V. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are listed in 34 CFR 75.210 of EDGAR. The specific selection criteria to be used for this competition are 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.

4. **Performance Measures:** Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the Department is currently developing measures that will yield information on various aspects of the quality of the Technology and Media Services to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program (e.g., the extent to which projects are of high quality, are relevant to the needs of children with disabilities, and contribute to improving results for children with disabilities). Data on these measures will be collected from the projects funded under this notice.

Grantees will also be required to report information on their projects' performance in annual reports to the Department (EDGAR, 34 CFR 75.590).

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: 1-202-205-8207.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the Grants and Contracts Services Team listed in this section.

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: March 10, 2004.

Troy R. Justesen,

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 04-5822 Filed 3-12-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—Projects for Children and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.326C.

DATES: For dates regarding this priority, see the chart in the Award Information section of this notice.

Applications Available: See chart.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: See chart.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: See chart.

Eligible Applicants: State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), other public agencies, nonprofit private organizations, for-profit organizations, outlying areas, freely associated States, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

Estimated Available Funds: \$1,789,000.

For funding information regarding individual States, see chart in the Award Information section of this notice.