

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research; Notice Inviting Nominations for Individuals to Serve as Peer Reviewers on Standing Panels

Purpose: The purpose of this notice is to invite interested parties to nominate qualified individuals to serve three-year terms as peer reviewers on standing panels.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Jaeger, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 3422, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2645. Telephone: (202) 205-8061. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205-9136. Internet: Robert.Jaeger@ed.gov

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternate format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed in the preceding paragraph.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 202(f)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, requires the Director of NIDRR to provide for scientific review of all applications for financial assistance for research, training, and demonstration projects. The scientific peer review must be conducted by individuals who are scientists or other experts in the rehabilitation field (including the independent living field), including knowledgeable individuals with disabilities, and the individuals representatives, who are not Federal employees, and who are competent to review applications for the financial assistance.

NIDRR's current peer review process uses *ad hoc* panels that are selected on a competition by competition basis. Many constituents have criticized the *ad hoc* panel system, and the Institute of Medicine, in its report Enabling America, recommended that NIDRR establish a standing panel review process in order to enhance its peer review process. One of the recommendations from the steering committee for NIDRR's long-range planning process was that NIDRR devise improvements to its research application review process. In 1997-1998, NIDRR formed a Standing Panel Working Group (SPWG) to evaluate NIDRR's existing peer review procedures and compare them to practices of other Federal agencies. Representatives from the National

Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Health and Human Services, all with direct experience with peer review systems served on the SPWG. The SPWG produced a report on current practices at other agencies, and a recommendation for NIDRR to establish standing panels aligned with the objectives in the proposed Long-Range Plan (LRP). The proposed LRP can be accessed on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/1998-4/102698a.html>

NIDRR plans to use standing panels of peer reviewers to evaluate Field Initiated Project (FIP) applications and applications for Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) projects. NIDRR receives approximately 200 FIP applications and 200 SBIR applications per year. NIDRR plans to use standing panels in order to enhance continuity, provide for more extensive feedback, and obtain the services of better qualified reviewers, including those with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds.

NIDRR plans for peer reviewers to serve for three-year terms on the standing panels, with two meetings to be held per year: one for FIP reviews and one for SBIR reviews. Because NIDRR plans to have staggered terms, there will be an ongoing need for candidates for appointment. The nomination process will remain open on a continuous basis, and nominations may be made at any time.

The format for submitting nominations for the new standing panels is in the Appendix. Individuals should review the list of standing panels NIDRR intends to form, and nominate ONE individual to serve as a member of ONE of these standing panels. Individuals may not nominate more than one person or nominate the same person for more than one panel. The nominator should be well acquainted with the nominee and have insight as to the nominee's abilities as a peer reviewer. Individuals may be qualified to be peer reviewers on the basis of education and training or some combination of personal and professional experience with disability. Nominators must contact the individual they wish to nominate to determine if the prospective nominee is willing to serve, and to avoid multiple nominations. Nominators must obtain the nominee's resume or curriculum vitae for submission to NIDRR. Individuals may not nominate themselves.

The standing panels NIDRR intends to form are based on the research agenda stated in the proposed LRP. They are as follows: (1) Employment Outcomes; (2) Health and Function; (3) Technology for Access and Function; (4) Independent Living and Community Integration; and (5) Statistics, Outcomes Research, Disability Studies, Rehabilitation Science, and Policy.

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Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR Part 350.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 760-764.

Dated: April 22, 1999.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Appendix—Nomination Procedure

Prospective panel members must be nominated by an individual who is well acquainted with the nominee and has insight as to the nominee's abilities as a peer reviewer. Nominators must contact the individual they wish to nominate to determine if the prospective nominee is willing to serve, and to avoid multiple nominations. If multiple nominations for a single individual are received, only the first nomination received by NIDRR will be processed. Individuals may not nominate themselves. The nominator should forward two items to NIDRR:

1. One Page Cover Letter

This is prepared by the nominator, and should include:

(1) The name of the nominee, mailing address, and other contact information for both nominator and nominee; (2) the name of the panel the individual is being nominated to; (3) a brief description of the qualifications of the nominee to serve as a member of that

standing panel; and (4) a brief statement as to how the nominator is acquainted with the nominee.

2. Complete Resume or Curriculum Vitae of Nominee

This may be in any format and length, but must include sufficient information to evaluate the nominee's credentials, including their education and experience.

These documents should be sent by mail to: Robert J. Jaeger, Ph.D., Standing Panel Nominations, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 3422, Switzer Building, Washington, DC. 20202-2645.

If the documents are sent by courier service, the following address should be used: Robert J. Jaeger, Ph.D., Standing Panel Nominations, U.S. Department of Education; 330 C St., SW.; Room 3422, Switzer Building,

Washington, DC. 20202-2645. Telephone 202-205-8061.

Nominations by fax, e-mail, or other electronic versions will not be accepted. Confirmation of receipt of nomination will be sent by regular mail to all nominators and nominees.

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