

diseases. This Center must identify, develop as appropriate, and evaluate devices and other technology that improve employment and community integration outcomes for this population of individuals with disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, Chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on Progressive and Degenerative Disease Rehabilitation.

(e) *Rehabilitation of Stroke Survivors*: This Center must conduct research to develop rehabilitation interventions that improve rehabilitation, employment, and community integration outcomes of stroke survivors, including young stroke survivors. Such interventions may include robotics, complementary alternative therapies, and universal design methodologies aimed at improving the utility of workplace tools and devices. This Center must explore the cost-effectiveness of stroke rehabilitation treatments, such as group model approaches. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, Chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on Trauma Rehabilitation.

(f) *Rehabilitation of Individuals with Arthritis*: This Center must address national goals to reduce pain and disability, improve physical fitness and quality of life, and promote independent living and community integration for persons with arthritis of all ages in the United States. This Center must research the benefits of exercise and physical fitness; home and community-based self-management programs; and technologies available to the broad populations of persons with arthritis in the environments where they live, learn, work, and play. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, Chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on Progressive and Degenerative Disease Rehabilitation.

(g) *Rehabilitation of Children with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)*: This Center must identify, assess, and evaluate current and emerging rehabilitation needs for children and adolescents with TBI. In doing this, the Center must document patterns of recovery, determining the effectiveness of current outcome measures for this population. Of particular interest will be evaluation of interventions and technologies, including specialized support services, to assist families and caregivers with transition to the school and the community. This RRTC must identify or develop effective rehabilitation strategies to improve outcomes for children and adolescents with TBI at all stages of rehabilitation. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, Chapter 4, Health and

Function: Research on Trauma Rehabilitation.

(h) *Rehabilitation of Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis (MS)*: This Center must conduct research to maximize the participation of people with MS, including those with all levels of symptoms associated with the disease, at home, in the community, and while working or learning. In doing so, the Center must identify, develop as necessary, and evaluate interventions to enhance the independence of people with MS. Those interventions must include strategies and programs that address interactions between cognitive, psychosocial, sensory, mobility, and other manifestations of the disease across the lifespan. The Center must consider the role of assistive and universally designed technologies, strategic goals, and financial planning for persons with MS, and the role of caregivers throughout the disease course. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, Chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on Progressive and Degenerative Disease Rehabilitation.

Executive Order 12866

This notice of proposed priorities 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 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, we have determined that the benefits of the proposed priorities justify the costs.

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

The benefits of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center Program have been well established over the years in that similar projects have been completed. These proposed priorities will generate new knowledge through a research, dissemination, utilization,

training, and technical assistance projects.

The benefit of these proposed priorities and proposed applications and project requirements will be the establishment of a new RRTCs that generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for disabled individuals to perform regular activities in the community.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 84.133B, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center Program)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(2).

Dated: May 6, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 03-11626 Filed 5-8-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RIN 1820 ZA17

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

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

ACTION: Notice of proposed priorities.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services proposes priorities for one or more research projects under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program under the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The Assistant Secretary may use these

priorities for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2003 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on identified national needs. We intend these priorities to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

DATES: We must receive your comments on or before June 9, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments about these proposed priorities to Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3412, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2645. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donna Nangle. Telephone: (202) 205-5880.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the TDD number at (202) 205-4475 or via the Internet: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Invitation To Comment

We invite you to submit comments regarding these proposed priorities.

We invite you to assist us in complying with the specific requirements of Executive Order 12866 and its overall requirement of reducing regulatory burden that might result from these proposed priorities. Please let us know of any further opportunities we should take to reduce potential costs or increase potential benefits while preserving the effective and efficient administration of the program.

During and after the comment period, you may inspect all public comments about these priorities in Room 3412, Switzer Building, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., eastern time, Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Assistance to Individuals With Disabilities in Reviewing the Rulemaking Record

On request, we will supply an appropriate aid, such as a reader or print magnifier, to an individual with a disability who needs assistance to review the comments or other documents in the public rulemaking record for these proposed priorities. If you want to schedule an appointment

for this type of aid, please contact the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

We will announce the final priorities in a notice in the **Federal Register**. We will determine the final priorities after considering responses to this notice and other information available to the Department. This notice does not preclude us from proposing or funding additional priorities, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does *not* solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use these proposed priorities, we invite applications through a notice published in the **Federal Register**. When inviting applications we designate each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by either (1) awarding additional points, depending on how well or the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the competitive priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the competitive priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the invitational priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

Note: NIDRR supports the goals of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative (NFI). The NFI can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/freedominitiative/freedominitiative.html>.

The proposed priorities are in concert with NIDRR's Long-Range Plan (the Plan). The Plan is comprehensive and integrates many issues relating to disability and rehabilitation research topics. While applicants will find many sections throughout the Plan that support potential research to be conducted under these proposed priorities, a specific reference is included for each topic presented in this notice. The Plan can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/NIDRR/Products>.

Through the implementation of the Plan, NIDRR seeks to: (1) Improve the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research; (2) foster an exchange of expertise, information, and training to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of traditionally underserved populations; (3) determine best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program

The purpose of the DRRP program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities that help to maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities into society and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act).

An applicant for assistance under this program must demonstrate in its application how it will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds (34 CFR 350.40(a)). The approaches an applicant may take to meet this requirement are found in 34 CFR 350.40(b).

Under the DRRP program, we define a research project as basic or applied (34 CFR 350.5). Research is classified on a continuum from basic to applied:

(1) Basic research is research in which the investigator is concerned primarily with gaining new knowledge or understanding of a subject without reference to any immediate application or utility.

(2) Applied research is research in which the investigator is primarily interested in developing new knowledge, information, or understanding which can be applied to a predetermined rehabilitation problem or need. Applied research builds on selected findings from basic research.

In carrying out a research activity under this program (34 CFR 350.13), a grantee must:

(a) Identify one or more hypotheses; and

(b) Based on the hypotheses identified, perform an intensive systematic study directed toward—

(1) New or full scientific knowledge; or

(2) Understanding of the subject or problem studied.

Priorities

Research Projects for Stabilizing and Improving Lives of Persons with Disabilities

Background

On May 17, 2002, we published in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 35417–35419) a notice inviting written comments suggesting priorities for research centers and projects administered by NIDRR under title II of the Act. Individuals were encouraged to suggest research priorities consistent with the Plan and that support the NFI.

We received many suggestions. The purpose of this notice of proposed priorities is to present multiple research topics from public suggestions as well as related topics from staff analysis of emerging disability needs. All topics are for research activities under the DRRP program.

We propose priorities for applied research that will alleviate problems and challenges faced by people with disabilities as they seek improved life outcomes. These priorities share the goal of developing new knowledge to improve the inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities in their families, school, or work. Although we are proposing multiple priorities, we may not issue final priorities or make awards in all areas.

Letters of Intent

Due to the open nature of this competition, NIDRR is requiring all potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). Each LOI must be limited to a maximum of four pages and must include the following information: (1) The title of the proposed DRRP, the name of the host institution, the name of the Principal Investigator (PI), and the names of partner institutions and entities; (2) a brief statement of the vision, goals, and objectives of the proposed DRRP and a description of its research and development activities at a sufficient level of detail to allow potential peer reviewers to be selected; (3) a list of proposed DRRP staff including the center Director and key personnel; and (4) a list of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest due to involvement in proposal development, selection as an advisory board member, co-PI relationships, etc.

Submission of a LOI is a prerequisite for eligibility to submit an application. The signed, original LOI, or with prior approval an email or facsimile copy, must be received by NIDRR no later than June 9, 2003. Applicants that submit email or facsimile copies must

follow up by sending to NIDRR the signed original copy no later than one week after the date the email or facsimile copy was sent. All communications pertaining to the LOI must be sent to: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3412, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2645. For further information regarding the LOI requirement, contact Donna Nangle at (202) 205–5880 or by email at: Donna.Nangle@ed.gov.

Priorities

The Assistant Secretary proposes to fund one or more DRRPs that will focus on stabilizing and improving lives of persons with disabilities. In carrying out the purposes of these priorities, projects awarded under each of the topics must, in consultation with the NIDRR project officer:

- Coordinate and establish partnerships, as appropriate, with other academic institutions and organizations that are relevant to the project's proposed activities;
- Demonstrate use of culturally appropriate data collection, evaluation, dissemination, training and research methodologies, and significant knowledge of the needs of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved populations;
- Involve, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their family members, or both in all aspects of the research as well as in design of clinical services and dissemination activities;
- Demonstrate how the research project can transfer research findings to practical applications in planning, policymaking, program administration, and delivery of services to individuals with disabilities; and
- Disseminate findings to appropriate audiences, including information on best practices, where applicable.

An applicant must propose research activities and dissemination of findings under one of the following topics:

(a) *Self-Determination in Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Disabilities*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information about factors that enhance and promote self-determination for youth with disabilities who are transitioning into adulthood. The project may include research on interventions that (1) enable successful transition to life activities such as independent living, higher education, and employment; and (2) improve functional outcomes such as enhanced memory, learning, visual perception, auditory reception, literacy, and self-advocacy. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter

3, Employment Outcomes: Transition from School to Work.

(b) *Examining Violence Against People With Disabilities*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information on violence against persons with disabilities. Activities may include research on statistics related to criminal victimization of people with disabilities compiled under the 1998 Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act (Pub. L. 301–105); study of data from enhanced crime incident reports; and analysis of data and research findings on the impact of violence on specific populations such as, but not limited to, individuals with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, women with disabilities, individuals with sensory disabilities, and individuals with mobility disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Emerging Universe of Disability.

(c) *Family and Cultural Aspects of Independent Living*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information on how individuals with disabilities draw upon their families (or those with whom they share living arrangements) to obtain necessary supports such as economic assistance, informal and formal care giving, and emotional nurturing. Activities may include: (1) Identifying factors that help or hinder NFI goals regarding educational attainment, home ownership, and full access in community life; (2) research on ways that family and shared-community living arrangements may facilitate independence and help implement the Supreme Court's *Olmstead v. L.C.* ruling; and (3) research on how family and shared-community living arrangements may facilitate meeting the objectives for people with disabilities in Healthy People 2010. The references for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Disability, Employment, and Independent Living and chapter 6, Research on Social Roles.

(d) *Older Women and Falls*: This project must identify and compare outcomes-oriented rehabilitation interventions for older women to overcome the disabilities and secondary conditions associated with falls and to prevent secondary falls and other complications. The project must examine risk factors for falls (e.g., age, disability, medications use, health, functional ability, environmental hazards). The references for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Emerging Universe of Disability and chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on

Trauma Rehabilitation; Research on Aging.

(e) *Issues in Asset Accumulation and Tax Policy for People with Disabilities:* This project must conduct research on fiscal and social environmental barriers to economic empowerment and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities and the impact of legislation designed to promote economic self-sufficiency and facilitate community integration. The project must conduct systematic analysis of the relationship between tax policy and asset accumulation for individuals with disabilities and improved economic and community integration outcomes. This includes testing the impact of asset accumulation on economic improvements and community integration for individuals with disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 3, Employment Outcomes: Economic Policy and Labor Market Trends.

(f) *Identifying Opportunities and Barriers to Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities:* This project must conduct research on ways to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities through self-employment and entrepreneurial strategies and how to train both people with disabilities and counselors in successful use of these strategies. The research must include analysis of the effects of policies and practices of the vocational rehabilitation system; related programs such as those of the Small Business Administration; and other public, private, or nonprofit employment organizations on self-employment options for individuals with disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 3, Employment Outcomes: Economic Policy and Labor Market Trends.

Executive Order 12866

This notice of proposed priorities 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 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, we have determined that the benefits of the proposed priorities justify the costs.

Summary of potential costs and benefits: The potential cost associated

with these proposed priorities is minimal while the benefits are significant. Grantees may anticipate costs associated with completing the application process in terms of staff time, copying, and mailing or delivery. The use of e-Application technology reduces mailing and copying costs significantly.

The benefits of the DRRP Program have been well established over the years that similar projects have been completed. These proposed priorities will generate new knowledge through research to focus on stabilizing and improving lives of persons with disabilities.

The benefit of these proposed priorities and proposed applications and project requirements will be the establishment of new DRRP projects that generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for disabled individuals to perform regular activities in the community.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.133A, Disability Rehabilitation Research Project.)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a).

Dated: May 6, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 03-11627 Filed 5-8-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RIN 1820 ZA19

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

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

ACTION: Notice of proposed priority.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services proposes a priority for a Technical Assistance Resource Center on Parenting with a Disability under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program under the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The Assistant Secretary may use this priority for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2003 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on an identified national need. We intend this priority to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

DATES: We must receive your comments on or before June 9, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments about this proposed priority to Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3412, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2645. If you prefer to send your comments through the Internet, use the following address: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donna Nangle. Telephone: (202) 205-5880.

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Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Invitation to Comment

We invite you to submit comments regarding this proposed priority.

We invite you to assist us in complying with the specific requirements of Executive Order 12866 and its overall requirement of reducing regulatory burden that might result from this proposed priority. Please let us know of any further opportunities we should take to reduce potential costs or increase potential benefits while