

including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials (ETechM2) for Individuals with Disabilities Program. These measures are:

- *Program Performance Measure 1:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantial content of the products and services.
- *Program Performance Measure 2:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high relevance to improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.
- *Program Performance Measure 3:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be useful in improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.1:* The Federal cost per unit of accessible educational materials funded by the ETechM2 Program.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.2:* The Federal cost per unit of accessible educational materials from the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center funded by the ETechM2 Program.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.3:* The Federal cost per unit of video description funded by the ETechM2 Program.

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

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual performance reports and additional performance data to the Department (34 CFR 75.590 and 75.591).

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: Whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit

discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person 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, or 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 documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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

David Cantrell,

Deputy Director, Office of Special Education Programs, Delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2021-03972 Filed 2-25-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program—Captioned and Described Educational Media Center

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) 2021 for Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities—

Captioned and Described Educational Media Center, Assistance Listing Number 84.327N. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820-0028.

DATES:

Applications Available: February 26, 2021.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 27, 2021.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 28, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Terry Jackson, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5128, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-6039. Email: Terry.Jackson@ed.gov.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program is to improve results for students with disabilities by (1) promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) supporting educational activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities; (3) providing support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) providing accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in sections 674(c)(1)(D) and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1474(c)(1)(D) and 1481(d).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2021 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34

CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Captioned and Described Educational Media Center

Background: Section 674(c) of the IDEA requires, in part, that the Secretary of Education support audio description,¹ open captioning, and closed captioning,² which is appropriate for use in early learning and kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) settings, of (a) television programs, (b) videos, and (c) other materials, including programs and materials associated with new and emerging technologies.

Ensuring that educational materials used in various learning environments are accessible to students who have hearing or vision impairments is an ongoing challenge and extends to a variety of critical content areas, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and Spanish language materials. STEM materials are often not in accessible formats, and few Spanish language materials are captioned or described. Therefore, eligible students who are hearing or vision impaired or who are English learners (ELs) who speak Spanish are placed at a disadvantage.

Research has demonstrated that accessible technologies like captioning and audio description contribute to gains in knowledge and understanding, improved retention, and increased interest in, and enjoyment of, the world for students with sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hard of hearing, and deaf blindness) (Rodriguez & Diaz, 2017). Captioning and audio description not only benefit students with sensory disabilities but can also benefit students

without sensory disabilities and ELs. Studies have demonstrated that captioning improves ELs' performance with listening, auditory, and comprehension tests. Gernsbacher (2015) highlighted that learning to read is a complex process and watching videos with audio captions can lead to improvement in reading skills, defining content words, recognizing and pronouncing new and different vocabulary words, and drawing inferences about what happened in the videos for hearing and hearing-impaired children.

In the past, the rights to accessible educational films and videos were purchased with Federal funds to make them available to eligible users with disabilities. Over the years, however, national broadcast television network program providers and the Television Access (84.327C) projects have collaborated to provide accessible educational television programs available at no cost and available on-demand to children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, March 16, 2015). As a result, the Television Access (84.327C) projects now secure media from program providers at no cost.

The need to support a Center that provides captioning and audio description for educational curricular materials and educational media that is appropriate for use in early learning and K–12 settings (including face-to-face, remote/online, and hybrid learning) continues to grow. Furthermore, the rapid growth, changes, and quality of accessible technology and captioning and description services must keep pace with advancements in new and emerging forms of media and technologies. A Center can provide easy access, e-learning opportunities, and cutting-edge digital technology for children and youth with sensory disabilities who need support and guidance in understanding how to use these technologies. In addition, a Center can provide families, educators, school administrators, and paraprofessionals with direct supports to access and use resources that are audio described and captioned and make appropriate curricular material selections.

Priority: The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a Captioned and Described Educational Media Center (Center) that will oversee the selection, acquisition, captioning, audio description, and distribution of educational media and materials

through a free loan service for eligible users.³

The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Improved selection, acquisition, captioning, audio description, dissemination, and public awareness of curricular and accompanying learning materials through a free loan service for eligible users;

(b) Increased number of described and captioned educational video programming,⁴ audio, and online digital media produced by the Center and the Television Access (84.327C) projects that are free of charge to users;

(c) Improved access and use of accessible curricular materials and online media products for early childhood providers, K–12 educators, children and youth with disabilities, ELs, teachers, families, and other professionals;

(d) Increased supports, resources, and trainings related to the use of accessible described and captioned media in early learning environments and K–12 settings for children and youth with disabilities, their families, teachers, and other professionals, including collections of described and captioned curricula, training materials, modules, webinars, and other informational resources;

(e) Increased access to content through a dedicated online portal and through the use of new and emerging technologies and processes; and

(f) Improved coordination and efficient use of funding across the Television Access (84.327C) projects and this Center to more efficiently and effectively meet the needs of States, administrators, educators, service providers, children and youth with disabilities, ELs, and their families, and more efficient use of the funding available to support these activities.

¹ In October 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rule changes including a switch from the term "video description" to "audio description" that can be found at <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/102760142335/FCC-20-155A1.pdf>. Audio description (also known as video description or description) refers to providing auditory access to significant visual content in a video through spoken narration accompanying the video's soundtrack. Audio description increases the accessibility of visual content, especially for audience members who are blind or visually impaired or who have visual processing difficulties and for those who may be temporarily unable to follow the video portion of a program.

² Closed captioning (also known as captioning) refers to providing visual access to audio content from a video through text displayed along with the video. Captioning increases the accessibility of video and multi-media programs, particularly for audience members who are deaf or have hearing loss, but also for those who are temporarily unable to hear a program or who benefit when auditory information is substituted/supplemented by text (for example, some English learners and some students with language processing difficulties).

³ For purposes of this priority, "eligible users" are defined as students, including English learners, in early learning and kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) settings (face-to-face, remote/online, and hybrid learning) who have hearing or vision impairments and individuals, such as teachers, parents, and paraprofessionals, who are directly involved in these students' early learning or K–12 classroom instruction. To be eligible to use the accessible products and materials in the accessible technology platform (ATP), children and youth with disabilities must meet the criteria for "eligible person" in the Copyright Act of the United States, at 17 U.S.C. 121. For more information, visit www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html#121.

⁴ For the purposes of this priority, "video programming" is defined consistent with the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. 613, meaning "programming by, or generally considered comparable to programming provided by a television broadcast station, but not including consumer-generated media."

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the following application and administrative requirements in this priority:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under “Significance,” how the proposed project will—

(1) Use applicable national, State, regional, or local data to demonstrate the need for the Center to oversee the selection and acquisition for captioning and audio description for children with sensory disabilities, families, educators, paraprofessionals, including children with disabilities, and ELs who may be underserved; and

(2) Increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits, services, or opportunities that are available by using accessible educational materials and educational television programming in early childhood environments, K–12, and remote/online settings.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under “Quality of project services,” how the project will—

(1) Improve the quality, usability, availability, and access to the content of a free online site to make it possible for eligible users to easily borrow media from the loan service;

(2) Provide secure access to on-demand, curricular materials, accessible educational video programming, and e-learning modules;

(3) Select educational curricular material and television programs of high educational value and quality that are widely available and appropriate for use in early learning environments and K–12 settings (face-to-face, remote/online, or hybrid learning environments) for children and youth with disabilities and ELs;

(4) Implement strategies and procedures for identifying and prioritizing educational media and curricular materials that are not currently readily accessible to students but are appropriate for eligible users attending early learning programs and elementary and secondary schools that meet the educational needs of those students, including ELs;

(5) Coordinate with the Television Access (84.327C) projects and media producers and distributors for the Center to acquire (at no cost) the rights to caption, describe, and widely distribute selected media, including distribution in alternate formats, such as video streaming;

(6) Provide training, support, and resources (e.g., collections of described and captioned curricula, training

materials, modules, webinars, other informational resources) related to the use of described and captioned materials and programming for children and youth with disabilities, their families, teachers, educators, administrators, and other professionals;

(7) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet these requirements, the applicant must describe how it will—

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for technical assistance and information; and

(ii) Ensure that services and products meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant;

(8) 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 model⁵ or conceptual framework 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; and

(9) Use a logic model or 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.

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks: www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel and www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptualframework.

(c) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under “Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel,” how—

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

(2) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment

from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, linguistic diversity, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(3) The applicant and key partners have adequate resources to carry out proposed project activities. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe the willingness of the potential television program providers or program owners, as appropriate, to permit and facilitate the video description or the video description and captioning of their programs; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(d) In the narrative section of the application under “Quality of the project evaluation,” include an evaluation plan for the project as described in the following paragraphs. The evaluation plan must describe measures of progress in implementation, including the extent to which the project’s products and services have reached its target population; and measures of intended outcomes or results of the project’s activities to assess the effectiveness of those activities.

In designing the evaluation plan, the applicant must—

(1) Provide a logic model or conceptual framework that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, project evaluation, methods, performance measures, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project;

(2) Provide a plan to implement the activities described in this priority; and

(3) Provide a plan, linked to the proposed project’s logic model or conceptual framework, for a formative evaluation of the proposed project’s activities. The plan must describe how the formative evaluation will use clear performance objectives to ensure continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project, including objective measures of progress in implementing the project and ensuring the quality of products and resources.

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks: www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel and www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.

(4) Designate, with the approval of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) project officer, a project liaison staff person with sufficient dedicated time, experience in evaluation, and knowledge of the project to work in collaboration with the Center to

⁵ Logic model (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (i.e., the active “ingredients” that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes. See 34 CFR 77.1.

Improve Program and Project Performance (CIPP), the project director, and the OSEP project officer on the following tasks:

(i) Revise, as needed, the logic model submitted in the application to provide for a more comprehensive measurement of implementation and outcomes and to reflect any changes or clarifications to the model discussed at the kick-off meeting;

(ii) Refine the evaluation design and instrumentation proposed in the application consistent with the logic model (e.g., prepare evaluation questions about significant program processes and outcomes; develop quantitative or qualitative data collections that permit both the collection of progress data, including fidelity of implementation, as appropriate, and the assessment of project outcomes; and identify analytic strategies);

(iii) Revise, as needed, the evaluation plan submitted in the application such that it clearly—

(A) Specifies the evaluation questions, measures, and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to answer these questions, suggests analytic strategies for those data, provides a timeline for conducting the evaluation, and includes staff assignments for completing the evaluation activities; and

(B) Can be used to assist the project director and the OSEP project officer, with the assistance of CIPP, as needed to specify the project performance measures to be addressed in the project's annual performance report;

(iv) Dedicate sufficient staff time and other resources during the first six months of the project to collaborate with CIPP staff, including regular meetings (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly) with CIPP and the OSEP project officer, in order to accomplish the tasks described in paragraph (d)(4) of this section; and

(v) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of carrying out the tasks described in paragraphs (d)(4) of this section and revising and implementing the evaluation plan. Please note in your budget narrative the funds dedicated for this activity.

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

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel, consultants, and contractors will be sufficiently allocated to the project and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and resources provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

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

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

(2) In the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) 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 and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative.

(ii) A two and one-half-day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or a virtual conference, during each year of the project period.

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

(iv) A one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting during the last half of the second year of the project period.

(3) Information on how the project will maintain a website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility;

(4) 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 this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project: In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), including—

(a) The recommendations of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts who have experience and knowledge in providing captioning and description services for children and youth with disabilities. This review will be conducted during a one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

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 or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

References

- Gernsbacher, M.A. (2015). Video captions benefit everyone. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2(1), 195–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732215602130>.
- Rodriguez, J., & Diaz, M.V. (2017). Media with captions and description to support learning among children with sensory disabilities. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(11), 2016–2025. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1159754.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015, March 16). Video-on-Demand Children's TV Programming Now Accessible for Thousands of Students with Visual or Hearing Disabilities [Press release]. www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/video-demand-children%E2%80%99s-tv-programming-now-accessible-thousands-students-visual-or-hearing-disabilities.

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 the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1474 and 1481.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the 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 Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

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: \$2,000,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2022 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$10,000,000 for the 60-month project period.

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:** State educational agencies; local educational agencies (LEAs), including public charter schools that operate as LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

Note: If you are a nonprofit organization, under 34 CFR 75.51, you may demonstrate your nonprofit status by providing: (1) Proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully

benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

2. a. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** This program 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 www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

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 Uniform Guidance.

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

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) Each applicant for, and recipient of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, 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).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission

Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf, 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 50 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 (15 points).**

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

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

(i) The significance of the problem or issue to be addressed by the proposed project;

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

(iii) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(b) *Quality of project services (30 points).*

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

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

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

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

(ii) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services;

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

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

(v) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(c) *Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (20 points).*

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

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

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

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

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

(iii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;

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

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

(d) *Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).*

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

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

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

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

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies;

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

(v) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

(e) *Quality of the management plan (15 points).*

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

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

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

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

adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project;

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

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

(v) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and 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).

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, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for

which they also have submitted applications.

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), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards—that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant—before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

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

6. *In General:* In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with—

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 115—232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Open Licensing Requirements:* Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee 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.

(c) Under 34 CFR 75.250(b), the Secretary may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting. In this case the Secretary establishes a data collection period.

5. *Performance Measures:* For the purposes of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) and 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 Educational Technology, Media, and Materials (ETechM2) for Individuals with Disabilities Program. These measures are:

- *Program Performance Measure 1:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantial content of the products and services.

- *Program Performance Measure 2:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high relevance to improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

- *Program Performance Measure 3:* The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be useful in improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

- *Program Performance Measure 4.1:* The Federal cost per unit of accessible educational materials funded by the ETechM2 Program.

- *Program Performance Measure 4.2:* The Federal cost per unit of accessible

educational materials from the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center funded by the ETechM2 Program.

- *Program Performance Measure 4.3:* The Federal cost per unit of video description funded by the ETechM2 Program.

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

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual performance reports and additional performance data to the Department (34 CFR 75.590 and 75.591).

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: Whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

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

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person 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, or 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 documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have

Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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

David Cantrell,

Deputy Director, Office of Special Education Programs, delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2021-03996 Filed 2-25-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities; Personnel Development To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities; and Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Programs—National Technical Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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) 2021 for the National Technical Assistance Center for Postsecondary Education and Training for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Assistance Listing Number 84.326D. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820-0028.

DATES:

Applications Available: February 26, 2021.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 27, 2021.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 28, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at

www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Louise Tripoli, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5124, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-7554. Email: Louise.Tripoli@ed.gov.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: Funds from the following three Department programs support this competition: The Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (TA&D) program; the Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (PD) program; and the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities (ETechM2) program.

The purpose of the TA&D program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance (TA), supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The purposes of the PD program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with children and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge—derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful—that are needed to serve those children. Finally, the purposes of the ETechM2 program are to (1) improve results for children with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) support educational activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities; (3) provide support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) provide accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities