

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), your application to the Department. You must mail the application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service or commercial carrier: Dr. Maria Carrington, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., Room 6033, Washington, DC 20006-8512.

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark, or
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: Dr. Maria Carrington, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., Room 6033, Washington, DC 20006-8512.

Hand delivered applications will be accepted daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General

Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The regulations for the Title III, Part A programs in 34 CFR part 607, and for the HSI program in 34 CFR part 606.

For Applications and Further Information Contact: Imogene Byers, Kelley Harris, or Carnisia Proctor, Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6033, Request for Eligibility Designation, Washington, DC 20202-8513.

You can contact these individuals at the following e-mail addresses or phone numbers:

Imogene.Byers@ed.gov—202-502-7672
Kelley.Harris@ed.gov—202-219-7083
Carnisia.Proctor@ed.gov—202-502-7606

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

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact persons listed under *For Applications and Further Information Contact*.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format by contacting those persons.

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>.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1057-1059d, 1101-1103g.

Sally L. Stroup,

Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

[FR Doc. 05-24162 Filed 12-15-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Technology and Media Services for Individuals With Disabilities-Center To Support Technology Innovation for Students With Disabilities; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.327Z.

Dates:

Applications Available: December 16, 2005.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: February 2, 2006.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: April 3, 2006.

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

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$31,992,000 for the Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program for FY 2006, of which we intend to use an estimated \$800,000 for the Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$800,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Number of Awards: 1.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the program is to: (1) Improve results for children with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology, (2) support educational media services activities designed to be of educational value in

the classroom setting to children with disabilities, and (3) provide support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom setting.

Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv) and (v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute, or otherwise authorized in the statute (see sections 674 and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2006 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities—Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students With Disabilities

Background

During the past 20 years, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded projects that develop and study a range of assistive and instructional technologies to improve outcomes for children with disabilities. Technology that has been accessible to individuals with disabilities has played a significant role in making it possible for students with disabilities to acquire and improve their functional abilities and to participate and progress in regular education settings.

Over the same period of time, a variety of private and public sector programs and activities have developed technology applications that can benefit children with disabilities. Some of these technology applications have been developed at the State and local level, some have arisen from the work of professional groups and trade associations, some have been commercially developed and others have been refined in the business, medicine, research, or military sectors.

Technology innovations, however, will not result in widespread and long lasting benefits to students with disabilities unless they are shared beyond the field of special education. Commercially developed products may not benefit children with disabilities unless they are designed to meet their needs. Likewise, special education researchers and technology developers cannot draw upon technology innovations and trends unless they are aware of them.

Over the past five years, OSEP has supported initiatives and sponsored communication efforts designed to bridge the gaps among researchers, developers, vendors, and other entities. Although this work has been fruitful in

improving communication, a permanent and more formal mechanism is needed. A Center would enable the array of stakeholders to develop strategic partnerships and to share cutting edge information thereby increasing innovative use of current technology while encouraging the development of new tools.

Priority

This priority will support a Center to advance learning opportunities and achieve better results for children with disabilities by—(a) Developing and implementing a network of collaborative partnerships; (b) Promoting the distribution and use of technology-related products and approaches to improve results for children with disabilities; and (c) Tracking technology innovation developments in government, private industry, early intervention, education policy, and other sectors and analyzing existing and anticipating emerging needs, issues, and trends to foster technology innovation that will improve results for children with disabilities.

The Center's activities for developing and implementing a collaborative network must include, but are not limited to—

(a) Developing and implementing a set of strategies to promote partnerships and collaboration among researchers, developers, vendors, and other appropriate entities. This activity also must include developing and implementing procedures to collect information on the relevant activities of these entities;

(b) Developing and regularly updating a database of projects (including OSEP-funded projects), agencies, professional and trade associations, commercial companies, and other organizations and entities that may contribute to the Center's efforts to improve the use of technology to achieve better results for children with disabilities. This database is to be posted on the Web site mentioned elsewhere in this priority;

(c) Forming an advisory board of eight to 10 representatives with various perspectives, and maintaining communication with this board, including convening an annual meeting in Washington, DC. The purpose of this board is to review and comment at least annually on the Center's plans and evaluation findings, and to provide additional advisory support as needed. Representatives on the advisory board must include, but are not limited to: Technology developers, technology researchers, Federal agencies and programs, commercial vendors, technical assistance providers,

personnel preparation programs, teachers and other service providers, persons with disabilities who use technology, and parents of children with disabilities;

(d) Distributing a quarterly e-mail newsletter (with links to the Center's Web site) describing the activities of the Center and of other members of the network, including the activities of OSEP-funded projects, that contribute to improving the use of technology to advance learning opportunities and achieve better results for children with disabilities; and

(e) Conducting technical assistance, dissemination or training activities for target audiences. These activities must be conducted in collaboration with other members of the network. The activities may draw upon OSEP-sponsored projects and other sources, including the materials developed by the Center. The activities must be designed to disseminate information on using technology to achieve better results.

The Center's activities for promoting the distribution and use of technology-related products and approaches to improve results, including products and approaches developed with OSEP funding, must include, but are not limited to—

(a) Maintaining a listing of commercial and noncommercial resources for disseminating findings and products of technology projects, and including these resources in the network database;

(b) Providing technical assistance and training for developers of technology-related products and approaches on developing high quality and marketable products, and finding dissemination or marketing outlets; and

(c) Including information on technology-related products and approaches with the potential to improve results in the newsletter, and providing follow-up information to potential dissemination or marketing outlets.

The Center's activities for tracking technology innovation developments and analyzing existing and anticipating emerging needs, issues, and trends to foster technology innovation across a variety of entities must include, but are not limited to—

(a) Convening panels of experts annually to focus on specific needs, issues, and trends, and produce documents describing implications for using technology innovation to achieve better results. If the panels involve preparation of background papers prior to meetings, the Center must post all background papers and resulting

products of consensus panels on the Web site; and

(b) Maintaining an ongoing collection of information on developments in the government, private industry, early intervention, education, and other sectors relevant to needs, issues, and trends, including those related to promising technology approaches. This information must be reported in the newsletter and on the Web site.

In addition to the other required activities, the Center must also do the following:

(a) Maintain a Web site that includes: The network database, online documents and products developed by the Center, online descriptions of products developed by OSERS-funded projects, links to Web resources (including all Web sites maintained by OSERS-funded projects involved in technology innovation), articles linked to the newsletter, and discussion groups. This Web site must also include relevant information and documents in a format that meets a government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

(b) Conduct an annual meeting in Washington, DC, on technology and children with disabilities. This meeting must include directors of OSEP-sponsored projects involved in technology innovations, and may include directors of technology innovation projects funded by other sources, and other local participants representing Federal agencies, professional groups, etc. The Center must pay for travel and lodging for approximately 85 project directors (the remaining participants are local or will pay for their travel with their own project funds). The conference must include a demonstration event of OSEP-supported technologies.

(c) Meet with OSEP staff during the first month of each project year to discuss and obtain approval for plans for the year.

(d) Conduct internal and external project evaluation activities to ascertain the quality of the Center's activities and products, to align the project activities with project goals and objectives, and to determine the Center's progress toward improving the use of technology to achieve better results.

(e) Submit quarterly reports describing and documenting Center activities, including results of the required evaluation activities.

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. However, section 681(d) of

the IDEA makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1474 and 1481(d).

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 IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$31,992,000 for the Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program for FY 2006, of which we intend to use an estimated \$800,000 for the Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$800,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

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:** SEAs; LEAs; public charter schools that are LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit 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 competition 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 competition must

involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26 in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

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 84.327Z.

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 under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** 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 to evaluate 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; the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, the references, or the letters of support. 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: December 16, 2005.

Deadline for Transmittal of

Applications: February 2, 2006.

Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov), or in paper format by mail or hand delivery. For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or by mail or hand delivery, please refer to section IV.6. *Other Submission Requirements* in this notice.

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

Deadline for Intergovernmental

Review: April 3, 2006.

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

6. *Other Submission Requirements:*

Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically or in paper format by mail or hand delivery.

a. 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 continuing to participate as a partner in the new government wide Grants.gov Apply site in FY 2006. Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities—CFDA Number 84.327Z is one of the competitions included in this project. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must use the Grants.gov Apply site at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Center to Support Technology Innovation for Students with Disabilities—CFDA Number 84.327Z competition at: <http://www.grants.gov>. 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.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in Grants.gov 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.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC, time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC, time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see <http://www.Grants.gov/GetStarted>). These steps include (1) registering your organization, (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps

are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/assets/GrantsgovCoBrandBrochure8X11.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D–U–N–S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to successfully submit an application via Grants.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit your 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. If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text) or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

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

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment 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 by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

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

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC, time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice. If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC, time, on the deadline date, please contact the

person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number (if available). We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail. If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.327Z), 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260, or

By mail through a commercial carrier: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center—Stop 4260, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.327Z), 7100 Old Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark, or
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery. If you submit your application in paper format by hand delivery, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.327Z), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 4 of ED 424 the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed 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 has developed measures that will yield information on various aspects of the quality of the Technology and Media Services for Individuals with Disabilities program. These measures focus on the extent to which projects are of high quality, are relevant to the needs of children with disabilities, and contribute to improving the results for children with disabilities. Data on these measures will be collected from the projects funded under this competition.

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

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jane Hauser, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 4092, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7373.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) 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 by contacting the following office: The Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363.

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: December 12, 2005.

John H. Hager,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. E5-7402 Filed 12-15-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Overview Information; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)—Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERC) on Low Vision and Blindness; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133E-3

Dates:

Applications Available: December 16, 2005.

Deadline for Transmittal of

Applications: February 14, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; institutions of higher education; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$950,000 for the Low Vision and Blindness RERC competition for FY 2006. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$950,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Note: The maximum amount includes direct and indirect costs.

Number of Awards: 1.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the RERC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act). For FY 2006, the competition for a new award focuses on projects designed to meet the priority we describe in the *Priority* section of this notice. We intend this priority to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Priority: This priority is from the notice of final priorities for this program, published in the **Federal Register** on April 25, 2005 (70 FR 21282).

Note: On April 25, 2005, we published a notice in the **Federal Register** (70 FR 21284) inviting applications under this priority. None of the applications received for this priority were successful.

Absolute Priority: For FY 2006 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Low Vision and Blindness: This RERC must research and develop technologies that will improve assessment of vision impairments and promote independence for individuals with low vision and blindness, including those who are deaf/blind.

RERCs must focus on innovative technological solutions, new knowledge, and concepts to promote the health, safety, independence, active engagement in daily activities, and quality of life of persons with disabilities. Accordingly, each RERC must:

(1) Contribute substantially to the technical and scientific knowledge-base relevant to the priority;

(2) Research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies, products, environments, performance guidelines, and monitoring and assessment tools as applicable to the priority;

(3) Identify, implement, and evaluate, in collaboration with the relevant industry, professional associations, and institutions of higher education, innovative approaches to expand research capacity in the specific field of study;

(4) Monitor trends and evolving product concepts that represent and

signify future directions for technologies in the specific area of research; and

(5) Provide technical assistance to public and private organizations responsible for developing policies, guidelines, and standards that affect the specific area of research.

In addition, the following requirements apply to each RERC priority:

- Each RERC must have the capability to design, build, and test prototype devices and assist in the transfer of successful solutions to relevant production and service delivery settings. Each RERC must evaluate the efficacy and safety of its new products, instrumentation, or assistive devices.

- Each RERC must develop and implement, in the first three months of the grant, a plan that describes how the RERC will include, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of its activities including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation;

- Each RERC must develop and implement, in the first year of the grant and in consultation with the NIDRR-funded National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR), a plan to disseminate the RERC's research results to persons with disabilities, their representatives, disability organizations, service providers, professional journals, manufacturers, and other interested parties.

- Each RERC must develop and implement, in the first year of the grant and in consultation with the NIDRR-funded RERC on Technology Transfer, a plan for ensuring that all new and improved technologies developed by this RERC are successfully transferred to the marketplace.

- Each RERC must conduct a state-of-the-science conference on its respective area of research in the third year of the grant and publish a comprehensive report on the final outcomes of the conference in the fourth year of the grant.

- Each RERC must coordinate with research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDRR-funded projects as identified through consultation with the NIDRR project officer.

The RERC program is in concert with NIDRR's proposed Long-Range Plan (Plan) published in the **Federal Register** on July 27, 2005 (70 FR 43522). The Plan is comprehensive and integrates many issues relating to disability and rehabilitation research topics. The Plan can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/>