

associated with the job or jobs a person performs or will be performing. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Technology Transfer be required to provide technical and financial resources to assist persons with disabilities who have developed assistive technology devices with bringing them to market.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities to assist persons with disabilities who have developed assistive technology devices with bringing the devices to market. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Technology Transfer be required to encourage large companies to incorporate the concept of universal design within their products, both current and future, so that persons with disabilities could use them.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities to encourage large companies to incorporate the concept of universal design within their products. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Technology Transfer be required to develop partnerships with venture capitalists to generate resources that could be used to assist small businesses in marketing their products.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities to develop partnerships with venture capitalists to generate resources that could be used to assist small businesses in marketing their products. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Technology Transfer be required to support other RERCs by providing small product development grants for products developed within the RERC family.

Discussion: There is no authority under the Rehabilitation Act for RERCs to provide subgrants. Therefore the activity suggested by the commenter is not an allowable activity.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Technology Transfer be required to involve underrepresented, minority high school, and undergraduate engineering and business students in the product evaluation process.

Discussion: NIDRR requires all RERCs funded under this priority to develop a plan that describes how the center will include, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of center

activities including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation. An applicant could propose activities that go beyond these requirements to include minority high school students and undergraduate engineering and business students. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: Two commenters suggested that the Cognitive Technologies topic area be expanded to include research and development activities pertinent to cognitive disabilities across the lifespan.

Discussion: An applicant could propose research and development activities pertinent to cognitive disabilities across the lifespan. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: Two commenters suggested that the RERC on Cognitive Technologies be required to seek additional financial support from outside foundations, such as the Coleman Colorado Foundation, that specifically focus on funding technology research pertinent to cognitive disability.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities to seek additional financial support from outside foundations. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Cognitive Technologies be required to include a research and development activity to develop "smart" residential living environments designed to augment the effectiveness of developmental disabilities direct support/personal assistance services.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities to develop "smart" residential living environments designed to augment the effectiveness of developmental disabilities direct support/personal assistance services. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to propose these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Accessible Public Transportation be required to include activities that focus on technology to improve accessibility to bus and other public and private ground transportation systems, and integrating those technologies with residential and community living environments for people with cognitive disabilities.

Discussion: An applicant could propose research and development activities to improve accessibility to bus and other public and private ground transportation systems, and integrating those technologies with residential and community living environments for people with cognitive disabilities. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However,

NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to include these activities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the very nature of the RERC on Telerehabilitation requires it to focus on care providers and their patients rather than a more general consumer base.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that care providers and their patients play an important role for this RERC. Others, including family members, allied health professionals, and points of service (e.g., hospitals, clinics, one's home, etc.) also play integral roles with respect to this topic area. This RERC will also need to stay in contact with representatives from the telecommunications industry, healthcare insurers, and healthcare policy makers.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Technology Access for Land Mine Survivors topic area and the Prosthetics and Orthotics topic area be combined so that the additional resources could be used for other topic areas not included in this priority.

Discussion: NIDRR believes the mission and intended target populations of these two topic areas are distinctly different even though both of them include the need to research and develop prosthetics and orthotics (P&O). One is expected to focus on improving the state of the science in the field of P&O while the other is expected to work within developing countries to improve the lives of land mine survivors using indigenous materials and expertise from respective countries. If the two were combined the RERC would be spread too thin thereby negatively affecting the center's ability to conduct quality research and development activities. If funded, the two centers will be expected to coordinate on research projects of mutual interest.

Changes: None.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.133E]

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) Program; Notice Inviting Applications for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

Note to Applicants: The notice of final funding priorities is published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Purpose of the Program: RERCs conduct research, development, and training activities regarding rehabilitation technology—including rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services, in order to enhance opportunities for meeting the needs of,

and addressing the barriers confronted by, individuals with disabilities in all aspects of their lives.

Eligible Applicants: Parties eligible to apply for grants under this program are 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.

Applications Available: April 22, 2003.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 27, 2003.

Maximum Award Amount: \$1,000,000 per year for the Universal Interface and Information Technologies topic area; \$950,000 per year for all other topic areas.

Note: We will reject without consideration or evaluation any application that proposes a budget exceeding the stated maximum award amount in any year (See 34 CFR 75.104(b)).

Estimated Number of Awards: 9.
Project Period: Up to 60 months.

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

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86 and 97, and the program regulations 34 CFR part 350.

Priorities

This competition focuses on projects designed to meet the priorities in the notice of final priorities for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**. The priorities are: (a) Hearing enhancement; (b) prosthetics and orthotics; (c) communication enhancement; (d) measurement and monitoring of functional performance; (e) technology access for land mine survivors; (f) universal interface and information technologies; (g) telerehabilitation; (h) accessible public transportation; (i) wheeled mobility; (j) cognitive technologies; and (k) technology transfer. Applicants are allowed to submit more than one proposal as long as each proposal addresses only one priority topic area. The topic area should be the descriptive title of the applicant's project. NIDRR requests that you include the topic in the title block of the ED 424 form, the abstract, and introduction paragraph.

For FY 2003, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet these priorities

Selection Criteria: The selection criteria to evaluate applications under

this program are found in the application package.

Pre-Application Meeting: Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priorities and to receive technical assistance through individual consultation and information about the funding priorities. The pre-application meeting will be held on May 12, 2003 either in person or by conference call at the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Switzer Building, room 3065, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC between 10 AM and 12 noon. NIDRR staff will also be available from 1:30 PM to 4 PM on that same day to provide technical assistance through individual consultation and information about the funding priority. For further information or to make arrangements to attend contact Donna Nangle, Switzer Building, room 3412, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20202. Telephone (202) 205-5880 or via Internet: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call (202) 205-4475.

Assistance to Individuals With Disabilities at the Public Meetings

The meeting site is accessible to individuals with disabilities, and a sign language interpreter will be available. If you will need an auxiliary aid or service other than a sign language interpreter in order to participate in the meeting (e.g., other interpreting service such as oral, cued speech, or tactile interpreter; assistive listening device; or materials in alternate format), notify the contact person listed in this notice at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting date. Although we will attempt to meet a request we receive after this date, we may not be able to make available the requested auxiliary aid or service because of insufficient time to arrange it.

Application Procedures

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

Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) Program—CFDA No. 84.133E—is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the RERCs Program, you may submit your application to us in either electronic or paper format.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-Application) portion of the Grant Administration and Payment System (GAPS). Users of e-Application will be entering data on-line while completing their applications. You may not e-mail a soft copy of a grant application to us. If you participate in this voluntary pilot project by submitting an application electronically, the data you enter on-line will be saved into a database. We request your participation in e-Application. We shall continue to evaluate its success and solicit suggestions for improvement.

If you participate in e-Application, please note the following:

- Your participation is voluntary.
- You will not receive any additional point value because you submit a grant application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit an application in paper format. When you enter the e-Application system, you will find information about its hours of operation.
- You may submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.
- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).

• Within three working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

(1) Print ED 424 from the e-Application system.

(2) The institution's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.

(3) Place the PR/Award number in the upper right-hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.

(4) Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349.

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

- *Closing Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability:* If you elect to participate in the e-Application pilot for the RERCs Program and you are prevented from submitting your application on the closing date because the e-Application system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of one business day in order to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery. For us to grant this extension—

(1) You must be a registered user of e-Application, and have initiated an e-Application for this competition; and

(2)(a) The e-Application system must be unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date; or

(b) The e-Application system must be unavailable for any period of time during the last hour of operation (that is, for any period of time between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time) on the deadline date.

The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension you must contact either (1) the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or (2) the

e-GRANTS help desk at 1-888-336-8930.

You may access the electronic grant application for the RERCs Program at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

We have included additional information about the e-Application pilot project and instructions for how to submit paper applications in the application package (see Parity Guidelines between Paper and Electronic Applications).

For Applications Contact: 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 84.133E.

For Further Information Contact: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3414, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2645. Telephone: (202) 205-5880. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205-4475. Internet: Donna.Nangle@ed.gov.

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

Electronic Access to This Document

You may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/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.access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 764(b)(3).

Dated: April 16, 2003.

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

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