



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

JUL 2 2008

Honorable Ed Thompson, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Health Officer  
Mississippi State Department of Health  
P.O. Box 1700  
570 East Woodrow Wilson Boulevard  
Jackson, MS 39215-1700

Dear Dr. Thompson:

This is to inform you that we have conditionally approved Mississippi's Application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008 under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our conditional approval is based on review of the application submitted by the Mississippi Department of Health (MDH) to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), on May 7, 2008, and amended on June 20, 2008, including policies, procedures, methods, descriptions, assurances, certifications, and submission statement provided in Section II, and incorporated by reference to this letter as noted in Enclosure A. In addition, the State provided the following specific assurances that it will:

1. Operate consistent with the Part C requirements in 20 U.S.C. 1431 through 1444 and applicable regulations in 34 CFR Part 303;
2. Ensure that the statewide system of early intervention services required by Part C and its implementing regulations is in effect throughout the FFY 2008 grant period; and
3. Make such changes to, and submit, as necessary, for OSEP's approval, the State's policies, procedures, methods, and descriptions as are necessary to bring those policies, procedures, methods and descriptions into compliance with the requirements of Part C of the IDEA, as amended, as soon as possible, and not later than the earlier of the date indicated by the State in Section II of its application or June 30, 2009. Section II of the State's application identifies the IDEA statutory sections for which the State needs to amend any policies, procedures, methods and descriptions and the timelines by which the State will amend its policies, procedures, methods and descriptions in order to comply with Part C of the IDEA. Within Section II, the State has included the date by which it expects to complete necessary changes associated with any policies, procedures, methods and descriptions that are not yet in compliance with the requirements of Part C of the IDEA, as amended.

OSEP imposed Special Conditions on Mississippi's Part C FFY 2007 grant award to ensure compliance with the: (1) timely provision of early intervention service requirements in 34 CFR §§303.340(c), 303.342(e) and 303.344(f)(1); (2) 45-day timeline requirements in 34 CFR §§303.321(e)(2) and 303.322(e)(1) and 303.342(a); and (3) timely correction of identified noncompliance requirements in 34 CFR §303.501(b). In addition, OSEP's March 8, 2008 verification letter concluded that while it appeared that Mississippi's general supervision system is

reasonably designed to identify noncompliance, OSEP was unable to determine that the system was effective in ensuring correction of noncompliance.

Mississippi's FFY 2007 special condition progress reports, submitted on February 2, 2008 and June 2, 2008, demonstrated correction of noncompliance. Based on data indicating correction of noncompliance, it appears that Mississippi now has a general supervision system reasonably designed to correct noncompliance (except in the areas discussed below). OSEP looks forward to reviewing the State's timely correction data, including updated data on its remaining uncorrected January 2007 findings, under Indicator 9, in Mississippi's Part C FFY 2007 APR, due February 2, 2009. The February and June 2008 progress reports also provided statewide compliance data demonstrating substantial compliance with the 45-day timeline requirements in 34 CFR §§303.321(e)(2) and 303.322(e)(1) and 303.342(a) and that the State had corrected its findings regarding the 45-day timeline in all but one health district. OSEP looks forward to reviewing Mississippi's 45-day timeline data under Indicator 7 of the State's APRs.

However, Mississippi's February and June 2008 special conditions progress reports indicate that the State is not yet ensuring timely provision of early intervention services as required by 34 CFR §§303.340(c), 303.342(e) and 303.344(f)(1). Thus, Mississippi's FFY 2008 IDEA Part C grant award is being released subject to FFY 2008 Special Conditions regarding this requirement. The Special Conditions are set forth in Enclosure B and are being imposed pursuant to the Department's authority in 34 CFR §80.12. Acceptance by Mississippi of this grant award constitutes an agreement by the State to comply with the Special Conditions, which require a progress report on February 2, 2009 and a final progress report on May 15, 2009.

Enclosed is the State's grant award for funds currently available under the Department of Education Appropriations Act for FFY 2008 for the Part C program. These funds are available for obligation by States from July 1, 2008 through September 30, 2010.

The enclosed grant award for FFY 2008 is made with the continued understanding that this Office may, from time to time, require clarification of information within your application, if necessary. These inquiries are needed to allow us to appropriately carry out our administrative responsibilities related to Part C.

Please note that as part of your State's application for FFY 2008, your State has made an assurance, under 34 CFR §80.11(c), that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations in effect with respect to the FFY 2008 grant period. Any changes made by the State to its FFY 2008 application or Part C policies or procedures that are application requirements, after issuance of this grant award, must meet the applicable public participation requirements under Part C of the IDEA in 34 CFR §§303.110 through 303.113 and if they are requirements under Section II.A must be submitted to, and approved by, OSEP prior to the State's implementation of its new or revised application, policies and procedures.

Section IV.B of the FFY 2008 application for Part C funds requested updated information about each State's restricted indirect cost rate. Our records indicate that your agency has a final restricted indirect cost rate of 14% that has been approved by your agency's cognizant Federal agency and is effective until June 30, 2009. Section IV.B of your State's Part C Application indicates that your agency will continue to apply the currently approved restricted indirect cost rate throughout the FFY 2008 grant year until a new restricted indirect cost rate is negotiated and

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approved by the State lead agency's cognizant Federal agency. Please forward to us any revisions to your agency's restricted indirect cost rate once it is approved by your cognizant agency.

Section 604 of the IDEA provides that "[a] State shall not be immune under the eleventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States from suit in Federal court for a violation of this Act." Section 606 provides that each recipient of assistance under IDEA make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA. Therefore, by accepting this grant a State is expressly agreeing as a condition of IDEA funding to a waiver of Eleventh Amendment immunity and to ensuring that positive efforts are made to employ and advance employment of qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the provision of quality early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,



William W. Knudsen

Acting Director

Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

Enclosure A

Enclosure B

cc: Part C Coordinator