

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

President Obama is committed to fostering a society that values the contributions of all people, including individuals with disabilities. Although we have made significant advances in education, employment, and civil rights for individuals with disabilities, we must do more to fulfill the promise of equal access and equal opportunity. Educational, economic, and health outcomes for people with disabilities are still much lower than their peers without disabilities, and ensuring that individuals with disabilities are achieving to the highest levels possible is a national imperative.

The Administration has proposed changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are addressed throughout the ESEA, and has continued to include students with disabilities in all of its education reform efforts. The Administration is also working to improve the participation of individuals with disabilities in our nation's public workforce system and increase the employment of individuals with disabilities, including by providing incentives for States to create innovative models for service delivery that are likely to improve their employment outcomes.

The President's fiscal year 2013 budget request provides increased investments in education for children with disabilities as well as targeted investments that encourage innovation and advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

- **IDEA Part B Grants to States (\$11.6 billion)**, to support States and districts in providing special education and related services to students with disabilities. These formula funds are critically important to help ensure that the more than 6.6 million students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 served by Part B receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that meets their unique needs. By maintaining significant support for Part B, the Administration is helping to ensure that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible and are prepared for college and a career, or both.
- **\$463 million for IDEA Part C Grants for Infants and Families**, an increase of \$20 million, for formula grants to help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services to assist all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through age two and their families. These funds would increase the average State allocation by over \$300,000, help States serve an estimated 370,000 infants and toddlers, encourage States to extend early intervention services to children through age 5, and help States better coordinate with early learning programs that are participating in the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge. Additionally, this request would allow the Department to award up to \$2.7 million for State Incentive Grants (since the request is above \$460 million) to facilitate a seamless system of services for children with disabilities from birth until kindergarten entry.
- **\$373 million for IDEA Part B Preschool Grants**, for formula grants to help States provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment to all

children with disabilities ages 3 through 5. This request, supplemented by the funds requested for the Grants to States program, will help ensure that over 730,000 young children with disabilities are ready to succeed when they enter school.

- **\$236 million for National Activities under IDEA**, to improve services and supports for children with disabilities and advance the field through funding for technical assistance, personnel development and preparation, parent information centers, and technology and media services. The National Activities programs link States, school systems, and families to best practices to improve results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.
- **\$3.2 billion for a consolidated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program.** The request would consolidate the smaller VR-related programs under the Rehabilitation Act in order to reduce duplication of effort and administrative costs, streamline program administration at the Federal and local level, and improve accountability. A total of \$35.7 million would be made available to the VR State Grants program from the consolidation of employment-related programs.
- **Improving the achievement of students with disabilities.** The Administration believes strongly that all students, including students with disabilities, should enter school ready to learn and have access to high-quality interventions and effective teachers. The President's 2013 budget request includes funds for programs that would support these goals, such as:
 - **\$14.5 billion for the College- and Career-Ready Students program**, formerly Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies, which would strengthen school, district, and State accountability by continuing to require disaggregated reporting of achievement data for students with disabilities, asking States to implement meaningful interventions in schools with the largest achievement gaps, and measuring student growth as well as achievement.
 - **Continued funding for the Early Learning Challenge through Race to the Top**, which provides competitive grants to States to establish model systems of early learning for children, from birth to kindergarten entry, including children with disabilities, that promote high standards of quality and that focus on outcomes across all settings to ensure that more children enter school ready to succeed. This program complements, leverages, and streamlines the operations of other Federal and State investments, including IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B Preschool Grants.
 - **\$190 million for the Presidential Teaching Fellows program**, to support scholarships for talented teaching candidates to attend top-tier teacher preparation programs and teach in high-need schools and high-need subjects or fields, including special education. This new program would help ensure that students with disabilities, along with low-income students, minority students, and English Learners, have access to effective teachers.

- **Improving assessments for Students with Disabilities.** Through the Race to the Top Assessment program, the Department provided \$350 million to two consortia of States to develop high-quality assessments aligned with common, college- and career-ready standards in reading or language arts and mathematics. The designers of these assessments will ensure, from the very beginning, that they are reliable and valid for students with disabilities. The Department also provided \$67 million through the General Supervision Enhancement Grants program to two consortia of States to develop alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; these assessments will also be aligned to the same common, college- and career-ready standards.
- **New initiatives to encourage innovation and improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.** The Administration proposes the following initiatives to spur new and innovative approaches to improving results for individuals with disabilities:
 - **\$30 million for PROMISE: Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (SSI),** a joint pilot demonstration program with the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor to improve health, education, and post-school outcomes of children who receive SSI and their families. The FY 2013 request includes similar language as in FY 2012 appropriations that would allow the Secretary to use amounts that remain available after the re-allotment of funds to States under the VR State Grants program. This program would fund pilots in select States to improve the provision and coordination of services for these individuals.
 - **\$10 million for a proposed interagency Workforce Innovation Fund** that would, in combination with funds from the Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund, encourage innovation and support projects to identify and validate effective strategies for improving the delivery of services and outcomes for beneficiaries under the Rehabilitation Act and other programs authorized by the Workforce Investment Act.