DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

34 CFR Chapter III

Final Priority; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Disability Rehabilitation Research Project

[CFDA Number: 84.133A-8]

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Final priority.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for a Disability Rehabilitation Research Project (DRRP) on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers program administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The Assistant Secretary may use this priority for a competition in fiscal year (FY) 2013 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend this priority to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
EFFECTIVE DATE:  This priority is effective [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:  Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700.  Telephone:  (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail: marlene.spencer@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:

Purpose of Program:

This notice of final priority is in concert with NIDRR’s currently approved Long-Range Plan (Plan). The Plan, which was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 2006 (71 FR 8165), can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/policy.html.

Through the implementation of the Plan, NIDRR seeks to: (1) improve the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research; (2) foster an exchange of expertise, information, and training methods to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of traditionally underserved populations; (3)
determine the best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms for integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

This notice announces a priority that NIDRR intends to use for a DRRP competition in FY 2013 and possibly later years. However, nothing precludes NIDRR from publishing additional priorities, if needed. Furthermore, NIDRR is under no obligation to make an award for this priority. The decision to make an award will be based on the quality of applications received and available funding.

The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities, to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).
The purpose of DRRPs, which are under NIDRR’s Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, by developing methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technologies that advance a wide range of independent living and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities. DRRPs carry out one or more of the following types of activities, as specified and defined in 34 CFR 350.13 through 350.19: research, training, demonstration, development, dissemination, utilization, and technical assistance. An applicant for assistance under this program must demonstrate in its application how it will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds (34 CFR 350.40(a)). The approaches an applicant may take to meet this requirement are found in 34 CFR 350.40(b). In addition, NIDRR intends to require all DRRP applicants to meet the priority on General DRRP Requirements that it published in a notice of final priorities in the Federal Register on April 28, 2006 (71 FR 25472).
Additional information on the DRRP program can be found at: http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#DRRP.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a).

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the Federal Register on January 15, 2013 (78 FR 2923). That notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing the particular priority.

There are no differences between the proposed priority and this final priority.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the notice of proposed priority, 10 parties submitted comments on the proposed priority. Nine of these parties submitted comments that are wholly supportive of NIDRR’s proposed Center. One commenter submitted supportive comments, as well as two specific suggestions for the priority.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priority since publication of the notice of proposed priority follows.
**Comment:** One commenter suggested that NIDRR explicitly require the Center to collaborate with other NIDRR-funded knowledge translation grantees.

**Discussion:** NIDRR agrees with this suggestion. However, NIDRR plans to manage this collaboration through the General Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Requirements priority. These requirements will be provided in the notice inviting applications and the application package for this competition. The relevant requirement states that all DRRPs must "Coordinate on research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDRR-funded projects, as identified through consultation with the NIDRR project officer." After an award is made under this priority, the NIDRR Project Officer will work with the grantee to identify the appropriate NIDRR-funded projects with which the Center must collaborate, including other NIDRR-funded knowledge translation grantees.

**Changes:** None.

**Comment:** One commenter suggested that NIDRR require the Center to identify effective approaches that have been used by NIDRR technology grantees to bring their products to the marketplace.

**Discussion:** NIDRR generally agrees that the identification of effective approaches to technology transfer may help
fulfill the stated outcomes of the priority. However, we have purposefully left such prescriptive detail out of the priority so that applicants can propose a wide range of activities to meet the outcome of improved technology transfer among NIDRR’s technology grantees. The merits of each application will be determined by the peer review process.

Changes: None.

FINAL PRIORITY:
DRRP for Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services establishes a priority for a Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project to serve as the Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer (Center). The Center must conduct rigorous research, development, technical assistance, dissemination, and utilization activities to increase successful technology transfer of rehabilitation technology products and devices developed by NIDRR-funded technology grantees.

In planning and conducting all activities, the Center must partner with relevant stakeholders such as NIDRR’s technology grantees, trade and professional associations,
industry representatives, individuals with disabilities, and others.

Under this priority, the Center must be designed to contribute to the following outcomes:

(a) Increased rate of successful technology transfer of rehabilitation technology products developed by NIDRR-funded technology grantees to the marketplace, into engineering standards, or into other intended applications;

(b) Increased understanding among rehabilitation engineers and others engaged in disability research and development of technology transfer processes and practices that lead to successful transfer of rehabilitation technology products to the marketplace, into engineering standards, or into other intended applications;

(c) Increased capacity of NIDRR’s technology grantees to plan and to engage in technology transfer activities.

Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational through a notice in the Federal Register. The effect of each type of priority follows:
**Absolute priority:** Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

**Competitive preference priority:** Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

**Invitational priority:** Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This notice does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

**Note:** This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this priority, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register.
Under Executive Order 12866, the Secretary must determine whether this regulatory action is “significant” and, therefore, subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a “significant regulatory action” as an action likely to result in a rule that may--

(1) Have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred to as an “economically significant” rule);

(2) Create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles stated in the Executive order.
This final regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by OMB under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

We have also reviewed this final regulatory action under Executive Order 13563, which supplements and explicitly reaffirms the principles, structures, and definitions governing regulatory review established in Executive Order 12866. To the extent permitted by law, Executive Order 13563 requires that an agency--

(1) Propose or adopt regulations only upon a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs (recognizing that some benefits and costs are difficult to quantify);

(2) Tailor its regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining regulatory objectives and taking into account--among other things and to the extent practicable--the costs of cumulative regulations;

(3) In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, select those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity);
(4) To the extent feasible, specify performance objectives, rather than the behavior or manner of compliance a regulated entity must adopt; and

(5) Identify and assess available alternatives to direct regulation, including economic incentives--such as user fees or marketable permits--to encourage the desired behavior, or provide information that enables the public to make choices.

Executive Order 13563 also requires an agency “to use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs as accurately as possible.” The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB has emphasized that these techniques may include “identifying changing future compliance costs that might result from technological innovation or anticipated behavioral changes.”

We are issuing this final priority only on a reasoned determination that its benefits justify its costs. In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, we selected those approaches that maximize net benefits. Based on the analysis that follows, the Department believes that this regulatory action is consistent with the principles in Executive Order 13563.
We also have determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and Tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

In accordance with both Executive orders, the Department has assessed the potential costs and benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of this regulatory action. The potential costs are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering the Department’s programs and activities.

Summary of potential costs and benefits:

The benefits of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Programs have been well established over the years in that similar projects have been completed successfully. This final priority will generate new knowledge through research and development.

Another benefit of the final priority is that establishing new DRRPs will improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The new DRRPs will provide support and assistance for NIDRR grantees as they generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for individuals with disabilities.
to perform regular activities of their choice in the community.

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Dated: April 12, 2013

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Michael Yudin
Delegated the authority
to perform the functions
and duties of Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2013-09060 Filed 04/16/2013 at 8:45 am;
Publication Date: 04/17/2013]