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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 84.133E, Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(3).

Dated: April 6, 2005.

John H. Hager,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Appendix

Analysis of Comments and Changes

Comment: One commenter believes the target audience for the Universal Design and the Built Environment priority should be expanded beyond architects and interior designers to include consumer product and package designers.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities that include consumer product and package designers and the peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to include consumer product and package designers.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter believes the Universal Design and the Built Environment priority should require applicants to research, develop, and evaluate innovative ways to present human factors and other user data so that designers are more likely to incorporate the information into their designs.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities that include innovative ways to present human factors and other user data so that designers are more likely to incorporate the information into their designs and the peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring all applicants to include these specific types of activities in their proposals.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter states that persons with cognitive disabilities have been underserved by the universal design community and believes the Universal Design and the Built Environment priority should require applicants to include the design needs of persons with cognitive disabilities in their research and development projects.

Discussion: Although NIDRR agrees with the commenter that the universal design community has been slow to include the design needs of persons with cognitive disabilities, it has no basis for requiring that all applicants focus on this population. Applicants are encouraged to include the population in their applications. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter asked whether the Universal Design and the Built Environment priority applies only to architectural design.

Discussion: The Universal Design and the Built Environment priority does not apply only to architectural design. Applicants are required to advance the field of universal design and assist designers as well as builders and manufacturers, with incorporating universal design in their products and buildings.

Changes: None.

Comment: Three commenters believe applicants responding to the Low Vision and Blindness priority should be required to target populations across their lifespan, including early infancy, and to include a focus on employment.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees with the commenters that there is a need to target populations across their lifespan, including early infancy, and to focus on employment. However, NIDRR believes that there are simply not enough resources allocated for this RERC to make it a requirement for all applicants. An applicant could propose activities that target populations across their lifespan, including early infancy, and that focus on employment. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter asked NIDRR to clarify that the Low Vision and Blindness priority is not restricted to only computer access.

Discussion: The Low Vision and Blindness priority is not restricted only to computer access. Applicants are required to 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. Proposals may focus on computer access as well as other relevant technologies.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter asked whether the Technologies for Children with Orthopedic Disabilities priority is limited to conventional prosthetics and orthotics or whether it could be more broadly interpreted to include technology that can enhance the rehabilitation of children with orthopedic disabilities.

Discussion: The Technologies for Children with Orthopedic Disabilities priority is not limited to conventional prosthetics and orthotics. The focus of this priority is broader. Accordingly, applicants are required to research and develop technologies that will help children with orthopedic disabilities overcome functional deficits and that will support their ability to learn, play, and interact socially.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter asked if NIDRR uses the same definition of orthopedic disability as the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

Discussion: NIDRR generally uses a modified version of the OSERS definition that includes an emphasis on function and mobility to improve participation and

community living by individuals with disabilities.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter asked how much discretion an applicant has when determining the type and number of projects they include in their application.

Discussion: An applicant has full discretion when determining the type and number of projects included in a proposal provided the projects are responsive to the given priority. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal.

Changes: None.

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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); Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133E-1.

Dates:

Applications Available: April 25, 2005.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 24, 2005.

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: \$1,900,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$947,500.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$950,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Note: The maximum amount includes direct and indirect costs.

Estimated Number of Awards: 2.

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 2005, the competition for new awards focuses on projects designed to meet the priorities

we describe in the *Priorities* section of this notice. We intend these priorities to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Priorities: These priorities are from the notice of final priorities for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Absolute Priority: For FY 2005 these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet one or more of these priorities. (a) Technologies for Children with Orthopedic Disabilities, (b) Low Vision and Blindness, or (c) Universal Design and the Built Environment. Applicants are allowed to submit more than one proposal as long as each proposal addresses only one RERC priority.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(3).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97, (b) the regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 350, and (c) the notice of final priorities for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.
Estimated Available Funds:

\$1,900,000.
Estimated Average Size of Awards:

\$947,500.
Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$950,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Note: The maximum amount includes direct and indirect costs.

Estimated Number of Awards: 2.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. **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.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** This Program does not require cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. **Address to Request Application Package.** You may obtain an application

package via Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via Internet use the following address: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html>.

To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write or call the following: 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.

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 program contact person 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. We strongly recommend that you limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 125 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; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, you must include all of the application narrative in Part III.

The application package will provide instructions for completing all

components to be included in the application. Each application must include a cover sheet (ED Standard Form 424); budget requirements (ED Form 524) and narrative justification; other required forms; an abstract; Seven-Point Human Subjects narrative; Part III narrative; resumes of staff; and other related materials, if applicable.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: April 25, 2005.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 24, 2005.

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. 7. **Other Submission Requirements** in this notice.

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

4. **Intergovernmental Review:** This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

5. **Funding Restrictions:** We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. **Pre-Application Meeting:** Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priorities and to receive information and technical assistance through individual consultation about the funding priorities. The pre-application meeting will be held on May 3, 2005. Interested parties may participate either in person or by conference call at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Potomac Center Plaza, room 6082, 550 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. NIDRR staff also will be available from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on that same day to provide information and technical assistance through individual consultation about the funding priority. For further information or to make arrangements to attend either in person or by conference call, or for an individual consultation, contact Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, Potomac Center Plaza, room 6030, 550 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-7462 or via Internet: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

Assistance to Individuals With Disabilities at the Pre-Application Meeting

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.

7. 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 governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site in FY 2005. Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program—CFDA Number 84.133E-1 is one of the programs included in this project.

If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must use the Grants.gov Apply site (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. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

You may access the electronic grant application for Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program 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 with a date/time received by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We will not consider your application if it was received by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m. 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 submitted after 4:30 p.m. on the application deadline date.

- If you experience technical difficulties on the application deadline date and are unable to meet the 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, deadline, print out your application and follow the instructions in this notice for the submission of paper applications by mail or hand delivery.
- 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 your application is submitted timely to the Grants.gov system.

- To use Grants.gov, you, as the applicant, must have a D-U-N-S Number and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). You should allow a minimum of five business days to complete the CCR registration.

- 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. Any narrative sections of your application should be attached as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text) or .PDF (Portable Document) format.

- 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 acknowledgement 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.

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 84.133E-1), 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 84.133E-1), 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 84.133E-1), 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 the Application for Federal Education Assistance (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 34 CFR 350.54. The specific selection criteria to be used for this competition 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.

Note: NIDRR will provide information by letter to grantees on how and when to submit the report.

4. *Performance Measures:* To evaluate the overall success of its research program, NIDRR assesses the quality of its funded projects through review of grantee performance and products. Each year, NIDRR examines, through expert program review, a portion of its grantees to determine:

- The percentage of grantees judged by an external panel to be implementing a systematic, outcomes-oriented plan of evaluation, with well-formulated, measurable, and appropriate goals that are aligned with NIDRR's priorities and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) performance measures and used to track progress towards project objectives;

- The percentage of grantee research and development that has appropriate study design, meets rigorous standards of scientific and/or engineering methods, and builds on and contributes to knowledge in the field;

- The number of discoveries, analyses, and standards developed and/or tested and published by NIDRR grantees that are judged by expert panels to meet accepted standards of scientific and/or engineering rigor;

- The number of new or improved tools and methods developed, evaluated and/or tested, and published by NIDRR grantees that are judged by an expert panel to meet the accepted standards of scientific and/or engineering rigor;

- The percentage of new studies funded by NIDRR that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous and appropriate methods;

- The number of new or improved assistive and universally designed technologies, products, and devices developed by grantees that are judged by an expert panel to be effective in improving outcomes and have potential to be transferred to industry for commercialization; and

- The percentage of non-academic and consumer-oriented dissemination products and services, nominated by grantees to be their best outputs based on NIDRR-funded research and related activities, that are judged by an expert panel to demonstrate "good to excellent" utility and have potential to advance knowledge, change/improve policy or practice, and/or enhance

choice and self-determination for individuals with disabilities.

NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports (APRs) for these reviews. NIDRR also determines, using information submitted as part of the APR:

- The number of publications in refereed journals that are based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities; and
- The percentage of NIDRR-supported fellows, post-doctoral trainees, and doctoral students who publish results of NIDRR-sponsored research in refereed journals.

Department of Education program performance reports, which include information on NIDRR programs, are available on the Department of Education Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/planning.html>.

Updates on the GPRA indicators, revisions and methods appear in the NIDRR Program Review Web site: <http://www.neweditions.net/pr/commonfiles/pmconcepts.htm>.

Grantees should consult these sites, on a regular basis, to obtain details and explanations on how NIDRR programs contribute to the advancement of the Department's long-term and annual performance goals.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6030, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 245-7462 or via Internet: donna.nangle@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the TDD number at (202) 245-7317 or 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, audiotope, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed in this section.

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>.

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Dated: April 6, 2005.

John H. Hager,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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