

We have included additional information about the e-Application pilot project (see Parity Guidelines between Paper and Electronic Applications) in the application package.

**Applicable Regulations:** (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99; (b) The selection criteria are drawn from the general selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210. The specific selection criteria for this priority are included in the application package for this competition.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

### Priority

Under section 685 of IDEA and 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet the following absolute priority:

#### Absolute Priority—IDEA General Supervision Enhancement Grant (84.326X)

##### Background

Over the past seven years, OSEP has worked with interested parties to modify its monitoring system in a way that will improve results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities, and their families. The interested parties OSEP has worked with have included SEAs, local educational agencies, parents and advocates. To ensure States' compliance with IDEA, OSEP has implemented a Continuous Improvement Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS). An in-depth explanation of CIFMS can be found at: <http://dssc.org/frc/monitor.htm>.

Since the implementation of CIFMS, SEAs and State lead agencies have endorsed the concept. All of the States have been involved in some phase of CIFMS. Many States have begun the difficult process of—

- (1) Developing CIFMS systems at the State level;
- (2) Supporting the development of CIFMS systems at the LEA level;
- (3) Developing new data systems to support State and local CIFMS systems; and
- (4) Developing or enhancing State systems to identify and disseminate research-based promising practices in education and early intervention.

Providing the States with some initial funds to support their participation in CIFMS, as well as to support unique

State solutions and strategies developed in response to State-specific challenges identified through participation in CIFMS will reinforce OSEP's and the States' commitment to CIFMS.

##### Absolute Priority

To be funded under this priority, a project must address one or more of the following three focus areas.

#### Focus 1: Developing or Enhancing a Data System To Support the Needs of a CIFMS at the State or Local Level

##### Background

The collection and use of valid and reliable data are cornerstones of CIFMS. An analysis of State self-assessments has shown that many States, as well as their LEAs and local Part C agencies, lack the capacity to collect sufficient data to determine the impact of special education and early intervention services.

##### Focus

This focus supports the development or enhancement of a data system that is aligned with the data collection needs of CIFMS and that will provide information about one or more of the following:

- (a) Appropriate early intervention services or special education and related services or both.
- (b) The effectiveness of the monitoring system of the SEA or State lead agency or both.
- (c) The effectiveness of interagency coordination.
- (d) The effectiveness of the State's dispute resolution system.
- (e) The effectiveness of the State's system to identify children's eligibility for part B or part C services or both.
- (f) Personnel shortages, including information related to the retention of qualified teachers and service providers.
- (g) The system for exercising the general supervisory authority of the SEA or State lead agency or both.
- (h) Efforts to address family needs and enhance families' capacities to meet the developmental needs of their children.
- (i) Early intervention services in the natural environment or special education and related services in the least restrictive environment or both.
- (j) The transition from part C to part B services.
- (k) The involvement of parents.
- (l) Transition of youth with disabilities from school to work or postsecondary education, including graduation.
- (m) Student achievement and participation and performance on assessments of students with disabilities.

#### Focus 2: Developing or Enhancing a Process to Conduct Activities To Plan Improvement Based on CIFMS

##### Background

The process of developing improvement plans is a critical component of CIFMS. If done properly, improvement planning will result in improved special education and related services and early intervention or both. OSEP's analysis of State improvement plans in response to OSEP monitoring reports has shown that many States lack a cohesive data-based approach to developing their improvement plans. Many States have had trouble identifying and addressing the systemic barriers, root causes or factors that contributed to the practice that the State or OSEP has determined needs improvement.

##### Focus

This focus supports the development or enhancement of a process for planning improvement. The process must be aligned with the improvement planning phase of CIFMS and should result in solutions that, for example —

- (a) Identify underlying causes and/or systemic barriers to improved early intervention services or special education and related services or both;
- (b) Address the root causes and/or systemic barriers to improved early intervention services or special education and related services or both;
- (c) Include an evaluation component that assesses the impact of early intervention services or special education and related services or both;
- (d) Include an evaluation component that assesses how changes in staff practice affect the provision of special education and related services or early intervention services or both;
- (e) Are aligned or coordinated with the State's initiatives for general education reform; and
- (f) Are consistent with and responsive to the findings of OSEP monitoring reports.

#### Focus 3: Developing or Enhancing State Systems To Identify, Disseminate, and Implement Promising Educational or Early Intervention Practices Based on Research

##### Background

OSEP has found that, to be fully effective, many improvement plans require a State technical assistance and dissemination structure to identify, disseminate, and implement promising educational or early intervention practices based on research. In many States this structure is either