

technologies with various environments such as school, work, recreation, and social settings;

(b) *Prosthetics and Orthotics*: This center must increase understanding of the scientific and engineering principles pertaining to human locomotion, reaching, grasping, and manipulation, and incorporate those principles into the design and fitting of prosthetic and orthotic devices;

(c) *Communication Enhancement*: This center must research and develop augmentative and alternative communication technologies and strategies that will enhance the communicative capacity of individuals of all ages with significant communication disorders across environments (*i.e.*, education, employment, recreation, social);

(d) *Measurement and Monitoring of Functional Performance*: This center must research and develop technologies and methods that effectively assess the outcomes of rehabilitation therapies by combining measurements of physiological performance with measures of functional performance;

(e) *Technology Access for Land Mine Survivors*: This center must address the unique rehabilitation needs of land mine survivors of all ages and develop low-cost replacement limbs, orthotics, and assistive technologies using indigenous materials and expertise from respective countries that will improve the quality of life for individuals who have been severely injured due to land mine explosions;

(f) *Universal Interface and Information Technologies*: This center must research and develop innovative technological solutions for, and promote universal access to, current and emerging information technologies and technology interfaces that promote a seamless integration of the multiple technologies used by individuals with disabilities in the home, the community, and the workplace. This center must work collaboratively with the RERC on Telecommunication Access, the RERC on Mobile Wireless Technologies, and the NIDRR-funded Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center;

(g) *Telerehabilitation*: This center must research and develop methods, systems, and technologies that support remote delivery of rehabilitation and home health care services for individuals who have limited local access to comprehensive medical and rehabilitation outpatient services;

(h) *Accessible Public Transportation*: This center must research and develop methods, systems, and devices that will promote and enhance the ability of

people with disabilities to safely, comfortably, and efficiently identify destination information, embark/disembark, and use restroom facilities on various types of public transportation systems such as passenger trains and airplanes;

(i) *Wheeled Mobility*: This center must research and develop innovative technologies and strategies that will improve the current state of the science, design guidelines and performance standards, and usability of wheeled mobility devices and wheelchair seating systems;

(j) *Cognitive Technologies*: This center must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and approaches that will have a positive impact on the way in which individuals with significant cognitive disabilities function independently within their communities and workplace; and

(k) *Technology Transfer*: This center must research and develop innovative ways to facilitate and improve the process of moving new, useful, and more effective assistive technology inventions and applications from the prototype phase to the marketplace. This center will be expected to provide technical assistance to all RERCs on issues pertaining to technology transfer, including the development of long-range technology transfer plans.

Executive Order 12866

This notice of final priorities has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12866. Under the terms of the order, we have assessed the potential costs and benefits of this regulatory action.

The potential costs associated with the notice of final priorities are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering this program effectively and efficiently.

In assessing the potential costs and benefits—both quantitative and qualitative—of this notice of final priorities, we have determined that the benefits of the priorities justify the costs.

Summary of potential costs and benefits: The potential cost associated with these proposed priorities is minimal while the benefits are significant. Grantees may anticipate costs associated with completing the application process in terms of staff time, copying, and mailing or delivery. The use of e-Application technology reduces mailing and copying costs significantly.

The benefits of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers program have been well established over the

years in that similar projects have been completed. These priorities will generate new knowledge through a research, dissemination, utilization, and technical assistance projects.

The benefit of these priorities and application and project requirements will be the establishment of new health and function centers that support the President's NFI.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

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

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Dated: April 16, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Appendix

Analysis of Comments and Changes

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Wheeled Mobility topic area would be strengthened if the phrase "design standards" were changed to "design guidelines and performance standards."

Discussion: NIDRR agrees with the commenter that the Wheeled Mobility topic area would be strengthened by replacing the phrase "design standards" with "design guidelines and performance standards."

Changes: The phrase "design standards" has been replaced with "design guidelines and performance standards."

Comment: One commenter suggested that the RERC on Measurement and Monitoring of Functional Performance be required to incorporate issues that relate functional performance measurements to specific work tasks associated with the job or jobs a person performs or will be performing.

Discussion: An applicant could propose activities that relate functional performance measurements to specific work tasks