

published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

For FY 2003, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the priority.

### Application Procedures

**Note:** Some of the procedures in these instructions for transmitting applications differ from those in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (34 CFR 75.102). Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, these amendments make procedural changes only and do not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), the Secretary has determined that proposed rulemaking is not required.

### Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. The Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program—Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, CFDA No. 84.129B, is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program—Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, you may submit your application to us in either electronic or paper format.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-Application) portion of the Grant Administration and Payment System (GAPS). Users of e-Application will be entering data on-line while completing their applications. You may not e-mail a soft copy of a grant application to us. If you participate in this voluntary pilot project by submitting an application electronically, the data you enter on-line will be saved into a database. We request your participation in e-Application. We shall continue to evaluate its success and solicit suggestions for improvement.

If you participate in e-Application, please note the following:

- Your participation is voluntary.
- You will not receive any additional point value because you submit a grant application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit an application in paper format. When you enter the e-Application system, you will find information about its hours of operation.

- You may submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).

- Within 3 working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

- (1) Print ED 424 from the e-Application system.
- (2) The institution's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.
- (3) Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.
- (4) Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349.

- We may request that you give us original signatures on all other forms at a later date.

- *Closing Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability:* If you elect to participate in the e-Application pilot for the Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program—Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and you are prevented from submitting your application on the closing date because the e-Application system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of 1 business day in order to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery.

For us to grant this extension—

- (1) You must be a registered user of e-Application, and have initiated an e-Application for this competition; and
- (2)(a) The e-Application system must be unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date; or
- (b) The e-Application system must be unavailable for any period of time during the last hour of operation (that is, for any period of time between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time) on the deadline date.

The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension.

To request this extension you must contact either (1) the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or (2) the e-Grants help desk at 1-888-336-8930.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program—Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

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

*For Applications Contact:* Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), PO 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](mailto:edpubs@inet.ed.gov).

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.129B.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 205-8207. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternative format the standard forms included in the application package.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Beverly Steburg, U.S. Department of Education, RSA, 61 Forsyth Street, SW., Suite 18T91, Atlanta, GA 30303. Telephone: (404) 562-6336 or via Internet: [Beverly.Steburg@ed.gov](mailto:Beverly.Steburg@ed.gov).

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) 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 under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

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