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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.133A, Disability Rehabilitation Research Project.)

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

Dated: January 13, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.133A-17]

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research-Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program; Notice Inviting Applications for Fiscal Year 2003

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2003.

Purpose of the Program: The purpose of the DRRP Program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Act), as amended. For FY 2003 the competition for new awards focuses on projects designed to meet the priority we describe in the **Priority** section of this application notice. We intend this priority to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations.

Eligible Applicants: Parties eligible to apply for grants under this program are limited to minority entities and Indian tribes.

Application Available: January 16, 2003.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: March 17, 2003.

Maximum Award Amount: \$350,000.

Note: We will reject any application without consideration that proposes a budget exceeding the stated maximum award amount in any given year (34 CFR 75.104(b)).

Estimated Number of Awards: 3.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

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

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86 and 97, and (b) The program regulations 34 CFR part 350.

Priority

This competition focuses on a project designed to meet the priority in the notice of final priority for this program, 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 this priority.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria to evaluate applications under this program are found in the application package.

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 Fiscal Year 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 Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program—CFDA #84.133A is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the DRRP, 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 three 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 DRRP 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 one 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 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 and