

Priorities

Research Projects for Stabilizing and Improving Lives of Persons with Disabilities

Background

On May 17, 2002, we published in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 35417–35419) a notice inviting written comments suggesting priorities for research centers and projects administered by NIDRR under title II of the Act. Individuals were encouraged to suggest research priorities consistent with the Plan and that support the NFI.

We received many suggestions. The purpose of this notice of proposed priorities is to present multiple research topics from public suggestions as well as related topics from staff analysis of emerging disability needs. All topics are for research activities under the DRRP program.

We propose priorities for applied research that will alleviate problems and challenges faced by people with disabilities as they seek improved life outcomes. These priorities share the goal of developing new knowledge to improve the inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities in their families, school, or work. Although we are proposing multiple priorities, we may not issue final priorities or make awards in all areas.

Letters of Intent

Due to the open nature of this competition, NIDRR is requiring all potential applicants to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). Each LOI must be limited to a maximum of four pages and must include the following information: (1) The title of the proposed DRRP, the name of the host institution, the name of the Principal Investigator (PI), and the names of partner institutions and entities; (2) a brief statement of the vision, goals, and objectives of the proposed DRRP and a description of its research and development activities at a sufficient level of detail to allow potential peer reviewers to be selected; (3) a list of proposed DRRP staff including the center Director and key personnel; and (4) a list of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest due to involvement in proposal development, selection as an advisory board member, co-PI relationships, etc.

Submission of a LOI is a prerequisite for eligibility to submit an application. The signed, original LOI, or with prior approval an email or facsimile copy, must be received by NIDRR no later than June 9, 2003. Applicants that submit email or facsimile copies must

follow up by sending to NIDRR the signed original copy no later than one week after the date the email or facsimile copy was sent. All communications pertaining to the LOI must be sent to: Donna Nangle, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3412, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202–2645. For further information regarding the LOI requirement, contact Donna Nangle at (202) 205–5880 or by email at: Donna.Nangle@ed.gov.

Priorities

The Assistant Secretary proposes to fund one or more DRRPs that will focus on stabilizing and improving lives of persons with disabilities. In carrying out the purposes of these priorities, projects awarded under each of the topics must, in consultation with the NIDRR project officer:

- Coordinate and establish partnerships, as appropriate, with other academic institutions and organizations that are relevant to the project's proposed activities;
- Demonstrate use of culturally appropriate data collection, evaluation, dissemination, training and research methodologies, and significant knowledge of the needs of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved populations;
- Involve, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their family members, or both in all aspects of the research as well as in design of clinical services and dissemination activities;
- Demonstrate how the research project can transfer research findings to practical applications in planning, policymaking, program administration, and delivery of services to individuals with disabilities; and
- Disseminate findings to appropriate audiences, including information on best practices, where applicable.

An applicant must propose research activities and dissemination of findings under one of the following topics:

(a) *Self-Determination in Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Disabilities*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information about factors that enhance and promote self-determination for youth with disabilities who are transitioning into adulthood. The project may include research on interventions that (1) enable successful transition to life activities such as independent living, higher education, and employment; and (2) improve functional outcomes such as enhanced memory, learning, visual perception, auditory reception, literacy, and self-advocacy. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter

3, Employment Outcomes: Transition from School to Work.

(b) *Examining Violence Against People With Disabilities*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information on violence against persons with disabilities. Activities may include research on statistics related to criminal victimization of people with disabilities compiled under the 1998 Crime Victims with Disabilities Awareness Act (Pub. L. 301–105); study of data from enhanced crime incident reports; and analysis of data and research findings on the impact of violence on specific populations such as, but not limited to, individuals with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, women with disabilities, individuals with sensory disabilities, and individuals with mobility disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Emerging Universe of Disability.

(c) *Family and Cultural Aspects of Independent Living*: This project must conduct research and disseminate information on how individuals with disabilities draw upon their families (or those with whom they share living arrangements) to obtain necessary supports such as economic assistance, informal and formal care giving, and emotional nurturing. Activities may include: (1) Identifying factors that help or hinder NFI goals regarding educational attainment, home ownership, and full access in community life; (2) research on ways that family and shared-community living arrangements may facilitate independence and help implement the Supreme Court's *Olmstead v. L.C.* ruling; and (3) research on how family and shared-community living arrangements may facilitate meeting the objectives for people with disabilities in Healthy People 2010. The references for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Disability, Employment, and Independent Living and chapter 6, Research on Social Roles.

(d) *Older Women and Falls*: This project must identify and compare outcomes-oriented rehabilitation interventions for older women to overcome the disabilities and secondary conditions associated with falls and to prevent secondary falls and other complications. The project must examine risk factors for falls (e.g., age, disability, medications use, health, functional ability, environmental hazards). The references for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 2, Dimensions of Disability: Emerging Universe of Disability and chapter 4, Health and Function: Research on