

Initiative and through his Executive Order to Federal Agencies on the implementation of the *Olmstead* decision, that every effort should be expended to ensure that people can live and work in their communities and are not forced to live in congregate facilities and to give up any hope of employment.

The purpose of these grants, therefore, is to encourage the development of home modifications as a means to support individuals with disabilities as they seek and maintain employment.

DATES: Applications will be accepted May 29, 2003. The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is July 14, 2003.

Applications must be received by 4:45 p.m. (ET) at the address below. No exceptions to the mailing and hand-delivery conditions set forth in this notice will be granted. Applications that do not meet the conditions set forth in this notice will be considered non-responsive.

ADDRESSES: Applications shall be mailed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, Attention: Cassandra Willis, Reference SGA 03-08, Room N-5416, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210. Telefacsimile (Fax) applications will not be accepted. Applicants are advised that mail delivery in the Washington area may be delayed due to mail decontamination procedures.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cassandra Willis, U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, telephone (202) 693-4570 (this is not a toll-free number), prior to the closing deadline. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact DOL via the Federal Relay Service, (800) 877-8339. This announcement will also be published on the Internet on the ODEP's online Home Page at: <http://www2.dol.gov/odep>. Award notifications will also be published on the ODEP Homepage.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Part I. Delivery of Applications

1. Late Applications

Any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will be considered non-responsive, unless it is received before awards are made and it (a) is determined that its late receipt was caused by DOL error; (b) was sent by U.S. Postal Service registered or certified mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application submitted in response to a solicitation requiring

receipt of applications by the 20th of the month must have been post marked by the 15th of that month); or (c) was sent by the U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service to addressee not later than 5 p.m. at the place of mailing two working days prior to the date specified for receipt of applications. The term "working days" excludes weekends and Federal holidays. "Post marked" means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service.

2. Withdrawal of Applications

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice or telegram (including mail gram) received at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn in person by the applicant or by an authorized representative thereof, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt of the proposal.

3. Hand-Delivered Proposals

It is preferred that applications be mailed at least five days prior to the closing date. To be considered for funding, hand-delivered applications must be received by 4:45 p.m., ET, at the specified address. Failure to adhere to the above instructions will be basis for a determination of non-responsiveness. Overnight express mail from carriers other than the U.S. Postal Service will be considered hand-delivered applications and must be received by the above specified date and time.

Part II. Authority

Omnibus Appropriations Resolution, 2003, Public Law 1087; Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001, Public Law 106-554, 29 U.S.C. 557b.

Part III. Background and Purpose

Background

Based on the 1995 American Housing Survey, almost 8.9 million housing units in the United States had at least one occupant who had a physical activity limitation—approximately 9.1 percent of the 97.7 million occupied housing units that year. It is estimated that as many as 3.4 million (38.4 percent) of homes with at least one occupant with activity limitations had some type of home modification (such as grab bars and ramps). In 3.3 million (36.9 percent) of the homes, an occupant with activity limitations received help from another person. Canes, walkers, or crutches were used in 3.4 million (37.9 percent) of the homes; wheelchairs, 1.4

million (15.3 percent); motorized or electric carts, 161,000 (1.8 percent); and other devices, 462,000 (5.2 percent). Approximately 5.1 million (57.4 percent) of the households in which a member had an activity limitation had no home modifications present.

In general, funding to meet this significant home modification need is scarce nationally and eligibility is often limited for the few programs available that help an individual in need of home modifications. Assistance through the Veterans Administration for some modifications, for example, is only available to eligible veterans. Some Centers for Independent Living provide funds for such purposes, but the funding is extremely limited and not widely available, particularly in rural areas. The Social Security Administration may allow deductions for the cost of certain modifications from earned income, but only to participants in certain work programs and if the modifications are deemed required for employment outcomes. Vocational Rehabilitation may also provide funding for some home modifications, but only for those eligible individuals seeking employment. The Fair Housing Act mandates that the landlord allow a tenant to make modifications, but usually at their own expense and with the responsibility to return the rental property to its original state upon termination of the lease. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 203(b) loan program allows funding to be used for home modifications, but many simply cannot afford such loans.

In many communities across the country, older Americans and people with disabilities must rely on faith-based and community organizations as well as charitable associations for such assistance. In many cases, such funding is simply not available at all. Often, individuals are, in essence, "forced" to leave their homes for nursing homes or assisted living facilities, or prevented from moving into otherwise affordable housing, due to such inaccessibility. Just as often, opportunities for employment must go unrealized due to an inability to leave one's house without great effort.

Purpose

Through the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI), local faith-based and community organizations can take a leadership role in assisting individuals with disabilities to remain in their homes, or to move into accessible homes. To coordinate this effort, DOL is partnering with the Corporation for National and