

State VR agencies, consumer organizations, and other stakeholders. Through a minimum of two face-to-face meetings and other meetings, as necessary, the PSG members collect research data on one of the two selected topics, identify relevant professional practices, and develop, design, and write a study document that provides in-depth analysis of their designated topic as it relates to the practice of public rehabilitation. Public rehabilitation is defined for the purpose of this priority as the State VR agency and other agencies funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Project staff ensures that the PSG process includes the input of all PSG members, helps the PSG to identify appropriate resources for the review process, and advises the PSG in the product design, development, and production. A final national meeting of the PSG members and constituents and stakeholders of the public rehabilitation system (the National IRI Forum) is conducted to review all IRI documents produced in the study year. Participants provide input and feedback to the study group regarding the documents prior to publication. Each project submits a final draft of its IRI document to RSA for review and, upon RSA approval, disseminates the document in electronic and hard copy formats to State VR agencies, the National Clearinghouse on Rehabilitation Training Materials, and other interested entities for use in personnel training and service planning. The intent of this priority is to select the entity or entities to lead two PSGs annually during the 5-year project period.

**Priority:** This priority funds projects to lead a PSG on a topic selected by the IRI Planning Committee. Projects must demonstrate the ability to provide leadership to members of the PSG that results in the production of a high quality document in the assigned topic area. Projects must ensure that documents are relevant to the public rehabilitation system and to the work of VR counselors and accurately interpret and integrate the current body of knowledge of the selected topic contained in published professional research and demonstrations.

Specifically, projects must demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of and understanding of relevant current and emerging issues in the public rehabilitation system, the public VR program, and the continuing education needs of VR personnel and related professionals. Projects must have the demonstrated ability to direct a rehabilitation research investigation in

cooperation with a variety of experienced participants.

Projects must provide leadership to all phases of the IRI process, including assisting PSG members to define the areas of focus for the designated topic, to identify and address the continuing education needs of personnel of the public rehabilitation system, and to plan and write the project document. Projects must ensure that the group product meets the expectation of the IRI Planning Committee in terms of content areas and depth of review. At the conclusion of the National IRI Forum, projects must submit the final version of the IRI document to RSA for approval. Projects must distribute the approved document to State VR agencies and to others in an accessible format on request for use in staff development, training, and service planning.

Projects must include a plan to meet the communication, coordination, logistical, and budgetary requirements necessary to conduct at least three in-person meetings of the PSG, one of which must take place at the National IRI Forum in Washington, DC, at the end of the project year.

#### *Proposed Priority 2—Leadership of the National IRI Forum Background*

The National IRI Forum is held annually in Washington, DC, in May of each project year to enable various constituents and stakeholders of the public rehabilitation system to provide additional input on the draft documents prepared by the IRI study groups. The intent of this priority is to select the entity that will plan and lead the National IRI Forum to ensure that products of the two IRI PSGs receive a thorough review from interested stakeholders prior to publication.

**Priority:** This priority funds projects to plan and to lead the annual National IRI Forum of PSG members and other stakeholders in each year of the project period. Projects must demonstrate in-depth knowledge of current, relevant issues in the public rehabilitation system and of methods to facilitate professional development and continuing education activities. Project staff, in cooperation with the IRI Planning Committee, must identify and solicit key stakeholders to provide input and feedback on selected IRI topics, and facilitate discussion and input sessions of diverse individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds so that each of the two IRI PSGs receives feedback on its draft document in a collaborative and positive manner.

Projects must provide a detailed plan for all aspects of the planning and coordination of the meeting, including,

but not limited to, facilitation of document feedback sessions, site planning, coordination of accommodations and travel for PSG members funded by the project, coordination of accommodations requested by other participants, and the provision of on-site support services, including the provision of reasonable accommodations upon request. Projects must include a description of a process and methods that will result in high quality input on the IRI documents presented for review.

#### **Executive Order 12866**

This notice of proposed 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 proposed priorities are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering these programs effectively and efficiently.

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

We have also determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

**Summary of potential costs and benefits:** The potential costs associated with these proposed priorities are 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-Grants and e-Application technology reduces mailing and copying costs significantly. In starting and administering this program, because of the eligibility requirements of the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs, the successful grantee would require no significant costs other than those provided for by the grant award funds, with the exception of those accounted for by the grantee's required share of the project budget. The grantee's cost share obligation is 10 percent.

The benefits of the IRI process have been well established over the years that similar projects have been completed. These proposed priorities serve to solicit projects from the full eligibility base allowed by program regulations in order to identify the best resources for