

### *B. Purpose of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities*

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) is the lead agency within ACF and DHHS responsible for planning and administering programs to promote the self-sufficiency and protect the rights of persons with developmental disabilities. ADD implements the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the DD Act, which was reauthorized by Congress in 2000.

The DD Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C.15001, *et seq.*) supports and provides assistance to States, public agencies, and private nonprofit organizations to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion into the community.

As defined in the DD Act, the term "developmental disabilities" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments that is manifested before the individual attains age 22 and is likely to continue indefinitely. Developmental disabilities result in substantial limitations in three or more of the following functional areas; self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and capacity for economic self-sufficiency.

In the DD Act includes a number of findings, including:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to enjoy the opportunity for independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion into the community;
- Individuals whose disabilities occur during their developmental period frequently have severe disabilities that are likely to continue indefinitely; and
- Individuals with developmental disabilities often require lifelong specialized services and assistance, provided in a coordinated and culturally competent manner by many agencies, professionals, advocates, community representatives, and others to eliminate barriers and to meet the needs of such individuals and their families.

The DD Act further promotes the best practices and policies presented below:

- Individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with the

most severe developmental disabilities, are capable of achieving independence, productivity, integration and inclusion into the community, and often require the provision of services, supports, and other assistance to achieve such;

- Individuals with developmental disabilities have competencies, capabilities, and personal goals that should be recognized, supported, and encouraged, and any assistance to such individuals should be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of the individual; and
- Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are the primary decision makers regarding the services and supports such individuals and their families receive; and play decision making roles in policies and programs that affect the lives of such individuals and their families.

Toward these ends, ADD seeks to support and accomplish the following:

- Enhance the capabilities of families in assisting individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve their maximum potential;
- Support the increasing ability of individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise greater choice and self-determination and to engage in leadership activities in their communities; and
- Ensure the protection of individuals with developmental disabilities' legal and human rights.

The four programs funded under the Act are:

- State Developmental Disabilities Councils;
- State Protection and Advocacy Systems for Individuals Rights;
- Grants to the National Network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service; and
- Grants for Projects of National Significance.

### *C. Statutory Authorities Covered Under This Announcement*

This Announcement is covered under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, 42 U.S.C. 15001, *et seq.* The Projects of National Significance (PNS) is part E of the DD Act of 2000, 42 U.S.C. 15081, *et seq.*

### **Part II. Background Information For Applicants**

#### *A. Description of Projects of National Significance*

Under part E of the Act, grants and contracts are awarded for Projects of

National Significance (PNS) that support the development of national and State policies to enhance the independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities through:

- Data collection and analysis;
- Technical assistance to enhance the quality of State Developmental Disabilities Councils and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; and
- Other projects of sufficient size and scope that hold promise to expand or improve opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, including:
  - (a) Technical assistance for the development of information and referral systems;
  - (b) Educating policy makers;
  - (c) Federal interagency initiatives;
  - (d) The enhancement of participation of minority and ethnic groups in public and private sector initiatives in developmental disabilities; and
  - (e) Transition of youth with developmental disabilities from school to adult life.

The purpose of the Projects of National Significance (PNS) program is not only to provide technical assistance to the Developmental Disabilities Councils, the Protection and Advocacy Systems, and the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, but also to support projects "that hold promise to expand or improve opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities." PNS grantees often challenge traditional thinking and common service practices.

Last Fiscal Year, projects were funded in the following five Priority Areas:

- Learning through Assisting;
- Creating and Celebrating One Community for All Citizens;
- Enhancing Early Literacy and Education for Children with Developmental Disabilities;
- Increasing Access in Rural Communities; and
- Expanding Positive Youth Development Activities for Young People with Developmental Disabilities.

Project activities that received funding in 2002 ranged from creating opportunities for high school students to earn service learning credits working with children with disabilities to improving transportation options for individuals with disabilities residing in rural America. For more information about previous projects and their goals, visit ADD's Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add>.

The 2003 Priority Area relates to the outcomes contained in ADD's plan for implementing the Government Performance Reporting Act (GPRA). In