

(d) Conduct timely updates of all Center information and databases to ensure that information disseminated is accurate and current.

(e) Establish diverse advisory groups to provide recommendations to the Center relative to the activities or products described above and to ensure that all constituency needs are met.

(f) Employ effective technology and multiple strategies of communication for receiving and disseminating current information and research-based practices including, but not limited to, the establishment and maintenance of an easily accessible, user-friendly Web site that ensures seamless links to and from other relevant data and information sources. The Web site must address early intervention and special education professions, including paraeducators; related services careers, including related services assistants; preparation programs across the country, including alternate route programs; research related to the special education workforce; and surveys and links to research relevant to developing and sustaining a diverse, qualified workforce including individuals with disabilities as well as individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

(g) Establish and maintain effective communication and collaboration with other OSERS-funded projects, such as the OSEP Regional Resource Centers, the IDEA partnership projects, parent information centers, the Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE), the Center for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Personnel Preparation, the IRIS Center, and other technical assistance and research projects as appropriate.

(h) Conduct and participate in national and regional meetings including dissemination conferences, topical symposia and other meetings on recruitment and retention of qualified personnel as requested by OSEP.

(i) Contract with a third party evaluator to develop and conduct a comprehensive system for evaluating all aspects of the Center's work. The evaluation design must include both formative evaluation elements to identify strategies for improving the Center's work and summative evaluation elements with clearly measurable outcome and impact data.

(j) Submit for approval, prior to developing any new product, whether paper or electronic, a proposal describing the content and purpose of the product to the document review board of OSEP's Dissemination Center which OSEP expects to fund this year.

(k) Provide OSEP-specified technical assistance to States. This effort may include participation in: (1) Collaborative Web-based technical assistance activities, (2) coordination of and participation in State-to-State communities of practice, and (3) direct technical assistance to OSEP-specified States through partnerships between OSEP and selected States. Staff time and project resources dedicated to provide technical assistance to OSEP-specified States will be negotiated with OSEP as part of the cooperative agreement within 30 days of the project award (OSEP anticipates that technical assistance to OSEP-specified States could average approximately \$40,000 per year. Budgets should be developed with this in mind).

#### Fourth and Fifth Years of Project

In deciding whether to continue this project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), and in addition—

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of experts selected by the Secretary which review will be conducted during the last half of the project's second year in Washington, DC. Projects must budget for the travel associated with this one-day intensive review;

(b) The timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the Center; and

(c) Evidence of the degree to which the Center's activities have contributed to a changed practice and improved student outcomes.

#### *Absolute Priority 4—Federal Resource Center for Special Education (84.326V)*

##### Background

In 1984 the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) established the Federal Resource Center for Special Education (FRC) as a mechanism for ensuring the organized and consistent provision of high quality technical assistance by the OSEP-funded Regional Resource Centers (RRCs). The FRC was designed to coordinate the work of RRCs, identify emerging issues and trends in special education, and assist in linking State-identified needs with appropriate technical assistance providers.

Significant challenges are facing State and local educational agencies, such as: the need to meet the high standards established in the No Child Left Behind Act; a changing and more diverse population of children with disabilities; and persistent shortages in qualified and culturally competent personnel to serve

these students. The FRC, through coordinating RRC technical assistance activities and initiatives, is designed to assist States to meet these challenges through strengthening their capacity to include all children with disabilities in high quality instruction that improves performance and prepares all children to leave school equipped for a meaningful life.

##### Priority

This priority provides support for a cooperative agreement for a coordinating technical assistance center, which shall be called the Federal Resource Center (FRC). The purpose of the FRC is to: (1) Serve as a special education technical assistance center to align the work of the six RRCs with OSEP policy and strategic initiatives; (2) enhance each RRC's capacity to promote systems change initiatives in States through the provision of strategic training and professional development; (3) increase the depth and utility of information in ongoing and emerging areas of priority needs as identified by RRCs and OSEP; (4) support the RRCs' efforts to provide ongoing technical assistance to enhance States' participation in OSEP's Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS); (5) ensure that the RRCs operate in a non-duplicative and efficient manner; and (6) assist with the provision of technical assistance and support to the State Improvement Grant (SIG) program.

Specifically, the FRC project must:

(a) Support the RRCs' efforts to promote improved results for children with disabilities in States, especially those with performance challenges identified through the CIFMS, by providing strategic training, professional development, and technical support. This effort must include: (1) Coordination of communities of practice that target State performance improvement areas identified through the CIFMS; and (2) facilitation of RRCs' technical assistance initiatives including the development of State performance measurement systems that use accurate, valid, and reliable data for program improvement and data-based decisionmaking.

(b) Coordinate RRCs' information services functions to ensure the provision of timely, relevant, and accurate information as requested by States and other entities. The Center must: (1) Consolidate the information services function previously maintained by each RRC by establishing centralized information services; and (2) consolidate individual RRC Web sites into a centralized Web site that will