

training and information to help improve results for their children.

Eligible Applicants: Parent organizations, as defined in section 682(g) of IDEA. In order to demonstrate its eligibility to receive a grant, an entity must demonstrate that it is a parent organization under this section. A parent organization is a private nonprofit organization (other than an institution of higher education) that:

(a) Has a board of directors, the parent and professional members of which are broadly representative of the population to be served and the majority of whom are parents of children with disabilities, that includes individuals with disabilities and individuals working in the fields of special education, related services, and early intervention; or

(b) Has a membership that represents the interests of individuals with disabilities and has established a special governing committee meeting the requirements for a board of directors in paragraph (a) and has a memorandum of understanding between this special governing committee and the board of directors of the organization that clearly outlines the relationship between the board and the committee and the decisionmaking responsibilities and authority of each.

In addition, any parent organization that establishes a special governing committee must demonstrate that the bylaws of its organization allow the governing committee to be responsible for operating the project (consistent with existing fiscal policies of its organization).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 97, 98, and 99; and (b) The selection criteria, chosen from the EDGAR general selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210. The specific selection criteria for this competition are included in the application package for this competition.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the following priority:

Absolute Priority—Parent Training and Information Center for Texas—Region 2 (84.328M)

Background

In Fiscal Year 2002, a competition was held for Parent Training and Information Centers that included awards for Texas. All of the awards made for Texas were made for a period of five years except for the award to

serve Region 2 of the State. Because of the quality of applications to serve this region, an award was made for only one year. This priority provides for a competition to continue services in Region 2 for an additional 4 years.

Priority

The purpose of this priority is to support a Parent Training and Information Center in Texas—Region 2. A Parent Training and Information Center must—

(a) Provide training and information that meets the training and information needs of parents of children with disabilities in the area served by the Center, particularly underserved parents and parents of children who may be inappropriately identified, including those who are not identified at all;

(b) Assist parents to understand the availability of, and how to effectively use, procedural safeguards under IDEA, including encouraging the use, and explaining the benefits, of alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as the mediation process described in IDEA;

(c) Serve the parents of infants, toddlers, and children with the full range of disabilities;

(d) Assist parents to—

(1) Better understand the nature of their children's disabilities and their educational and developmental needs;

(2) Communicate effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention, and related services;

(3) Participate in decisionmaking processes and the development of individualized education programs and individualized family service plans;

(4) Obtain appropriate information about the range of options, programs, services, and resources available to assist children with disabilities and their families;

(5) Understand the provisions of IDEA for the education of, and the provision of early intervention services to, children with disabilities; and

(6) Participate in school reform activities;

(e) Contract with the State educational agency, if the State elects to contract with the Parent Training and Information Center, for the purpose of meeting with parents who choose not to use the mediation process to encourage the use, and explain the benefits, of mediation consistent with section 615(e)(2)(B) and (D) of IDEA;

(f) Establish cooperative relations with the Community Parent Resource Center or Centers in their State in accordance with section 683(b)(3) of IDEA;

(g) Network with appropriate clearinghouses, including organizations conducting national dissemination activities under section 685(d) of IDEA, and with other national, State, and local organizations and agencies, such as protection and advocacy agencies, that serve parents and families of children with the full range of disabilities;

(h) Annually report to the Assistant Secretary on—

(1) The number of parents to whom the Parent Training and Information Center provided information and training in the most recently concluded fiscal year, and

(2) The effectiveness of strategies used to reach and serve parents, including underserved parents of children with disabilities; and

(i) If there is more than one parent center in a particular State, coordinate its activities with the other center or centers to ensure the most effective assistance to parents in that State.

An applicant must identify the strategies it will undertake—

(a) To ensure that the needs for training and information for underserved parents of children with disabilities in the areas to be served are effectively met, particularly in underserved areas of the State; and

(b) To work with the community-based organizations, particularly in the underserved areas of the State.

A Parent Training and Information Center that receives assistance under this absolute priority may also conduct the following activities—

(a) Provide information to teachers and other professionals who provide special education and related services to children with disabilities;

(b) Assist students with disabilities to understand their rights and responsibilities on reaching the age of majority, as stated in section 615(m) of IDEA; and

(c) Assist parents of children with disabilities to be informed participants in the development and implementation of the State improvement plan under IDEA.

In addition to the annual Project Directors' meeting included in the "General Requirements" section of this notice, a project's budget must include funds to attend a regional Project Directors' meeting to be held each year of the project.

Current funding levels and number of school age children were factors in determining the funding level for this grant. OSEP identifies the Regions in Texas by using the educational services breakdown operational within the State. Applications for this award will be accepted to fund one parent center in