

to voting accurately, independently, and privately for all citizens with disabilities. Voting is a citizen's most basic right. Yet many individuals with disabilities find it difficult, if not impossible, to vote without a poll worker's or another individual's assistance. Development products may address, but are not limited to, voting apparatus, accommodations information, training materials (*i.e.*, books, guidelines, electronic materials) for public elections officials and citizens, and cost analysis and evaluation of products and technologies to enhance voting access for citizens with disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 5, Technology for Access and Function: Research to Improve Accessibility of Telecommunications and Information Technology.

(b) *Technologies for Families and Caregivers.* Under this topic, a project must develop technologies, strategies, and approaches that will facilitate and improve the continuum of activities and reduce the demands involved in care giving for individuals with disabilities. The upsurge of programs such as "Long-Term Care" and "Home-Health Care" has stimulated the need for tools and strategies that enable individuals with disabilities to live longer and more productively in their communities. New and improved technologies for care giving will help implement the Supreme Court's *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision. Development products may address, but are not limited to, evaluation and assessment of existing technology solutions, accommodations information, training materials (*i.e.*, books, guidelines, electronic materials) for public officials and citizens, and cost analysis and evaluation of products and technologies to enhance community integration, personal assistance services, and independent living for citizens with disabilities. The reference for this topic can be found in the Plan, chapter 5, Technology for Access and Function: Assistive Technology for Individuals.

Executive Order 12866

This NFP 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 NFP are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering this program effectively and efficiently.

In assessing the potential costs and benefits—both quantitative and qualitative—of this NFP, we have

determined that the benefits of the priorities justify the costs.

Summary of Potential Costs and Benefits

The potential costs associated with these 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-Application technology reduces mailing and copying costs significantly.

The benefits of the DRRP Program have been well established over the years in that similar projects have been successfully completed. These final priorities will generate new knowledge through research to focus on stabilizing and improving lives of persons with disabilities.

The benefit of these final priorities and project requirements will be the establishment of new DRRP projects that generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for disabled individuals to perform regular activities in the community.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

Electronic Access to This Document

You may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister>.

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of this document is published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>. (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.133A, Disability Rehabilitation Research Project)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a).

Dated: July 22, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.

Appendix

Analysis of Comments and Changes

General

Comment: Several commenters raised concerns that NIDRR did not publish a priority that specifically targeted Native Americans.

Discussion: The priority on Research Infrastructure Capacity Building includes Native Americans as a proposed target group. Nothing in the other published priorities precludes applicants from proposing Native Americans as the target population for the proposed research. The peer review process will evaluate the merits of the proposal.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter expressed several concerns about references to racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority populations in the NIDRR priorities. These concerns included: (1) NIDRR's use of a standard statement about inclusion of minorities in research activities; (2) combining ethnic categories into one proposed priority is inappropriate; (3) NIDRR does not ensure that applicants demonstrate "who, what, when, and where" in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds; and (4) the American Indian and Alaska Native populations are a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Commenters also noted that many caregivers do not speak, write, or read the English language, and they questioned whether it was likely that potential grantees would deal with caregivers who do not speak, write, or read the English language or would address minority backgrounds including American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities.

Discussion: (1) The standard statement that each NIDRR applicant must demonstrate in its application how it will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is required by 34 CFR 350.40(a), and as a result, cannot be changed by this priority. (2) Nothing in these priorities precludes an applicant from focusing on any racial, ethnic, or minority population, including American Indians and Alaska Natives. (3) In section 350.40(b), NIDRR lists some of the approaches applicants may take to meet the requirement in § 350.40(a), including, for example, addressing a problem that is of particular significance to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds and generating information pertinent to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. (4) In the background section to these priorities, language barriers and lack of understanding about cultural values and beliefs are identified as challenges to the effectiveness of rehabilitation services received by individual with disabilities from minority backgrounds. An applicant may choose to include linguistic or cultural issues in the proposed research activities. However, NIDRR has no basis for requiring that all applicants adopt the same approach or