

assessment, educational policy, and administration;

(d) In addition to the two-day Project Directors Meeting listed in the General Requirements section of this notice, budget for two additional two-day trips annually to Washington, DC, to attend an additional Project Director meeting and to attend an OSEP Leadership Conference; and one trip a month to attend appropriate meetings convened by the Department of Education, and other Centers and organizations.

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;

(c) The degree to which the project's design and methodology demonstrates the potential for advancing significant new knowledge; and

(d) Evidence of the degree to which the project's activities have contributed to changed practice and improved outcomes for children with disabilities.

Special Education—Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities [CFDA Number 84.326]

Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and information—through such mechanisms as institutes, regional resource centers, clearinghouses, and programs that support States and local entities in building capacity—to (1) Improve early intervention, educational, and transitional services and results for children with disabilities and their families; and (2) address systemic-change goals and priorities.

Eligible Applicants

State educational agencies, local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, other public agencies, nonprofit private organizations, for-profit organizations, outlying areas, freely associated States, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99; and (b) The selection criteria, chosen from the general selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210. The specific selection criteria for these competitions will be provided in the application package for these competitions.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

Priorities

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet one of the following priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—National Dropout Prevention Center for Students With Disabilities (84.326Q)

Background

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) reported that 38 percent of students with disabilities who left school did so by dropping out, 30 percent enrolled in high school but did not finish, and 8 percent dropped out before entering high school. In 1996, Blackorby and Wagner found the dropout rate for students with disabilities to be approximately twice that of regular education students. Through technical assistance that will lead to improved results for children with disabilities, this priority is expected to have a significant impact on dropout prevention, the improvement of educational services, and interagency coordination.

Priority

The Secretary establishes an absolute priority for a cooperative agreement to support a National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities to provide guidance and assistance to States, schools, families, agencies, and communities in designing, implementing, and evaluating effective comprehensive dropout prevention programs based on scientifically validated practices for students with disabilities. The Center will focus on two broad areas: (1) Prevention and Educational Programs, and (2) Reentry. The Center must address these areas through knowledge development activities and technical assistance and dissemination.

Knowledge development activities of the Center must include, but are not limited to:

(a) Conducting an annual survey of States to determine the current status of implementation of scientifically validated dropout prevention and educational and reentry programs and evaluating policies and practices that sustain or pose barriers to these interventions. Reentry program status must include information on service options such as the general education diploma (GED) participation, test accommodations on the GED, and adult education programs.

(b) Contracting with the What Works Clearinghouse to identify effective exemplary programs for wide replication.

(c) Organizing and synthesizing research, policy, and practice and advances in the two focus areas.

Technical assistance and dissemination activities of the Center must include, but are not be limited to:

(a) Responding to written and telephone inquiries with research-validated information.

(b) Collaborating with the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-supported Promoting What Works Synthesis Center on the preparation and dissemination of information materials designed to increase awareness of and the use of research-validated practices by a variety of audiences (e.g., educators, policy makers, service providers, families, community agencies).

(c) Developing partnerships and communications around dropout issues with leaders and key stakeholders in special education and regular education, State and school level administrators, and consumer and advocacy organizations such as the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs).

(d) Establishing a coordinated network of researchers, practitioners, policy makers, families, service providers, community agencies, business groups who will serve as resources to States in designing and implementing effective programs.

(e) Providing for information exchanges between researchers and practitioners who direct effective model programs and those seeking to design, implement, or replicate these models. Information must be exchanged through a variety of methods, including a national forum during the first year, and a national forum in the fifth year. These exchanges must be designed to expand the coordinated interagency network, create a dialog about systemic