

generate policy-relevant information for Federal, State and local decision-makers about the availability, use and purchase of AT devices and services as well as identify exemplary practices for improving access to AT services and devices.

On-going analyses of data will provide for program development and inform planning activities. The AT Act received funding in the FY 2003 budget to support operation through FY 2004. This Data Collection Project will be funded for 12 months to capture the grantees' activities during that period.

Goals

The short-term goal of this proposed priority is to maintain and support the existing Web-based data collection instrument for AT Act State grantees and to develop and implement a new web-based data collection instrument for the AT Act P&A grantees. The long-term goal of this proposed priority is to evaluate the performance of the AT Act grantees' and to measure the outcomes and impacts of their activities.

Performance indicators will be used to measure outcomes including the extent to which grantees achieve the following short-term and long-term goals: (1) Increase access to and dissemination of information about AT; (2) increase outreach to underserved groups; (3) increase technical assistance and training for consumers and service providers; (4) increase interagency coordination; and (5) the impact of activities on individuals with disabilities including improved access to and capacity to live independently in the community, participate in educational environments, and obtain and maintain employment.

Proposed Priority

The Assistant Secretary proposes a Data Collection Technical Assistance Project. The purpose of the project is to maintain and support the existing Web-based data collection instrument for the AT Act State grantees and to develop, implement, test, support and maintain a Web-based data collection instrument for the AT Act P&A grantees. The Data Collection Technical Assistance Project must:

(a) Maintain and support the existing Web-based data collection instrument for the AT Act State grantees and develop, implement, test, support and maintain a Web-based data collection and analysis system, including a data collection instrument for the AT Act P&A grantees to assess performance, outcomes;

(b) Train entities funded under the AT Act in the use of the data collection

systems including specific training on the data collection instruments;

(c) Generate analytical reports based on the data collected from the grantees and prepare an annual report on grantees' performance and outcomes, including interpretations of findings;

(d) Identify and evaluate successful strategies that can be linked to increased access to and provision of AT based on the data collected from the grantees, including analyses of use of AT by individuals with disabilities and national trends related to AT use by individuals with disabilities;

(e) Coordinate information dissemination activities and distribute information about access to and provision of AT for individuals with disabilities of all ages to the AT Act State grantees, AT Act P&A grantees, grantees providing TA to the AT Act State grantees and P&A grantees, and the National AT Internet Site; and

(f) Prepare and submit an annual report of findings about program outcomes, and separately prepare a report on assessment of the reliability of the data collection measures and validity of data collected from the AT Act grantees and P&A grantees, and the extent to which the data addresses the intended purposes of the data collection activities.

Executive Order 12866

This notice of proposed priority 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 notice of proposed priority 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 notice of proposed priority, we have determined that the benefits of the proposed priority justify the costs.

Summary of Potential Costs and Benefits

The potential cost associated with this proposed priority is 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 Data Collection Project have been well established over the years in that similar projects have

been completed. This proposed priority will generate new knowledge through a dissemination, utilization, training, and technical assistance project.

The benefit of this proposed priority and proposed applications and project requirements will be the establishment of a new Data Collection Technical Assistance Project that generates, disseminates, and promotes the use of new information that will improve access to AT and expand opportunities for employment, education and community life.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.224B, Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance Program)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 3014

Dated: August 11, 2003.

Loretta Petty Chittum,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance Program; Notice Inviting Applications for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

Note to Applicants: This notice is a complete application package. Together with the statute authorizing the program and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), this notice contains all of the information, application forms, and instructions you need to apply for a grant under this competition.