

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act Data Collection Project is to provide technical assistance (TA) to the Assistive Technology (AT) Act State Grant Program Grantees and to the Protection and Advocacy Grantees (P&A). The authority for the Secretary to fund TA projects is contained in section 104 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (AT Act).

For FY 2003 the competition for a new award focuses on a project designed to meet the priority we describe in the *Priority* section of this application notice. We intend this priority to improve data collection activities of the State AT projects and the P&A projects funded under the AT Act that serve individuals with disabilities.

In order to provide applicants with a 30-day application period and to ensure that this grant is awarded before the end of FY 2003, NIDRR is inviting applications based on the proposed priority. NIDRR will publish the final priority after the comment period closes.

Depending upon the comments that NIDRR receives, the final priority may include revisions to the proposed priority. It is generally the policy of the Department not to solicit applications before the publication of a final priority. However, in this case, it is essential to solicit applications on the basis of the proposed priority in order to allow applicants sufficient time to prepare applications of appropriate quality to be funded. Applicants are advised to begin to develop their applications based on the proposed priority. If changes are made in the final priority, applicants will be given an opportunity to revise or resubmit their applications.

Eligible Applicants: Parties eligible to apply for grants under this program are States, public, or private agencies, including for-profit agencies.

Applications Available: August 14, 2003.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: September 15, 2003.

Estimated Available Funds: \$428,000.

Maximum Award: \$428,000 for year 1 and \$300,000 each year for years 2 and 3.

Note: We will reject without consideration or evaluation any application that proposes a budget exceeding the stated maximum award amount in any year (See 34 CFR 75.104(b)).

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Applicable Regulations: EDGAR, 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86 and 97.

Priority

This competition focuses on a project designed to meet the priority in the notice of proposed priority for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

For FY 2003, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

Selection Criteria

We use the following selection criteria from 34 CFR 75.210 to evaluate applications under this program.

The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) *Significance* (8 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies (8 points).

(b) *Quality of the project design* (35 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable (12 points).

(ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs (10 points).

(iii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition (8 points).

(iv) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources (5 points).

(c) *Quality of project services* (16 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the

quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (5 points).

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services (5 points).

(ii) The extent to which the technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources (6 points).

(d) *Quality of project personnel* (12 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the project.

(2) In determining the quality of proposed project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (3 points).

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator (5 points).

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (4 points).

(e) *Adequacy of resources* (6 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization (3 points).

(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (3 points).

(f) *Quality of the management plan* (11 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed