

assessment does not include VR consumers with evidence of mental retardation in their case files.

2. The assignment of approximately one-half of the eligible project participants into a literacy intervention group who would receive the additional services and benefits of the project and approximately one-half of the project participants into a control group who would not receive project services. However, no individual in the control group can be denied literacy services if his or her Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) requires those services. Furthermore, those services may not be provided or paid for under these demonstration grants.

3. The use of diagnostic tests and effective assessments of reading proficiency consistent with the procedures of RSA's outside evaluator.

4. The administration of a pre- and post-test to project participants as directed by RSA's outside evaluator.

Interventions

An applicant for this competition must choose either the LBLP or the WRS for its curriculum and provide a rationale for its choice (e.g., the local adult literacy provider already uses WRS). However, an applicant may also choose to describe its capacity to use the other curriculum if it would be willing to substitute the alternative curriculum as its curriculum in order to enhance its ability to compete. RSA will select grantees in a manner to ensure that each curriculum intervention is adequately represented in the applications selected for funding.

Project Participants

The following participant research criteria must be met:

1. Projects must have a sufficient number of individuals in the control and experimental groups so that the effects of the literacy intervention can be adequately measured.

2. Project participants must be eligible to receive VR services by the State VR agency and have, or be in the process of developing, an IPE.

3. All project participants (control and experimental groups) must be given an informed choice with respect to participation in the demonstration project consistent with the human subjects provisions as included in the application package.

4. Project participants for the experimental and control groups must

be selected using the requisite instrument. RSA requires use of the *Learning Needs Screening Tool*, a validated and public domain screener, which can be incorporated into the VR intake process. Copies of the screener as well as further information may be found on the Internet at the following Web site: <http://www.seekingwdc.org/ld/WaScreenTool.htm>.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used only for project costs and related activities and may not be used to supplant the cost of services ordinarily provided by the VR program. Related activities may include, but are not limited to— (1) counselor training or orientation, including counselor training on administration of literacy assessment instruments, (2) educational assessment and evaluation, (3) research expenses, (4) support services such as consumer transportation, childcare, and facilitation for attendance and retention, (5) instructional materials, (6) curriculum and instruction, (7) professional development for instructors and administrators, (8) assistive technology devices and services, (9) instructional technology, and (10) consultants.

Invitational Priority

Within the priority for this competition, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priority:

Establishing partnerships with other organizations that can assist in carrying out their respective projects related to improving literacy and employability skills of adults with disabilities.

These organizations might include Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) programs, institutions of higher education, volunteer-based literacy programs, community rehabilitation programs, nonprofit or for-profit vendors of literacy services, and other workforce agencies. Applicants under this invitational priority must meet the requirements in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129, which governs how partnerships and other groups of eligible parties may submit applications and conduct funded projects.

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets the invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Waiver of Delayed Effective Date

The Administrative Procedure Act requires that a proposed rule be published at least 30 days before its effective date, except as otherwise provided for good cause (5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3)). In order to make timely grant awards, the Secretary has determined that a delayed effective date is impracticable.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program. *Applicable Program Regulations*: 34 CFR part 373.

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: www.ed.gov/news/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 the document 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.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.235P Special Demonstration Programs—Model Demonstration Projects to Improve the Literacy and Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Disabilities)

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 773(b).

Dated: September 24, 2003.

Robert H. Pasternack,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 03-24530 Filed 9-26-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-U