DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Overview Information; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program—Field Initiated (FI) Projects; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers: 84.133G–1 (Research) and 84.133G–2 (Development).


Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the FI Projects program is to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities. Another purpose of the FI Projects program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

NIDRR makes two types of awards under the FI Projects program: Research grants (CFDA 84.133G–1) and development grants (CFDA 84.133G–2).

In carrying out a research activity under an FI research grant, a grantee must identify one or more hypotheses or research questions and, based on the hypotheses or research questions identified, perform an intensive, systematic study directed toward producing (1) new scientific knowledge, or (2) better understanding of the subject, problem studied, or body of knowledge.

In carrying out a development activity under an FI development grant, a grantee must use knowledge and understanding gained from research to create materials, devices, systems, or methods, including designing and developing prototypes and processes, that are beneficial to the target population. Target population means the group of individuals, organizations, or other entities expected to be affected by the project. There may be more than one target population because a project may affect those who receive services, provide services, or administer services.

Note: Different selection criteria are used for research projects (84.133G–1) and development projects (84.133G–2).

Applicants must clearly indicate in the application whether they are applying for a research grant (84.133G–1) or a development grant (84.133G–2) and must address the selection criteria relevant for their project type. Without exception, NIDRR will review each application based on the designation (i.e., research [84.133G–1] or development [84.133G–2]) made by the applicant. Applications will be determined ineligible and will not be reviewed if they do not include a clear designation of research or development.

Note: This program is in concert with President George W. Bush’s New Freedom Initiative (NFI) and NIDRR’s Final Long-Range Plan for FY 2005–2009 (Plan).

The Plan, which was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 2006 (71 FR 8165), can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/newfreedom.

The purpose of the NFI and the Plan, NIDRR seeks to (1) improve the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research; (2) foster an exchange of expertise, information, and training to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved populations; (3) determine the best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for individuals with disabilities from underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

Priority: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priority:

Invitational Priority: For FY 2009, this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications. The priority is:

Projects that are designed to contribute to improved employment outcomes among individuals with disabilities.

Note: The invitational priority is based on NIDRR’s Long-Range Plan.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants. Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested $105,700,000 for NIDRR for FY 2009, of which we intend to use an estimated $4,000,000 for the FI Projects competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Estimated Range of Awards: $195,000–$200,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: $200,000.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding $200,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Note: The maximum amount includes direct and indirect costs.

Estimated Number of Awards: 20.

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

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; IHEs; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Cost sharing is required by 34 CFR 350.62 and will be negotiated at the time of the grant award.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address To Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address: http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html.

To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: Education Publications Center, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794–1398. Telephone, toll free: 1–877–433–7827. FAX: (301) 470–1244. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call, toll free: 1–877–576–7734.
Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov), or in paper format by mail or hand delivery. For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery, please refer to section IV. 6. Other Submission Requirements in this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT in section VII in this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual’s application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

4. Intergovernmental Review: This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section in this notice.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this competition may be submitted electronically or in paper format by mail or hand delivery.
   a. Electronic Submission of Applications.
      To comply with the President’s Management Agenda, we are participating as a partner in the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site. The FI Projects, CFDA Numbers 84.133G–1 (Research) and 84.133G–2 (Development), both are included in this project. We request your participation in Grants.gov.

   If you choose to submit your application electronically, you must use the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at http://www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

   You may access the electronic grant application for the FI Projects competition (CFDA numbers 84.133G–1 and 84.133G–2) at http://www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number.

Do not include the CFDA number’s alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.133, not 84.133G).

Please note the following:
- Your participation in Grants.gov is voluntary.
- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received—that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system—after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf.

To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see http://
Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1–800–518–4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT in section VII in this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system, and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you submit your application in paper format by mail, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand. If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you submit your application in paper format by hand delivery, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (Applicants must identify either CFDA Number 84.133G–1 (Research) or 84.133G–2 (Development) depending on the designation of their project.) 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department—

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—on Item 11 of the SF 424 that the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application;

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245–6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34
CFR 350.54 and 34 CFR 350.55 and are listed in the application package.

Note: There are two different sets of selection criteria for PI projects: One set to evaluate applications proposing to carry out research activities (CFDA 84.133G–1), and a second set to evaluate applications proposing to carry out development activities (CFDA 84.133G–2). Each applicant will be evaluated using the selection criteria for the type of project the applicant designates in its application.

2. Review and Selection Process: Additional factors we consider in selecting an application for an award are as follows:

The Secretary is interested in outcomes-oriented research or development projects that use rigorous scientific methodologies. To address this interest, applicants are encouraged to articulate goals, objectives, and expected outcomes for the proposed research or development activities. Proposals should describe how results and planned outputs are expected to contribute to advances in knowledge, improvements in policy and practice, and public benefits for individuals with disabilities. Applicants should propose projects that are designed to be consistent with these goals. We encourage applicants to include in their applications a description of how results will measure progress towards achievement of anticipated outcomes (including a discussion of measures of effectiveness), the mechanisms that will be used to evaluate outcomes associated with specific problems or issues, and how the proposed activities will support new intervention approaches and strategies. Submission of the information identified in this section is voluntary, except where required by the selection criteria listed in the application package.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notice (GAN). We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section in this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section in this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c).

For specific requirements on reporting, please go to http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/appforms/appforms.html.

Note: NIDRR will provide information by letter to grantees on how and when to submit the report.

4. Performance Measures: NIDRR assesses the quality of its funded projects through review of grantee performance and products. Each year, NIDRR examines a portion of its grantees to determine:

- The percentage of newly awarded NIDRR projects that are multi-site, collaborative, controlled studies of interventions and programs.
- The number of accomplishments (e.g., new or improved tools, methods, discoveries, standards, interventions, programs, or devices) developed or tested with NIDRR funding that have been judged by expert panels to be of high quality and to advance the field.
- The average number of publications per award based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.
- The percentage of new grants that include studies funded by NIDRR that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous and appropriate methods.

NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports (APRs) in support of these performance measures.


Grantees should consult these sites on a regular basis to obtain details and explanations on how NIDRR programs contribute to the advancement of the Department’s long-term and annual performance goals.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynn Medley or Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 6027 (Lynn Medley) or room 6026 (Marlene Spencer), PCP, Washington, DC 20202–2700.

Telephone: (202) 245–7338 or by e-mail: Lynn.Medley@ed.gov (Lynn Medley).

Telephone: (202) 245–7532 or by e-mail: Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov (Marlene Spencer).

If you use a TDD, call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1–800–877–8339.

VIII. Other Information

Alternative Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5075, PCP, Washington, DC 20202–2550. Telephone: (202) 245–7363. If you use a TDD, call the FRS, toll free, at 1–800–877–8339.

Electronic Access to This Document: You can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: http://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.


Dated: November 24, 2008.

Tracy R. Justesen,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. E8–28263 Filed 11–26–08; 8:45 am]