

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-2575

**FY 2011 APPLICATION PACKAGE FOR NEW GRANTS
UNDER
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION
RESEARCH**

REHABILITATION ENGINEERING RESEARCH CENTERS (RERC)

Low Vision and Blindness
CFDA NUMBER: 84.133E-1

AND

Wireless Technologies
CFDA NUMBER: 84.133E-3



FORM APPROVED

OMB No. 1820-0027, EXP. DATE 03/31/2013
SF FORM 424, 3/31/2012

DATED MATERIAL - OPEN IMMEDIATELY
CLOSING DATE: August 15, 2011

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**SECTION
A**

DEAR APPLICANT LETTER

June 24, 2011

Dear Applicant:

The Secretary invites applications for two new awards in fiscal year (FY) 2011 under the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers program, for a Center on Low Vision and Blindness (CFDA Number - 84.133E-1) and for a Center on Wireless Technologies (CFDA Number – 84.133E-3).

NIDRR is seeking applications that address all elements of the priority, and that propose appropriate, high-quality research methodologies. It is critical that proposals describe expected public benefits, especially benefits for individuals with disabilities, and propose projects that are designed to demonstrate outcomes that are consistent with the proposed goals.

The start date for new awards for the (FY) 2011 programs will be no later than October 1, 2011.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This application package contains information and the required forms for potential applicants to apply and be considered for a FY 2011 grant award under this competition, including the published Federal Register notice dated June 24, 2011. The background statement from the Notice of Proposed Priorities is in Section D.

The closing date (application deadline) is August 15, 2011.

Potential applicants are advised to read the materials in this application package carefully. Please pay particular attention to the information on the types of organizations that are eligible to apply for these grants, how to prepare an application, the dollar amount for any year, the protection of human subjects, and the selection criteria. Applications must be responsive to the absolute priority in Section C and the statutory, regulatory, and general requirements for the RERC program in Section E. The application narrative should be written in the order of the selection criteria in Section F. The selection criteria will be used by the reviewers to evaluate the application.

Include a one page abstract. The abstract is a critical component of the proposal, and it should describe the purpose, target population to be served during the project period, planned goals and objectives, proposed methodological approach, and anticipated project outcomes.

Award Amounts and Indirect Cost Rate

We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding the amount of \$950,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The indirect cost rate is the applicant's federally negotiated rate.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

You **must** submit your application electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site. See Section B, Notice Inviting Applications and Section J, Application Transmittal Instructions.

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file-size limitation to each section and you may only upload one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

Electronic copies must be fully uploaded on the Grants.gov site by 4:30:00 pm, Washington DC time on the closing date, **August 15, 2011**. This process may take several hours. Therefore, please allow several hours or a full day to submit your application. If there is a submission error, additional time will be needed to correct the error and resubmit. **We encourage you to read Section J – Grants.Gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants**

PROGRAM REGULATIONS

These grants are subject to the requirements of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97, which set forth general rules affecting the submittal, review, grant award, and post-award administration for Department of Education grant programs.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Pre-Application Meeting: A pre-application meeting will be held between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on July 15, 2011 by teleconference. Interested parties are invited to participate in the pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priority and to receive information and technical assistance. You must contact Marlene Spencer at Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov by July 14, 2011 in order to participate in this meeting. NIDRR staff also will be available to provide information and technical assistance via individual phone consultations from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on July 15, 2011. Requests for individual consultations during this one hour window must be made in advance to Marlene Spencer.

If you have any questions about the information in this application package, please contact Lynn Medley at Lynn.Medley@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 245-7338 or Marlene Spencer at Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 245-7532. Individuals who use a telecommunications device (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., EST, Monday through Friday.

If you experience problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726.

Thank you for your interest in these programs.

Sincerely,

//signed//

Sue Swenson,
Acting Director,
National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research

**SECTION
B**

**FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE INVITING
APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AWARDS**

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2011.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers: 84.133E-1 and 84.133E-3.

Dates:

Applications Available: June 24, 2011.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: July 15, 2011.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 15, 2011.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and

related activities, including international activities; 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; and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program (RERCs)

The purpose of the RERC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act by conducting advanced engineering research on and development of innovative technologies that are designed to solve particular rehabilitation problems, or to remove environmental barriers. RERCs also demonstrate and evaluate such technologies, facilitate service delivery system changes, stimulate the production and distribution of new technologies and equipment in the private sector, and provide training opportunities.

Priorities: These priorities are from the notice of final priorities for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2011 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from these competitions, these priorities are absolute priorities.

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

These priorities are:

84.133E-1--RERC on Low Vision and Blindness.

84.133E-3--RERC on Wireless Technologies.

Note: The full text of these priorities is included in the notice of final priorities, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register and in the application package for these competitions.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b) (3).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, and 97. (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 350. (c) The notice of final priorities for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$1,900,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2012 from the list of unfunded applicants from these competitions.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$950,000 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.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1 for the RERC on Low Vision and Blindness competition (CFDA No. 84.133E-1) and 1 for the RERC on Wireless Technologies competition (CFDA No. 84.133E-3).

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

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

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: The competitions announced in this notice do not require cost sharing or matching.

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:
www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html.

To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: ED Pubs, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone, toll free: 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (703) 605-6794. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also: www.EDPubs.gov or at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this program as follows: CFDA numbers 84.133E-1 and 84.133E-3.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the person or team listed under Accessible Format in section VIII of this notice.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you limit the application narrative (Part III) to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section (Part III).

The application package will provide instructions for completing all components to be included in the application. Each application must include a cover sheet (Standard Form 424); budget requirements (ED Form 524) and narrative budget justification; other required forms; an abstract, Human Subjects narrative, Part III project narrative; resumes of staff; and other related materials, if applicable.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: June 24, 2011.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: Interested parties are invited to participate in a pre-application meeting and to receive information and technical assistance through individual consultation with NIDRR staff. The pre-application meeting will be held July 15, 2011. Interested parties may participate in this meeting by conference call with NIDRR staff from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Washington, DC time. NIDRR staff also will be available from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the same day, by telephone, to provide information and technical assistance through individual consultation. For further information or to make arrangements to participate in the meeting via conference call or for an individual consultation, contact either Lynn Medley or Marlene Spencer as follows: Lynn Medley, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5140, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7338 or by e-mail: Lynn.Medley@ed.gov.

Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail: Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 15, 2011.

Applications for grants under the competitions announced in this notice must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including

dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 7. Other Submission Requirements of 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 of 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. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and Central Contractor Registry: To do business with the Department of Education, you must--

a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), the Government's primary registrant database;

c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and

d. Maintain an active CCR registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet. A DUNS number can be created within one business day.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow 2-5 weeks for your TIN to become active.

The CCR registration process may take five or more business days to complete. If you are currently registered with the CCR, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2)

register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf).

7. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers program, CFDA number 84.133E-1 or 84.133E-3, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at 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.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant applications for the RERC on Low Vision and Blindness and the RERC on Wireless Technologies competitions at 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 84.133E).

Please note the following:

- 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 these competitions 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 under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at <http://www.G5.gov>.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information–Non–Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a .PDF (Portable Document) format only. If you upload a file type other than a

.PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues

with the 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 of 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.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may

submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. FAX: (202) 245-7323.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

- b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.133E-1 or 84.133E-3)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

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 qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You 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: (CFDA Number 84.133E-1 or 84.133E-3)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 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--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the program under which you are submitting your application; and

(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 program are from 34 CFR 350.54 and are listed in the application package.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant program, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d) (3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary also requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Special Conditions: Under 34 CFR 74.14 and 80.12, the Secretary may impose special conditions on a grant if the

applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 34 CFR parts 74 or 80, as applicable; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

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 Notification (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 of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of 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: (a) If you apply for a grant under this program, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the program.

This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) 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 directed 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 www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

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

- The percentage of NIDRR-supported fellows, post-doctoral trainees, and doctoral students who publish results of NIDRR-sponsored research in refereed journals.

- 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 NIDRR grants that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous methods.
- The number of new or improved NIDRR-funded assistive and universally designed technologies, products, and devices transferred to industry for potential commercialization.

NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their Annual Performance Reports (APRs) for these reviews.

Department of Education program performance reports, which include information on NIDRR programs, are available on the Department's Web site:

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/sas/index.html.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.253, the extent to which a grantee has made "substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application." This consideration includes the review of a grantee's progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal

civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contacts

For Further Information Contact: Either Lynn Medley or Marlene Spencer as follows: Lynn Medley, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5140, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7338 or by e-mail:

Lynn.Medley@ed.gov. Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail:

Marlene.Spencer@ed.gov.

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

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible 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.

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Dated:

Alexa Posny,
Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services.

**SECTION
C**

**FEDERAL REGISTER
FINAL PRIORITY NOTICE**

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA Numbers: 84.133E-1 and 84.133E-3]

Final Priorities; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)--Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program--Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priorities for two RERCs.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces two priorities for RERCs: Low Vision and Blindness (Priority 1) and Wireless Technologies (Priority 2). The Assistant Secretary may use these priorities for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2011 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend to use these priorities to improve rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities are effective July 25, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marlene Spencer, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700.

Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by e-mail:

marlene.spencer@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Relay Service, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This notice of final priorities (NFP) is in concert with NIDRR's currently approved Long-Range Plan (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: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/policy.html.

Through the implementation of 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 traditionally underserved populations;
- (3) determine the best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for underserved populations;
- (4) identify research gaps;
- (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and
- (6) disseminate findings.

This notice announces two priorities that NIDRR intends to use for RERC competitions in FY 2011 and possibly later years. However, nothing precludes NIDRR from publishing additional priorities, if needed. Furthermore, NIDRR is under no obligation to make an award for these priorities. The decision to make an award will be based on the quality of applications received and available funding.

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities; 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; and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program (RERCs)

The purpose of the RERC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act by conducting advanced engineering research on and development of innovative technologies that are designed to solve particular rehabilitation problems, or to remove environmental barriers. RERCs also demonstrate and evaluate such technologies, facilitate service delivery system changes, stimulate the production and distribution of new technologies and equipment in the private sector, and provide training opportunities.

General Requirements of RERCs

RERCs carry out research or demonstration activities in support of the Rehabilitation Act by--

- Developing and disseminating innovative methods of applying advanced technology, scientific achievement, and psychological and social knowledge to solve rehabilitation problems and to remove environmental barriers through studying and evaluating new or emerging technologies, products, or environments and their effectiveness and benefits; or

- Demonstrating and disseminating: (a) innovative models for the delivery of cost-effective rehabilitation technology services to rural and urban areas; and (b) other scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independent living needs of individuals with severe disabilities; and

- Facilitating service delivery systems change through: (a) the development, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative, consumer-responsive, and individual- and family-centered models for the delivery to both rural and urban areas of innovative cost-effective rehabilitation technology services; and (b) other scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independent living needs of and addressing the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities, including individuals with severe disabilities.

Each RERC must be operated by, or in collaboration with, one or more institutions of higher education or one or more nonprofit organizations.

Each RERC must provide training opportunities, in conjunction with institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations, to assist individuals, including individuals with

disabilities, to become rehabilitation technology researchers and practitioners.

Each RERC must emphasize the principles of universal design in its product research and development. Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (North Carolina State University, 1997, The Center for Universal Design, www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm).

Additional information on the RERC program can be found at: www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/index.html.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(3).

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priorities (NPP) for NIDRR's Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program in the Federal Register on March 29, 2011 (76 FR 17396). That notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing the particular priorities.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the NPP, five parties submitted comments on the proposed priorities.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes. In addition, we do not address general comments that raised concerns not directly related to the proposed priorities.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priorities since publication of the NPP follows.

Low Vision and Blindness

Comment: One commenter recommended that the Low Vision and Blindness priority should emphasize a model of assistive technology development in which mainstream, mass-market products are designed with accessibility features to meet the needs of individuals with low vision and blindness. The commenter noted that this model is more likely to lead to low-cost products, relative to the model in which specialized products are designed for the relatively small market of individuals with low vision and blindness.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the development of mass-marketed products with accessibility features can lead to lower costs for consumers who are blind or have low vision. The Low Vision and Blindness priority provides the flexibility for applicants to propose projects that use this kind of mass-market development model. However, NIDRR recognizes that a model that focuses on developing other more specialized or customized technologies and products may be needed in order to develop useful and appropriate technologies and products for individuals who are blind or have low vision. For this reason, we also provide applicants with the flexibility to use models that focus on these technologies and products.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that NIDRR require the RERC to work directly with companies that are in a position to

manufacture and sell products in order to expedite the process of transferring the RERC's work to consumers in the market.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that collaborations with companies and industry partners can expedite the process of technology transfer. The RERC priority requirements, which apply to both the Low Vision and Blindness and Wireless Technologies priorities, include a requirement to collaborate with relevant industry partners to improve research capacity. This collaboration may also expedite the transfer of the RERC's work to consumers in the market. In an effort to increase transfer of RERC-developed technologies to the marketplace, NIDRR also requires RERCs to develop a technology transfer plan in the first year of the grant. Therefore, NIDRR believes that an additional requirement to collaborate with relevant industry partners is unnecessary. The current requirements achieve the commenter's aim of expediting the technology transfer process.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Low Vision and Blindness priority include more explicit language about the RERC's role as a clearinghouse for information on technologies for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the RERC should have responsibility for providing information about technologies for individuals who are blind or have low vision. Paragraph (4) of the priority requires each RERC to communicate with a wide variety of stakeholders about trends and evolving product

concepts related to its designated topic. Paragraph (5) of the priority also requires each RERC to provide technical assistance to stakeholders on relevant policies, guidelines, and standards related to its designated topic. Finally, the RERC priority requirements, which apply to both the Low Vision and Blindness and Wireless Technologies priorities, include a requirement that the RERC disseminate its research results to relevant stakeholders. For these reasons, we believe that this priority provides sufficiently for the RERC's role in transmitting information on technologies for individuals who are blind or have low vision, and, therefore, decline to add more explicit language as requested.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Low Vision and Blindness priority should contain more explicit language about the RERC's requirement to collaborate with developers of technology from outside the RERC, researchers, and students in the field.

Discussion: The requirements that are applicable to both RERC priorities include a requirement to collaborate with relevant industry partners and relevant NIDRR-funded research projects. While the priority does not require collaboration with developers of technology or with students in the field, nothing in the priority precludes such collaborations. NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to propose to collaborate with developers from outside of the RERC or with

students in the field. We believe individual projects are well positioned to determine entities with whom to collaborate, and this priority provides them with adequate flexibility to do so.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter expressed concern about language in the Low Vision and Blindness priority that refers to improved vision assessment for the population of individuals who are at risk for experiencing low vision and blindness. This commenter stated that such language would result in having the RERC focus on prevention of blindness among at-risk individuals, instead of on assessments and technologies to meet the needs of individuals who already experience vision loss.

Discussion: The priority includes requirements for research and development that will improve access to graphical information, signage, and travel information and devices, as well as development of technologies to promote the participation of individuals with low vision and blindness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. In order to facilitate early intervention and better outcomes, NIDRR requires the RERC to focus on improved vision assessment technologies to improve the field's ability to detect and serve emerging populations of individuals who are blind or who have low vision. While applicants may develop improved assessment technologies that would facilitate prevention of low vision and blindness among at-risk populations, the RERC must focus its resources on the multiple requirements related to research on

and development of technologies to promote the independence of individuals who are blind or who have low vision.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that NIDRR revise the Low Vision and Blindness priority to require the RERC to investigate and address the employment needs of older individuals with low vision and blindness.

Discussion: Nothing in the priority precludes applicants from proposing a project or projects that emphasize employment for older individuals with low vision and blindness. However, NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to focus on this specific topic or population. NIDRR does not want to limit applicants' ability to propose projects that address other important topics, outcomes, or populations by requiring research and development to support employment of older individuals with low vision and blindness.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that we revise the Low Vision and Blindness priority to require the RERC to develop its research and development plans based upon the input of the diverse population of individuals with vision loss and the organizations that represent them. This commenter also recommended that NIDRR require active partnerships between the RERC and organizations that represent individuals living with vision loss.

Discussion: The RERC priority requirements, which apply to both the Low Vision and Blindness and Wireless Technologies priorities, include a requirement that each RERC develop and implement a plan for including individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of its activities, including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation. In developing such a plan, applicants may determine the timing and extent of involvement of individuals with disabilities in their activities. Nothing in the priority precludes applicants from proposing to develop active partnerships with organizations that represent individuals who are living with vision loss. However, NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to do so. NIDRR does not want to limit applicants' ability to propose alternative mechanisms for including individuals with disabilities or their representatives in the RERC's work.

Changes: None.

Comment: In reference to the requirement in the priority that the RERC must research and develop technologies to promote the participation of individuals with low vision and blindness in STEM education, one commenter expressed concern that the RERC would focus its work exclusively in this area and produce solutions with limited relevance outside of the classroom. The commenter recommended that we revise the priority to ensure that the RERC's activities are aimed at developing technologies for

use in the home, at school, and in the community by individuals with vision loss of all ages.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the RERC's work should address the needs of individuals with low vision and blindness of all ages and in all settings. The Low Vision and Blindness priority states that the RERC must research and develop technologies that will improve the assessment of low vision and blindness and promote independence for individuals with low vision and blindness of all ages. Within the broad requirements of the priority, applicants are free to focus their research and development towards finding solutions that benefit subpopulations in settings, inside and outside of the classroom, where they see the greatest need.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter expressed support for the requirement in the Low Vision and Blindness priority that the grantee must research and develop technologies that will improve the assessment of low vision and blindness and promote independence for individuals with low vision and blindness of all ages, including those who are deaf-blind and those with multiple disabilities. This commenter noted, however, that individuals with low vision and blindness who have other disabling conditions cannot be easily categorized according to their disabling conditions, and that their technology needs are largely driven by their functional abilities. The commenter suggested that NIDRR revise the priority to require research and

development that accounts for variations in functional abilities among individuals with low vision and blindness and other disabling conditions.

Discussion: NIDRR does not agree that the priority should be revised to be more prescriptive in terms of the conceptual and methodological strategies used by the RERC, as suggested by the commenter. NIDRR strongly believes that applicants should have the flexibility to propose a wide variety of research and development approaches that meet the requirements of the priority. The peer review process will determine the merits of each proposal.

Changes: None.

Wireless Technologies

Comment: One commenter suggested that NIDRR revise the Wireless Technologies priority to require applicants to focus on the research and development of low-cost or no-cost options for access to wireless technologies by people with disabilities. Specifically, the commenter recommended that the priority require the development of access solutions that are built into wireless technologies or that allow third parties to provide low-cost access solutions for those technologies.

Discussion: Nothing in the priority precludes applicants from proposing research and development projects that focus on low- or no-cost access solutions for wireless technologies, including built-in or third-party solutions. However, NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to do so. NIDRR

does not want to limit applicants' ability to propose other important research and development approaches and projects by requiring all applicants to focus their work on built-in or third-party accessibility solutions.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Wireless Technologies priority should be broad enough to include research to develop accessibility solutions for consumer electronics that employ wireless technologies to communicate with other devices.

Discussion: Nothing in the Wireless Technologies priority precludes applicants from proposing projects to develop accessibility solutions for consumer electronics that employ wireless technologies to communicate with other devices. However, NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to do so. NIDRR does not want to limit applicants' ability to propose other important research and development projects by requiring all applicants to focus their work in this area.

Changes: None.

FINAL PRIORITIES:

Priority 1--Low Vision and Blindness.

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services establishes a priority for a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Low Vision and Blindness. This RERC must research and develop technologies that will improve the assessment of low vision and blindness and

promote independence for individuals with low vision and blindness of all ages, including those who are deaf-blind and those with multiple disabilities. Specifically, the RERC must improve vision assessment for the changing and expanding population of individuals who are at risk for experiencing low vision and blindness, including but not limited to, the elderly, returning military veterans, and prematurely born infants. The RERC must also research and develop technologies that will improve individuals' access to graphical information, signage, and travel information and devices and appliances that have digital displays and control panels. In addition, the RERC must research and develop technologies to promote the participation of individuals with low vision and blindness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Regarding participation in STEM education, these technologies include but are not limited to accessible scientific measurement instruments, tools, and materials.

Priority 2--RERC on Wireless Technologies.

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services establishes a priority for a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Wireless Technologies. Under this priority, the RERC must research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and products that facilitate the use of wireless technologies for individuals with disabilities. The RERC must research and develop wireless hardware and software that will meet the needs, promote

independence, and improve the quality of life and community participation of individuals with disabilities. The RERC must also work with and provide information to relevant Federal agencies, designers, and manufacturers regarding barriers to and methods for facilitating the use of wireless technologies by individuals with disabilities.

Requirements applicable to both priorities:

A RERC established under either of the proposed priorities in this notice must be designed to contribute to the following outcomes:

(1) Increased technical and scientific knowledge relevant to its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by conducting high-quality, rigorous research and development projects.

(2) Increased innovation in technologies, products, environments, performance guidelines, and monitoring and assessment tools applicable to its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome through the development and testing of these innovations.

(3) Improved research capacity in its designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by collaborating with the relevant industry, professional associations, institutions of higher education, health care providers, or educators, as appropriate.

(4) Improved awareness and understanding of cutting edge developments in technologies within its designated priority

research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by identifying and communicating with NIDRR, individuals with disabilities and their representatives, disability organizations, service providers, professional journals, manufacturers, and other interested parties regarding trends and evolving product concepts related to its designated priority research area.

(5) Increased impact of research in the designated priority research area. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by providing technical assistance to relevant public and private organizations, individuals with disabilities, employers, and schools on policies, guidelines, and standards related to its designated priority research area.

(6) Increased transfer of RERC-developed technologies to the marketplace. The RERC must contribute to this outcome by developing and implementing a plan for ensuring that all technologies developed by the RERC are made available to the public. The technology transfer plan must be developed in the first year of the project period in consultation with the NIDRR-funded Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer.

In addition, under each priority, the RERC must--

- Have the capability to design, build, and test prototype devices and assist in the technology transfer and knowledge translation of successful solutions to relevant production and service delivery settings;

- Evaluate the efficacy and safety of its new products, instrumentation, or assistive devices;
- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, a plan that describes how it will include, as appropriate, individuals with disabilities or their representatives in all phases of its activities, including research, development, training, dissemination, and evaluation;
- Provide as part of its proposal, and then implement, in consultation with the NIDRR-funded National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, a plan to disseminate its research results to individuals with disabilities and their representatives, disability organizations, service providers, professional journals, manufacturers, and other interested parties;
- Conduct a state-of-the-science conference on its designated priority research area in the fourth year of the project period, and publish a comprehensive report on the final outcomes of the conference in the fifth year of the project period; and
- Coordinate research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDRR-funded projects, as identified through consultation with the NIDRR project officer.

Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational through a

notice in the Federal Register. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This notice does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use one or more of these priorities, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register.

Executive Order 12866: This notice 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 final regulatory action.

The potential costs associated with this final regulatory action 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 final regulatory action, we have determined that the benefits of the final priorities justify the costs.

Summary of potential costs and benefits:

The benefits of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Programs have been well established over the years in that similar projects have been completed successfully. These final priorities will generate new knowledge through research and development. Another benefit of these final priorities is that the establishment of new RERCs will improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The new RERCs will generate and promote the use of new technologies and information that will improve the options for individuals with disabilities with regard to community living and community participation.

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Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Dated:

Alexa Posny,
Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and Rehabilitative
Services.

**SECTION
D**

BACKGROUND STATEMENTS

From the notice of proposed priorities (NPP) for NIDRR's Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program in the Federal Register on March 29, 2011 (76 FR 17396).

Priority 1--Low Vision and Blindness.

Background:

Low vision and blindness affects approximately 3.4 million adults over 40 years of age in the United States (The Eye Diseases Prevalence Research Group, 2004) and according to the 2009 Annual Report from the American Printing House for the Blind, there are 59,335 legally blind children aged 0-21 in the U.S. (American Printing House for the Blind, 2009). Survey estimates of the number of individuals with low vision and blindness vary depending on the definitions used and the wording of the questions. The 2008 National Health Interview Survey Provisional Report stated that there are 25.2 million American adults aged 18 and over who report experiencing vision loss (Pleis & Lucas, 2009). As increasing numbers of premature infants survive due to advances in modern medicine and technology, the number of infants with low vision and blindness is expected to increase. In addition, the prevalence of age-related causes of low vision and blindness, such as macular degeneration, cataracts, and glaucoma, is expected to rise as the population ages.

The population of those with low vision and blindness is also changing. The elderly population of individuals with low vision and blindness is growing (The Eye Diseases Prevalence Research Group, 2004); returning veterans are experiencing low vision and blindness due to blast injuries (Thach, Johnson, Carroll, Huchun, Ainbinder, et al., 2008); doctors are reporting an increase in the number of children with low vision and blindness and additional non-ophthalmic disabling conditions (Rahi, Cumberland, & Peckham, 2010); and there is a growing prevalence of deaf-blind individuals in the U.S. (Saunders & Echt, 2007).

Persons with low vision and blindness often need assistance with performing activities of daily living. While such assistance may be provided through more traditional methods such as through the assistance of family members or service animals or through the use of white canes and braille, clinicians, researchers and rehabilitation engineers are developing a growing number of technological products and interventions that assist persons with low vision and blindness as they navigate their communities and perform tasks and activities at home and work.

NIDRR has been an active participant in supporting the technological advancements in low vision and blindness assessment, therapy, and rehabilitation for 20 years. NIDRR grantees have researched and developed technologies that improve assessment of low vision and blindness and technologies for blind orientation, navigation, and wayfinding. In addition, NIDRR grantees are researching and developing infant vision screening and rehabilitation technology, educational technology, and vocational and daily living technology for individuals with low vision and blindness.

Notwithstanding this valuable research and work, new and improved vision assessment and vision rehabilitation technologies are required to meet the needs of the changing and expanding population of individuals who experience low vision and blindness. New products and technologies that detect and mitigate low vision and blindness must be researched and developed for individuals of all ages, as rehabilitation needs may vary or change with age.

With enhancements in technology in all segments of society, there is an increasing need for individuals with low vision and blindness to manipulate and produce many types of information, such as text and graphics (Arditi, 2004; Krufka, Barner, & Aysal, 2007). Thus, further research and development are needed to ensure that individuals with low vision and blindness have access to graphical information, signage, and travel

information, and appliances and displays for education, employment, and daily living (Vidal-Verdu & Hafez, 2007; Marston & Church, 2005; Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind Act of 2010, 2010; Marom, 2010). In addition, in the area of education, new methods for presenting scientific information and concepts in accessible form are needed for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Accordingly, NIDRR seeks to fund an RERC on low vision and blindness to research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies that will improve the ability of individuals with low vision and blindness to function independently within their schools, communities, and workplaces.

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Krufka S.E., Barner K.E. & Aysal T.C. (2007). Visual to tactile conversion of vector graphics. *IEEE Transactions on Neural Systems and Rehabilitation Engineering*. Jun; 15(2):310-21.

Proposed Priority 2--Wireless Technologies

Background:

Wireless technologies allow the connection of communication, information, and control devices to local, community, and nationwide networks. Wireless devices support a wide range of applications spanning voice and data communication, remote monitoring, and position finding, and offer tremendous potential for assisting individuals with disabilities to participate actively in the community.

Wireless technology can improve the quality of life and enhance inclusiveness for individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, health care, education, and emergency response. For example, a new wireless system offers those with hearing difficulties the ability to caption events in real-time; for those who have difficulty seeing, new mobile applications can use smart-phone cameras to scan labels on grocery items or pill bottles; for those with communication difficulties, there are many communications applications available for cell phones that convey typed messages through voice output (Mobile Future, 2010). Cloud computing is a technology that uses the internet and central remote servers to maintain data and applications. These “cloud” applications can be used without installation to a personal computer, and data and personal files can be accessed at any computer with internet access. Cloud computing technologies may provide individuals with disabilities an additional option for access from any wireless device in a variety of settings to a shared pool of computing resources, software, and information.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recognizes the importance of wireless technology for individuals with disabilities (FCC Broadband plan, 2010; FCC Working Paper: A Giant Leap & A Big Deal: Delivering on the Promise of Equal Access to Broadband for People with Disabilities, 2010). As part of its broadband plan, the FCC

has included an accessibility and innovation forum and plans to modernize accessibility laws, rules, and subsidy programs.

NIDRR has been an active participant in directing the technological advancements in wireless technologies for ten years so that individuals across the range of abilities may enjoy the benefits of these technologies and participate more fully in society. NIDRR grantees have been active in research on technology use and usability, and the development of public policy influencing equitable access to wireless technologies. In addition, NIDRR grantees have developed new technologies and accessible technology applications in the areas of web accessibility, emergency communications, audio captioning, touch-screen and audible interfaces, and TTY Phone-Deaf 911. NIDRR grantees have also filed comments on and informed final FCC rules concerning wireless use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS), and the broadband plan.

NIDRR recognizes the potential benefits that wireless technology has for individuals with disabilities and that wireless networking represents the future of computer and internet connectivity. However, as wireless technology continues to advance in technical sophistication and commercial availability at a rapid pace, issues of usability continue for individuals with disabilities. The wireless industry too often fails to design products and services for use by individuals with disabilities, is unaware of the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, and does not fully evaluate the usability of wireless products and services for individuals with disabilities before they become mainstream products and services (Designing Inclusive futures, 2008). Technical issues in areas such as interoperability (the ability of a system or a product to work with other systems or products), speech-to-text conversion, and hearing aid compatibility have been identified as barriers that individuals with disabilities experience as they attempt to use wireless technologies (Baker & Moon, 2008). In addition, ergonomic and interface

needs of individuals with disabilities are recognized barriers to use of wireless technologies (Mueller, Jones, Broderick, & Haberman, 2005).

In addition to promoting usability of emerging and existing wireless technologies, NIDRR proposes to continue research and development efforts to develop new wireless products and technologies that directly facilitate the independence and community participation of individuals with disabilities. Accordingly, NIDRR seeks to fund an RERC on Wireless Technologies to research, develop, and evaluate innovative technologies and approaches that will improve the ability of individuals with disabilities to use wireless technologies to promote independence and community participation.

References:

Mobile Future. (2010). Mobile ability: The transformational impact of wireless innovation for people with disabilities. Retrieved from http://www.mobilefuture.org/content/pages/mobile_ability

Federal Communications Commission. (2010). The national broadband plan. Retrieved from www.broadband.gov

Federal Communications Commission. (2010). A giant leap and a big deal: Delivering on the promise of equal access to broadband for people with disabilities. Retrieved from <http://download.broadband.gov/plan/fcc-omnibus-broadband-initiative-%28obi%29-working-report-giant-leap-big-deal-delivering-promise-of-equal-access-to-broadband-for-people-with-disabilities.pdf>

Baker, P.M. & Moon, N.W. (2008). Wireless technologies and accessibility for people with disabilities: findings from a policy research instrument. Assist Technol. Fall; 20(3): 149-56.

Mueller, J., Jones, M., Broderick, L., & Haberman, V. (2005). Assessment of user needs in wireless technologies. Assist Technol. Spring; 17(1): 57-71.

Baker, P.M. & Moon, N.W. (2008). Access barriers to wireless technologies for people with disabilities: issues, opportunities and policy options. In: Designing Inclusive Futures. Langdon, P.; Clarkson, P. John; Robinson, P. (Eds.) 1st Edition.

**SECTION
E**

**Statutory and Regulatory Requirements of
RERCs**

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)

General Requirements of RERC program

RERCs carry out research or demonstration activities in support of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, by--

- Developing and disseminating innovative methods of applying advanced technology, scientific achievement, and psychological and social knowledge to: (a) solve rehabilitation problems and remove environmental barriers; and (b) study and evaluate new or emerging technologies, products, or environments and their effectiveness and benefits; or

Demonstrating and disseminating: (a) innovative models for the delivery of cost-effective rehabilitation technology services to rural and urban areas; and (b) other scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independent living needs of individuals with severe disabilities; and

- Facilitating service delivery systems change through: (a) the development, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative consumer-responsive and individual- and family-centered models for the delivery to both rural and urban areas of innovative, cost-effective rehabilitation technology services; and (b) other scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independence needs of individuals with severe disabilities.

Each RERC must be operated by, or in collaboration with, one or more institutions of higher education or one or more nonprofit organizations.

Each RERC must provide training opportunities, in conjunction with institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations, to assist individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to become rehabilitation technology researchers and practitioners.

Each RERC must emphasize the principles of universal design in its product research and development. Universal design is “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (North Carolina State University, 1997. http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm).

Additional information on the RERCs can be found at:
<http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/index.html>.

**SECTION
F**

SELECTION CRITERIA

SELECTION CRITERIA

We use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications under RERC program. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) Importance of the problem (10 points total)

- (1) The Secretary considers the importance of the problem.
- (2) In determining the importance of the problem, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant clearly describes the need and target population.

(b) Design of research activities (25 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of research activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of research activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methodology of each proposed research activity is meritorious, including consideration of the extent to which--

(A) The proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art;

(B) Each research hypothesis is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge;

(C) Each sample population is appropriate and of sufficient size;

(D) The data collection and measurement techniques are appropriate and likely to be effective; and

(E) The data analysis methods are appropriate.

(c) Design of development activities (25 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of development activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of development activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the plan for development, clinical testing, and evaluation of new devices and technology is likely to yield significant products or techniques, including consideration of the extent to which-

(A) The proposed project will use the most effective and appropriate technology available in developing the new device or technique;

(B) The proposed development is based on a sound conceptual model that demonstrates an awareness of the state-of-the-art in technology;

(C) The new device or technique will be developed and tested in an appropriate environment;

(D) The new device or technique is likely to be cost-effective and useful;

(E) The new device or technique has the potential for commercial or private manufacture, marketing, and distribution of the product; and

(F) The proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

(d) Design of training activities (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of training activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of training activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the type, extent, and quality of the proposed clinical and laboratory research experience, including the opportunity to participate in advanced-level research, are likely to develop highly qualified researchers.

(e) Design of dissemination activities (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the extent to which the design of dissemination activities is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(2) In determining the quality of dissemination activities, the Secretary considers the extent to which the materials to be disseminated are likely to be effective and usable, including consideration of their quality, clarity, variety, and format.

(f) Plan of operation. (5 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of operation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of operation, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the plan of operation to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks.

(g) Adequacy and reasonableness of the budget (4 points total)

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget.

(2) In determining the adequacy and the reasonableness of the proposed budget, the Secretary considers the extent to which the budget for the project, including any subcontracts, is adequately justified to support the proposed project activities.

(h) Plan of evaluation (8 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the plan of evaluation.

(2) In determining the quality of the plan of evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the plan of evaluation will be used to improve the performance of the project through the feedback generated by its periodic assessments.

(i) Project staff (8 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the project staff.

(2) In determining the quality of the project staff, 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) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the key personnel and other key staff have appropriate training and experience in disciplines required to conduct all proposed activities;

(ii) The extent to which the commitment of staff time is adequate to accomplish all the proposed activities of the project.

(j) Adequacy and accessibility of resources (5 points total).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy and accessibility of the applicant's resources to implement the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy and accessibility of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the applicant is committed to provide adequate facilities, equipment, other resources, including administrative support, and laboratories, if appropriate;

(ii) The extent to which the facilities, equipment, and other resources are appropriately accessible to individuals with disabilities who may use the facilities, equipment, and other resources of the project.

**SECTION
G**

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Protection of Human Subjects

Research activities involving human subjects supported by awards under these programs are subject to Department of Education Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects. You do **not** need an assurance or IRB approval as a condition of applying for this competition.

If you marked "Yes" for Item 3 of Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, you must provide a human subjects "exempt research" or "nonexempt research" narrative. Insert the narrative(s) in the space provided. If you have multiple projects and need to provide more than one narrative, please indicate which project each set of responses addresses.

A. Exempt Research Narrative. If you marked "Yes" for item 3 a. and designated exemption numbers(s), provide the "exempt research" narrative. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by ED that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct. In addition, narratives are required for each participating partner if research is being conducted at other sites.

B. Nonexempt Research Narrative. If you marked "No" for item 3 a. you must provide the "nonexempt research" narrative. The narrative must address the seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

Copies of the Department of Education regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects as well as other documents are available on the website below. For more information call (202) 260-3353 or go on-line the Protection of Human Subjects in research Web Site:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html>

**SECTION
H**

APPLICATION FORMAT

APPLICATION FORMAT (Grants.gov)

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (grants.gov) by the closing date of August 15, 2011.

It is recommended that your electronic application (or paper application if you have requested and been approved for a waiver), be organized in the following manner and include the following:

NOTE: You will be uploading sections of your application by heading. There is a heading for: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. There is a file-size limitation to each section and you may only upload one document under each heading. Therefore, in order to make sure that all of your materials are uploaded successfully, you will need to combine multiple original documents for a heading (e.g., letters, resumes) into a single document before uploading.

1. Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424)

- This form requires basic identifying information about the applicant and the application.
- Applicants should note that if there are multiple RERCs open to use the **RELEVANT** CFDA and Title from the NFP/NIA as the title.

2. Table of Contents

- The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized.
- While the application will be submitted electronically, the reviewers will use printed copies during the review process. The Table of Contents will assist them in more efficiently and effectively evaluating your application.
- Upload the Table of Contents to Optional Forms: Other Attachments.

3. Abstract

- The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of what the whole (all years) project is, not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced.
- Upload the Abstract to ED Abstract.

4. ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)

- Remember that you must provide complete budget information for each year of the proposed project. Use the Budget Narrative heading to upload.
- Please report Federal Funds in Section A – Budget Summary and Non-Federal Funds Section B – Budget Summary.

- Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are provided within this application package.

Name: Enter the Name of the applicant organization(s) or institution(s) in the space provided.

Personnel (Line 1): Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6.

Fringe Benefits (Line 2): The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.

Travel (Line 3): Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants and trainees on line 6.

Equipment (Line 4): Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy

Supplies (line 5): Show all tangible personal property except that on line 4.

Contractual (line 6): The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

Construction (line 7): Not applicable.

Other (line 8): Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), stipends, training, and communication and printing costs.

Total Direct Costs (line 9): The sum of lines 1-8.

Indirect Costs (line 10): There is no restricted indirect cost rate for this program. Use your institution's Federally negotiated rate.

Training Stipends (line 11): There are three types of projects that might included budget requests for stipends, tuition allowance, or other types of similar charges to support the objectives of the project:

- _ Fellowship or Scholarship Programs
- _ Educational Training Projects
- _ Projects where students receive tuition remission or other forms of compensation, as, or in lieu of wages

Total Cost (line 12): This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect +

stipends). The sum for column one, labeled *Project Year 1 (a)*, should also be equal to item 18a on the SF Form 424.

Cost Share: Please include this information on the ED Form 524, Section B – Budget Summary, Non-Federal Funds – Tab 2 and in your budget narrative.

5. Budget Narrative

- This part requires an itemized budget breakdown for the project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures.
- Address Cost Share in a separate section of the budget narrative labeled “Cost Share”.
- Please provide an itemized budget breakdown for each project year.
- Upload the Project Narrative to the Project Narrative Section.

6. Project Narrative

- The project narrative responds to the Statutory, Regulatory and General RRTC Requirements found in Section E and Selection Criteria found in Section F of this application package. The reviewers will use this section to evaluate your application.
- Applying through grants.gov use the Project Narrative selection criteria categories to attach your narrative.

Each applicant is encouraged to limit the project narrative to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial.
- Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices.
- Ensure that you attach ***.PDF files only*** for any attachments to your application. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to this Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs:
http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs

NOTE: The recommended page limit does apply to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the budget narrative, the forms; or the one page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the project narrative section.

7. General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427

- Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

8. GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the Grants.gov website.

9. Faith Based Survey on EEO

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the Grants.gov website.

10. ED Supplemental Form for SF 424

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the Grants.gov website.

11. SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying

- Instructions for completing this form are included on the Grants.gov website.

12. Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

- Vitae of staff or consultants should include the individual's title and role in the proposed project, and other information that is specifically pertinent to this proposed project. If collaboration with another organization is involved in the proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or assurances of cooperation.
- Upload the Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support to the Other Attachments- Optional Section.

**SECTION
I**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. CAN I GET AN EXTENSION OF THE DUE DATE?

In the case of most competitions the answer is no. On rare occasions the Department of Education may extend a closing date for all applicants. If that occurs, a notice of the revised due date is published in the Federal Register, this extension will identify who is eligible to apply for a given competition. There are no extensions or exceptions to the due date made for individual applicants. Additionally, there are provisions for extension for Grants.gov, per the guidance included in the application package.

2. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION?

The application should include the following: (1) Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); (2) Table of Contents; (3) Abstract; (4) ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524); (5) Budget Narrative; (6) Project Narrative; (7) General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427; (8) GG Lobbying Form (90-0013); (9) Faith Based Survey on EEO; (10) ED Supplemental Form for SF 424; (11) SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying; and (12) Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support. The budgets for all years, including a detailed budget narrative, should be included. If collaboration with another organization or individual is involved in any proposed activity, the application should include assurances of participation by the other parties, including written agreements or letters of cooperation. It is not useful to include general letters of support or endorsement in the application. If the applicant proposes to use unique tests or other measurement instruments that are not widely known in the field, it would be helpful to include the instrument in the application. Many applications contain voluminous appendices that are not helpful and in many cases cannot even be mailed to the reviewers. It is generally not helpful to include such things as brochures, general capability statements of collaborating organizations, maps, copies of publications, or descriptions of other projects completed by the applicant.

3. WHAT FORMAT SHOULD BE USED FOR THE APPLICATION?

NIDRR generally advises applicants to organize the project narrative to follow the selection criteria. The project narrative should address the specific selection criteria for the competition. The specific review criteria vary according to the specific programs and are included in this application package. Additionally, applicants should provide clearly stated hypotheses or research questions, goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and public benefit of the research or development project. The application should be organized to provide a thorough description of the methods and target population(s) and supported by evidence of need for the project, as identified in the relevant literature; citations are useful and may strengthen the proposal. Specific information on the format can be found in Section H – Application Format and Instructions of this application package.

4. ARE THERE PAGE LIMITS TO MY APPLICATION?

The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 125 pages, using the following standards: (1) A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top,

bottom, and both sides; (2) Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs; (3) Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch); (4) Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial; and (5) Include all critical information in the program narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices.

5. MAY I SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO MORE THAN ONE OPEN NIDRR PROGRAM COMPETITION AT A TIME OR MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM COMPETITION?

Yes. You may submit more than one application in any given competition. You may submit to as many open competitions, for which an application is responsive to the program requirements. However, each competition is unique and the selection criteria will vary from one competition to another. It is important that each separate application include the required materials for that particular competition.

6. DO I NEED AN ABSTRACT AND WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

Yes. The abstract is used by both the peer reviewers and the program staff in the review and processing of the application. The ONE-PAGE abstract should be a comprehensive description of the project (all years), not a description of the competency of the institution or project director. It is not an executive summary. It can be single or double-spaced. Upload the Abstract to ED Abstract

7. WHAT IS THE ALLOWABLE INDIRECT COST RATE?

For the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (133E) applicants must have a current indirect cost rate agreement to charge indirect costs to a grant. The maximum amount of the award includes both direct and indirect costs (ED Budget Information non-Construction programs (ED-524). The Department's Indirect Cost Group has more information on what you should know about indirect cost rates on its Web site, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/abouticg.html>

8. CAN PROFIT MAKING BUSINESSES APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Yes; however, for-profit organizations will not be able to collect a fee or profit on the grant. It varies by program.

9. CAN INDIVIDUALS APPLY FOR GRANTS?

Individuals are not eligible to apply for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers Program.

10. CAN NIDRR STAFF ADVISE ME WHETHER MY PROJECT IS OF INTEREST TO NIDRR OR LIKELY TO BE FUNDED?

No. NIDRR staff can only advise you of the requirements of the program in which you propose to submit your application. However, staff cannot advise you of whether your subject area or proposed approach is likely to receive approval.

11. HOW DO I ENSURE THAT MY APPLICATION WILL BE REVIEWED UNDER THE CORRECT COMPETITION?

Applicants should be sure that their applications are referred to the correct competition by clearly including the competition title and CFDA number, including alphabetical code, on the Standard Form 424, and include a project title that describes the project, based on the competition.

12. HOW SOON AFTER SUBMITTING MY APPLICATION CAN I FIND OUT IF IT WILL BE FUNDED?

The time from closing date to grant award date varies from program to program. Generally speaking, NIDRR endeavors to have awards made within six to seven months of the closing date. Unsuccessful applicants generally will be notified within that time frame as well. When NIDRR is able to release information on the status of grant applications, it will notify applicants by letter. The results of the peer review cannot be released except through this formal notification. This information is **not** posted on the NIDRR homepage or the Grants.gov or e-Application website.

13. WHAT START DATE SHOULD I USE ON MY APPLICATION?

For the purpose of estimating a project start date, the applicant should estimate approximately six to seven months from the closing date, preferably October 1. You must have a start date that allows you to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) by May 31st with six month of activities to report on.

14. IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, CAN I ASSUME I WILL GET THE REQUESTED BUDGET AMOUNT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS?

No. Funding in subsequent years is subject to availability of funds and project performance.

15. WILL ALL APPROVED APPLICATIONS BE FUNDED?

No. Peer review panels can result in more applications being determined to be worthy of consideration for funding than available resources allow. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to consider resubmitting applications in future competitions. Funded applications will be notified in the manner described in #12.

16. DO I HAVE TO INCLUDE COST SHARE IN MY APPLICATION?

No. Cost share is not required for this program. If you choose to share costs, include the information on the SF 424, ED 524, and the budget narrative.

17. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ABOUT HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION IN MY RESEARCH?

If you are planning research involving human subjects at any time during the project period, you check "Yes" in the Human Subjects section of the ED supplement to the SF

424 form. If you checked “Yes,” you need to indicate whether the research is exempt or not exempt from the protection of human subjects requirements of EDGAR part 97 and if you have an IRB number. You will need to fill out the human subjects narrative for each site where the research is being conducted. The program and the Department’s human subjects staff review the applicant’s response against the application itself to determine its accuracy. They contact you for additional information or clarification, if needed. More information can be found in the instructions for the SF 424 form and in this application package in the Human Subjects section.

18. SHOULD I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV?

Applications for grants for this competition must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at 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. **We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions.**

DUNS NUMBER INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: Check with your fiscal office to see if your institution has an assigned DUNS before contacting Dun & Bradstreet

D-U-N-S No.: Please provide the applicant's D-U-N-S Number. You can obtain your D-U-N-S Number at no charge by calling **1-800-234-3867** or by completing a D-U-N-S Number Request Form. The form can be obtained via the Internet at the following URL:

http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html

The D-U-N-S Number is a unique nine-digit number that does not convey any information about the recipient. A built in check digit helps assure the accuracy of the D-U-N-S Number. The ninth digit of each number is the check digit, which is mathematically related to the other digits. It lets computer systems determine if a D-U-N-S Number has been entered correctly.

Dun & Bradstreet, a global information services provider, has assigned D-U-N-S numbers to over 43 million companies worldwide. **Live help Monday-Friday 8am-6pm (EST) Dial 1.800.234.3867**

Note: Electronic submission via Grants.gov must use DUNS number your organization used when it registered in the Central Contractor Registry.

SECTION

J

GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education *Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants*

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

ATTENTION – Adobe Forms and PDF Files Required

Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download the latest version of Adobe reader (at least Adobe Reader 8.1.2). Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov. We strongly recommend that you review these details on www.Grants.gov before completing and submitting your application. In addition, applicants should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed below. Also, applicants are required to upload their attachments in .pdf format only. (See details below under “Attaching Files – Additional Tips.”) If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Also, applicants should be aware that on October 11, 2010, Grants.gov implemented a new security build which requires each organization’s e-Biz POC (Point of Contact) update their Grants.gov registration. To complete this step, the e-Biz POC must have their DUNS number and CCR MPIN. We recommend this step be completed several days before application submission unless the e-Biz POC has already responded to this requirement. For more information on this topic, please visit this Grants.gov information link: <http://www.grants.gov/securitycommebiz/>.

- 1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration may take five or more business days to complete. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. [Note: Your organization will need to update its Central Contractor Registry (CCR) registration annually.]
- 2) **SUBMIT EARLY** – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded. The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully before 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date.

Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization

Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the CCR (Central Contractor Registry). If you do not enter the same DUNS number on your application as the DUNS you registered with, Grants.gov will reject your application.

- 3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK** – You will want to verify that Grants.gov and the Department of Education receive your Grants.gov submission timely and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_faqs.jsp#54. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Error Messages document at <http://www.grants.gov/assets/AdobeReaderErrorMessages.pdf>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>, or use the customer support available on the Web site:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp.

If electronic submission is optional and you have problems that you are unable to resolve before the deadline date and time for electronic applications, please follow the transmittal instructions for hard copy applications in the Federal Register notice and get a hard copy application postmarked by midnight on the deadline date.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30:00 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application.

You must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.

Please go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Submit Application FAQs found on the Grants.gov website. http://www.grants.gov/help/submit_application_faqs.jsp.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g. cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. **(See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)**

MAC Users

For MAC compatibility information, review the Operating System Platform Compatibility Table at the following Grants.gov link: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants **only include .pdf files** in their application:

1. Ensure that you attach ***.PDF files only*** for any attachments to your application. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to this Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs
2. Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
3. When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded files must be less than 50 characters, contain no spaces, no special characters (example: -, &, *, %, /, #, \) including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.

4. Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package totals 1 to 2 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

2/2011

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL OR HAND DELIVERY IF A WAIVER HAS BEEN OBTAINED

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA number 84.133E-1 or E-3)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S.

Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

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 if a waiver has been obtained 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: (CFDA Number 84.133E-1 or E-3)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 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--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(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.

**SECTION
K**

**REQUIRED FORMS
and
FORM INSTRUCTIONS**

REQUIRED FORMS

All electronic and paper (if a waiver has been submitted and approved) applications submitted to NIDRR must include the following forms/parts:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED-524)
- Budget Narrative
- Project Narrative
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427
- GG Lobbying Form (90-0013)
- Faith Based Survey on EEO
- ED Supplemental Form for SF 424
- SF LLL Disclosure of Lobbying
- Vitae/Bibliography/Letters of Support

A separate application must be submitted for each grant sought. No grant may be awarded unless the completed application forms have been received. All above forms are mandatory and must be submitted with the application, if an item does not appear to be relevant write "NA" for not applicable.

**SECTION
L**

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Did you complete the registration process for Grants.gov for the mandatory electronic submission on www.grants.gov?

Does your application include each of the following?

Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) marked appropriately with **84.133E-1or E-3**.

Priority Topic identified in the Descriptive Title in Block 12 of the SF 424?

Ensure that the dollar amounts on the ED Budget Information Non-Construction Program (ED form 524) do not exceed the maximum amount available in any year.

Voluntary Cost Share included on side "B" of the ED 524 and explained in the budget narrative for each year?

Budget narrative for each year with arithmetic checked for accuracy

Program narrative, including abstract and responses to the selection criteria

Assurances and Certifications (from the forms list in section K)

Correctly uploaded files onGrants.gov?

Narrative on the Protection of Human Subjects?

Did You do each of the following?

Submit application on or before August 15, 2011?

Provide 1 original and 2 copies of the application if submitting by post, hand-delivery or carrier service (Although not required, 1 original and 9 copies are requested and a disk copy) – if you obtained a waiver?

Fully complete the upload of your application and receive successful validation of the submission before 4:30:00 pm, Washington, D.C. time on the closing date?

PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1820-0027. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 200 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.

If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. **If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:** 84.133 Grant Program, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-2700.

GRANT APPLICATION RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If you fail to receive the notification of application within fifteen (15) days from the closing date, call:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
(202) 245-6288

GRANT AND CONTRACT FUNDING INFORMATION

The Department of Education provides information about grant and contract opportunities electronically in several ways:

ED Internet Home Page <http://www.ed.gov/> (WWW address)