DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance on State Data Collection—The Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center To Improve State Capacity To Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2022 for The Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats, Assistance Listing Number 84.373Q. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820–0028.

DATES:

Applications available: July 12, 2022.

Deadline for transmittal of Applications: August 22, 2022.

Pre-Application webinar information: No later than July 18, 2022, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will post pre-recorded informational webinars designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to interested applicants. The webinars may be found at *www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/osep/new-osep-grants.html*.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2021 (86 FR 73264) and available at *www.federalregister.gov/d/2021–27979*. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on February 13, 2019, and, in part, describe the transition from the requirement to register in *SAM.gov* a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the implementation of the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). More information on the phase-out of DUNS numbers is available at *https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ofo/docs/unique-entity-identifier-transition-fact-sheet.pdf*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rebecca Smith, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5038B, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–5076. Telephone: (202) 258–9436. Email: *rebecca.smith@ed.gov*.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7–1–1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection program is to improve the capacity of States to meet the data collection and reporting requirements under Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Funding for the program is authorized under section 611(c)(1) of IDEA. This section gives the Secretary authority to reserve not more than ½ of 1 percent of the amounts appropriated under Part B for each fiscal year to provide technical assistance (TA) activities authorized under section 616(i) of IDEA to improve the capacity of States to meet the data collection and reporting requirements under Parts B and C of IDEA. The maximum amount the Secretary may reserve under this set-aside for any fiscal year is $25,000,000, cumulatively adjusted by the rate of inflation. For FY 2022, the inflation adjusted amount is $37,300,000. Section 616(i) of IDEA requires the Secretary to review the data collection and analysis capacity of States to ensure that data and information determined necessary for implementation of section 616 of IDEA are collected, analyzed, and accurately reported to the Secretary. It also requires the Secretary to provide TA, where needed, to improve the capacity of States to meet the IDEA Part B and Part C data collection requirements, which include the data collection and reporting requirements in sections 616 and 618 of IDEA. In addition, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116–260, gives the Secretary authority to use funds reserved under section 611(c) of IDEA to provide TA to States to improve their capacity to administer and carry out other services and activities to improve data collection, coordination, quality, and use under Parts B and C of IDEA.

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. This priority is from the notice of final priority and requirements published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register** (NFP).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2022 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Technical Assistance on State Data Collection—The Rhonda Weiss[1] *National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats.*

Background:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey, 12.7 percent of the U.S. population experiences disability (more than 1 in 8 people). Approximately 2.3 percent, or over 7.4 million, U.S. citizens have a visual disability and 5.2 percent, or close to 16 million U.S. citizens, have a cognitive disability. Disability impacts people of all ages, races, ethnicities, geographies, and socioeconomic groups.

The purpose of the Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats (Accessible Data Center) is to improve State capacity to accurately collect, report, analyze, and use the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities.

Under the authority of IDEA sections 616 and 618, States are required to collect and analyze data on infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and report on the data to the Department and the public. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act), requires States to publish data in a manner that provides the same access and usability to persons with and without disabilities. Currently, States struggle to report data in accessible formats that also are dynamic and usable by data consumers with limited statistical knowledge. To meet the demands of both statutes, States generally rely on static data portrayals rather than dynamic visualizations. The lack of available software to develop accessible, dynamic, and manipulatable data products creates inequitable access for persons with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities.

[1] The Center is named in remembrance of Rhonda Weiss, who was a senior attorney with the U.S. Department of Education, a staunch advocate for disability rights, and a champion for ensuring equity and accessibility for persons with disabilities. For more information on Rhonda and her work to ensure equity and accessibility for persons with disabilities please see *www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/12/13/blind-government-lawyer-disabilities-rights/*.

The Accessible Data Center will increase the capacity of States to collect, report, analyze, and use the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in accessible formats by: (1) developing an openly licensed software program that allows States to report and publish data products that are accessible, usable, and manipulatable by persons with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities, as well as by those persons without disabilities; and (2) providing TA on accessible data reporting and publication. By developing an accessible and usable data reporting platform and supporting States as they revise their data collection tools and publish accessible data, both internal and external users will be better positioned to analyze and use the data. Hazen et al. (2017) note that both data analysis and data use by both internal and external users can be integrated into the data quality process and used as a tool for improving data quality. By increasing the capacity of States to report their data in formats that are both accessible and useable, the Accessible Data Center will aid in the improvement of data quality across the States and ensure equitable access to IDEA data for all stakeholders.

Federal agencies have increasingly used open licensing to expand the impact and reach of materials developed with Federal funds, enable innovative use of those materials, and ensure that those materials and resources are available to the public (U.S Department of State, 2017). Open licensing gives permission to the public to use materials created under the terms of the license and attribute to the creator under copyright law. Pfenninger et al. (2017) note that open licensing allows the burden of the work to be distributed more broadly, avoids unnecessary duplication, supports learning from one another to get to solutions more quickly, and allows for research to be seen and used. Additionally, open licensing helps to improve educational research opportunities and systems, given the rapid pace of technological change and ongoing advances.

Data visualizations can be difficult to access for persons with disabilities. This difficulty is not limited to persons who are blind and/or visually impaired, but also impacts those with cognitive and learning disabilities, and those with visual or motor disabilities who do not access their computers with a mouse or touchscreen. These barriers have been amplified by the growing interest in, and use of, infographics and interactive data displays and dashboards on websites and in social media. In addition to difficulty with use, persons with disabilities are often excluded as potential authors and designers of data visualizations due to the inaccessibility of the computer-based tools used to create and publish data displays. Despite legislation, including sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, potential data authors and consumers with disabilities continue to be excluded from the data sharing necessary for equal access and participation in civic conversations, education, advocacy, and employment.

To extend the benefits and opportunities of data visualization equitably and inclusively to all people, new tools must be developed that prioritize access and usability for everyone. Developers and designers should engage with people with disabilities (including developers and designers with disabilities) to identify and integrate accessibility solutions. Accessibly designed software and data visualizations will increase access for those who have traditionally been excluded and increase opportunities for all consumers and authors to interact with data in new and preferred ways. Following the principles of universal design, everyone benefits when we expand the ability of people with disabilities to use and access information, products, programs, and spaces with greater convenience and enjoyment.

In addition to equitable access and data availability, data reporters face a growing problem of how to meaningfully publish large datasets. Consumers need easy tools for conducting simple analyses, comparing variables, and searching for data-based answers to unique and changing questions. Interactive data visualizations increase confidence in data reliability and provide stakeholders with opportunities to look at data in new ways (Kirk, 2016).

Modern, web-based data visualizations include the ability to select, link, filter, and reorganize data, as well as the delivery of 3–D/multidimensional data representations that can be accessed from multiple perspectives (Cota et al., 2017). Challenges to producing interactive data visualizations include managing visual noise, fitting large amounts of data onto limited screen sizes, and satisfying the high-performance computation requirements behind dynamic visualizations (Hajirahimova & Ismayilova, 2018). Innovative data interactivity and manipulation solutions can also solve accessibility challenges. Accessibility solutions for static images (which usually involve written descriptions embedded in alt-tags in computer code) should become standard practice, while simultaneously being reimagined to accommodate responsive and animated representations of data.

Priority:

Under this priority, the Department provides funding for a cooperative agreement to establish and operate the Rhonda Weiss National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Capacity to Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use Accurate IDEA Data in Accessible Formats (Accessible Data Center).

The Accessible Data Center will provide TA to help States better meet current and future IDEA Part B and Part C data collection and reporting requirements, improve data quality, and analyze and use the data reported to provide equitable access and visualizations to persons with disabilities. The Accessible Data Center's work will comply with the privacy and confidentiality protections in the IDEA Part B and C regulations, which incorporate provisions in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and include IDEA-specific provisions and will not provide the Department with access to child-level data. The Accessible Data Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Improved accessibility of the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported and published under IDEA sections 616 and 618;

(b) Increased capacity of States to collect, report, analyze, and use high-quality IDEA Part B and Part C data in accessible formats;

(c) Development of an open license, accessible software program, for the publication of dynamic data products (consistent with the open licensing requirement in 2 CFR 3474.20); and

(d) Development and documentation of a knowledge base related to the accessible reporting and dynamic presentation of data.

In addition, the Accessible Data Center must provide a range of targeted and general TA products and services for improving States' capacity to accurately collect, report, analyze, and use IDEA section 616 and section 618 data in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, particularly those with blindness, visual impairments, motor impairments, and intellectual disabilities. Such TA must include, at a minimum—

(a) Working with the Department to develop open-source electronic tools to

assist States in reporting their IDEA data in accessible formats that allow for dynamic visualizations that can be manipulated for persons with and without disabilities. The tools must utilize accessibility best practices, exceed all Federal accessibility requirements, and be designed to accommodate continued enhancements to meet States' changing needs and updates in accessibility best practice;

(b) Developing a plan to maintain appropriate functionality of the open-source electronic tools described in paragraph (a) as changes are made to data collections, reporting requirements, accessibility best practices, and accessibility requirements;

(c) Developing universal TA products, including a user manual and instructions, and conducting training with State staff on use of the open-source electronic tools; and

(d) Developing white papers and presentations that include tools and solutions to challenges in the collection, reporting, analysis, and use of IDEA data in accessible formats.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Significance of the Project,'' how the proposed project will—

(1) Address State challenges in collecting, analyzing, reporting, and using the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in formats that are both accessible to persons with visual impairments and/or other disabilities and also dynamic, to promote enhanced data use that will improve data quality and identify programmatic strengths and areas for improvement. To meet this requirement the applicant must—

(i) Demonstrate knowledge of IDEA data collections, including data required under IDEA sections 616 and 618;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of accessible reporting and dynamic visualization, and document areas for further knowledge development;

(iii) Present information about the difficulties State educational agencies (SEAs), State lead agencies (LAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), early intervention service (EIS) providers, and schools have encountered in meeting the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act when reporting IDEA data; and

(iv) Present information about the difficulties SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, EIS providers, and schools have in developing dynamic data visualizations for public use; and

(2) Improve outcomes in collecting, analyzing, reporting, and using the IDEA Part B and Part C data in formats that are accessible to persons with visual impairments and/or other disabilities.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of project services,'' how the proposed project will—

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will—

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients and end users for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that products and services meet the needs of the intended TA recipients and end users;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide—

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks: *https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/ConceptualFramework_Updated.pdf* and *www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.*

(4) Be based on current research and use evidence-based practices (EBPs).[2] To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) The current research on the capacity of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS providers to report and use data, specifically section 616 and section 618 data, in a manner that allows persons with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data, as both a means of improving data quality and identifying strengths and areas for improvement;

(ii) How it will analyze and incorporate the views of end users regarding the accessibility of tools currently available for data collection, reporting, analysis, and use. Specifically, how it will assess the overall accessibility, data manipulability, and the accessibility of dynamic data visualizations for persons with and without disabilities; and

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research, EBPs, and the needs of end users in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) How it will develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How it proposes to identify or develop the knowledge base on the capacity needs of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS programs/EIS providers to meet IDEA data collection and reporting requirements, data analysis, and use of the IDEA Part B and Part C data reported under IDEA sections 616 and 618 in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data;

(ii) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,[3] which must identify the intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(iii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,[4] which must identify—

[2] For purposes of these requirements, ''evidence-based practices'' (EBPs) means, at a minimum, demonstrating a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

[3] ''Universal, general TA'' means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with Accessible Data Center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by Accessible Data Center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the Accessible Data Center's website by independent users. Brief communications by Accessible Data Center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

[4] ''Targeted, specialized TA'' means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more Accessible Data Center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach; and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,[5] which must identify—

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of SEA, State LAs, LEA, and EIS program/provider personnel to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the SEA, State LA, LEA, and EIS program/provider levels;

(C) Its proposed plan for assisting SEAs and State LAs (and LEAs, in conjunction with SEAs and EIS programs/providers, in conjunction with State LAs) to build or enhance training systems to meet IDEA Part B and Part C data collection and reporting requirements in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data. This includes professional development based on adult learning principles and coaching;

(D) Its proposed plan for working with appropriate levels of the education system (*e.g.,* SEAs, State LAs, regional TA providers, LEAs, EIS providers, schools, and families) to ensure there is communication between each level and there are systems in place to support the capacity needs of SEAs, State LAs, LEAs, and EIS providers to meet IDEA data collection and reporting requirements, as well as support data analysis and the use of IDEA Part B and Part C data, in a manner that allows individuals with vision and/or other disabilities, as well as those without, to access and dynamically manipulate data; and

(E) Its proposed plan for collaborating and coordinating with Department-funded projects, including those providing data-related support to States, where appropriate, to align complementary work and jointly develop and implement products and services to meet the purposes of this priority. Such Department-funded projects include the IDEA Data Center (IDC), the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy), the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR), the Center for the Integration of IDEA Data (CIID), EdFacts, and the research and development investments of the Institute of Education Sciences/National Center for Education Statistics; and

(6) Its proposed plan to develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of the project evaluation,'' include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator.[6] The evaluation plan must—

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of these requirements;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the annual performance report and at the end of Year 2 for the review process; and

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a third-party evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Adequacy of resources,'' how—

(1) The proposed project will encourage 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, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits, and funds will be spent in a way that increases their efficiency and cost-effectiveness, including by reducing waste or achieving better outcomes.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under ''Quality of the management plan,'' how—

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

[5] ''Intensive, sustained TA'' means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between Accessible Data Center staff and the TA recipient. ''TA services'' are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

[6] A ''third-party'' evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, or have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements:

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one- and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two- and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or virtually, during each year of the project period; and

(iii) Three annual two-day trips, or virtually, to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility; and

(5) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project:

In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), including—

(a) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(b) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

References:

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U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *2019 American Community Survey. https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Disability&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S1810&hidePreview=true.*

U.S. Department of State. (2017). *Federal Open Licensing Playbook. https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/open_licensing_playbook_final.pdf.*

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1411(c), 1416(i), 1418(c), 1442; and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. 116–260, 134 Stat. 1182, 1601.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The NFP.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: $3,000,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2023 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding $3,000,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* SEAs; State LAs under Part C of the IDEA; LEAs, including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

2. a. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

b. *Indirect Cost Rate Information:* This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see *www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.*

c. *Administrative Cost Limitation:* This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR

part 200, subpart E, of the Uniform Guidance.

3. *Subgrantees:* A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

4. *Other General Requirements:*

(a) Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Application Submission Instructions:* Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2021 (86 FR 73264), and available at *www.federalregister.gov/d/2021–27979,* which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on February 13, 2019, and, in part, describe the transition from the requirement to register in *SAM.gov* a DUNS number to the implementation of the UEI. More information on the phase-out of DUNS numbers is available at *https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ofo/docs/unique-entity-identifier-transition-fact-sheet.pdf.*

2. *Intergovernmental Review:* This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. However, under 34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to timely make an award.

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

4. *Recommended Page Limit:* The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 70 pages and (2) use 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, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed below:

(a) *Significance and need for project (10 points).*

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

(2) In determining the significance of and need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

(b) *Quality of project services and design (35 points).*

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

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

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

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

(ii) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(iv) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

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

(c) *Quality of the project evaluation (15 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(d) *Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).*

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are

members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

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

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

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

(iii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

(iv) The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator.

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

(vi) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(vii) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

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

(e) *Quality of the management plan (25 points).*

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

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

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives is brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. *Review and Selection Process:* We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, 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 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 (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. *Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:* In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. *Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:* Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions, and under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk 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 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. *Integrity and Performance System:* If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards—that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant—before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds $10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed $10,000,000.

6. *In General:* In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with—

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 115–232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

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); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your 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. *Open Licensing Requirements:* Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. *Reporting:* (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, 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 competition. 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 multiyear 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.*

5. *Performance Measures:* For the purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established a set of performance measures that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection program. These measures are:

- *Program Performance Measure #1:* The percentage of TA and dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified or individuals with appropriate expertise to review the substantive content of the products and services.
- *Program Performance Measure #2:* The percentage of TA and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts or members of the target audiences to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.
- *Program Performance Measure #3:* The percentage of all TA and dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts or members of the target audiences to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.
- *Program Performance Measure #4:* The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance on State Data Collection Program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.

The measures apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the Accessible Data Center meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the Accessible Data Center to report on such alignment in its annual and final performance reports.

6. *Continuation Awards:* In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, 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. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, Braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at *www.govinfo.gov.* At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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Katherine Neas,

Deputy Assistant Secretary, delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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