DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, etc.

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

ACTION: Notice of final priority.

Overview Information:

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project—Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133A–13.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project (DRRP) administered by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). Specifically, this notice announces a priority for a center on knowledge translation for disability and rehabilitation research (KTDRR Center). The Assistant Secretary may use this priority for a competition in fiscal year (FY) 2012 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need.

DATES: *Effective Date:* This priority is effective March 15, 2012.

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 email: *marlene.spencer@ed.gov*.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This notice of final priority (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 8166), can be accessed at the following Web 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) determine effective methods to improve community living, employment, and health outcomes for underserved populations; (3) identify research gaps; (4) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (5) disseminate findings.

This notice announces a priority that NIDRR intends to use for a DRRP competition in FY 2012 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 this priority. 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).

Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)

The purpose of DRRPs, which are funded under NIDRR's Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, by developing methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technologies that advance a wide range of independent living and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities. DRRPs carry out one or more of the following types of activities, as specified and defined in 34 CFR 350.13 through 350.19: research, training, demonstration, development, dissemination, utilization, and technical assistance. Additional information on DRRPs can be found at: *www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program*.

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

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priority for this program in the **Federal Register** on June 7, 2011 (76 FR 32971). That notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing this particular priority.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the notice of proposed priority, four parties submitted comments on the proposed priority.

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 priority.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priority since publication of the notice of proposed priority follows.

Comment: Two commenters suggested that the priority focus on activities to promote the use of research findings to shape service delivery systems and to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities. One of these commenters suggested that the priority focus specifically on service delivery systems for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that service delivery systems for individuals with disabilities should be informed and shaped by disability and rehabilitation research in order to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Nothing in the priority precludes applicants from specifically focusing on service delivery systems—including service delivery systems for individuals with developmental disabilities—in their knowledge translation work. Given the wide range of intended audiences of disability and rehabilitation research listed in the priority, NIDRR does not have a sufficient basis for requiring all applicants to focus specifically on service delivery systems or service delivery systems for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Changes: None.

Comment: Two commenters suggested that the priority be restructured as a network of smaller grants with the goal of disseminating disability and rehabilitation research to meet the information needs of a wide range of audiences.

Discussion: NIDRR does not agree that a network of smaller grants would better serve the wide range of intended audiences of disability and rehabilitation research. NIDRR intends the KTDRR Center to serve as the main knowledge translation (KT) resource for other NIDRR grantees, including NIDRR grantees that serve as KT Centers. NIDRR grantees conduct research on a broad range of disability and rehabilitation topics, and the results of NIDRR research are applicable to a wide range of audiences. Smaller grants would not be sufficient to ensure that

grantees have the resources and levels of KT expertise that are necessary to increase the use of disability and rehabilitation research results by the wide range of intended audiences.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that the KTDRR Center actively consider business-specific information needs in order to promote employment for people with disabilities.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that businesses and other types of employers are important audiences for a wide range of disability and rehabilitation research and that KT efforts should take their information needs into account. A significant percentage of NIDRR grants focus on employment of individuals with disabilities. The findings from these and other NIDRR grants are relevant to businesses and other types of employers and can potentially be used to promote employment among individuals with disabilities.

Changes: In the relevant paragraphs, paragraphs (a) and (b)(3), NIDRR has added ''employers'' to the suggested list of intended audiences of disability and rehabilitation research.

Comment: None

Discussion: NIDRR has determined that the requirement for the provision of technical assistance under paragraph (b)(1) is redundant with the more broadly stated technical assistance requirement under paragraph (b)(6).

Changes: NIDRR has deleted paragraph (b)(1), and re-numbered paragraph (b) accordingly.

Final Priority:

Priority—Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR Center)

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for a center on knowledge translation for disability and rehabilitation research (KTDRR Center). The purpose of the KTDRR Center is to promote the use of high-quality disability and rehabilitation research that is relevant to the needs of intended audiences by serving as the main knowledge translation (KT) resource for other NIDRR grantees, including NIDRR grantees that serve as KT centers (NIDRR KT Centers). The KTDRR Center's work will also be available to researchers who are not NIDRR grantees, as well as to the public.

For purposes of this priority, KT refers to a multidimensional, active process of ensuring that new knowledge and products gained via research and development reach intended audiences; are understood by these audiences; and are used to improve participation of individuals with disabilities in society. KT encompasses all steps from the creation of new knowledge to the synthesis, dissemination, and implementation of such knowledge, and is built upon continuing interactions and partnerships within and between different groups of knowledge creators and users.

Under this priority, the KTDRR Center must contribute to the following outcomes:

(a) Increased use of valid and relevant disability and rehabilitation research findings to inform decision-making by individuals with disabilities and their family members, disability advocates, service providers, researchers, educators, employers, administrators, policy-makers, and others. The KTDRR Center must contribute to this outcome by—

(1) Identifying standards, guidelines, and methods that are appropriate for conducting systematic reviews and developing research syntheses on disability and rehabilitation research. NIDRR grantees must be able to use these standards, guidelines, and methods to systematically assess and describe the rigor of the research, and the quality and relevance of the evidence being considered. The standards used to assess and describe the rigor of the research and the quality of the evidence must be consistent with the definitions of strong and moderate evidence in the notice of final supplemental priorities and definitions for discretionary grant programs published in the **Federal Register** on December 15, 2010 (75 FR 78486), and corrected on May 12, 2011 (76 FR 27637);

(2) Providing NIDRR grantees with technical assistance on conducting systematic reviews and developing research syntheses in the grantee's area of expertise, using standards, guidelines, and methods that the KTDRR Center identifies pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this priority. In so doing, the KTDRR Center must choose appropriate standards, guidelines, or methods, taking into account the types of research and stages of knowledge development in the substantive area(s) being reviewed; and

(3) Providing NIDRR grantees with technical assistance on how to use KT practices that are appropriate for their intended audiences, to promote the use of systematic reviews and research syntheses in the grantee's area of expertise.

(b) Increased knowledge of KT principles and use of current KT practices among NIDRR grantees, including NIDRR KT Centers. The KTDRR Center must contribute to this outcome by—

(1) Synthesizing and disseminating information from the KT literature that can be used to improve KT practices used by NIDRR grantees, including other NIDRR KT Centers;

(2) Identifying and showcasing promising KT practices employed by NIDRR KT Centers, other NIDRR grantees, and other entities to increase the use of disability and rehabilitation research findings by individuals with disabilities and their family members, disability advocates, service providers, researchers, educators, employers, administrators, policy-makers, and others;

(3) Facilitating the exchange of KT information among other NIDRR grantees, including other NIDRR KT Centers;

(4) Organizing and sponsoring events (e.g., conferences, workshops, Webinars, and other appropriate training events) to build KT capacity among NIDRR grantees; and

(5) Providing technical assistance on KT to other NIDRR KT Centers and other NIDRR grantees, upon request of those centers and grantees.

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 this priority, 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 priority 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. This final priority will generate new knowledge through research and development. Another benefit of this final priority is that the establishment of new DRRPs will improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The new DRRP will provide support and assistance for NIDRR grantees as they generate, disseminate, and promote the use of new information that will improve the options for individuals with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community.

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

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Dated: February 9, 2012.

Alexa Posny,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2012–3416 Filed 2–13–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Assessment Governing Board; Meeting

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board.

ACTION: Notice of open and closed meeting sessions.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda for the upcoming meeting of the National Assessment Governing Board (Board) and also describes the specific functions of the Board. Notice of this meeting is required under Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. This notice is issued to provide members of the general public with an opportunity to attend and/or provide comments. Individuals who will need special accommodations in order to attend the meeting (*e.g.* interpreting services, assistive listening devices, materials in alternative format) should notify Munira Mwalimu at 202–357–6938 or at *Munira.Mwalimu@ed.gov* no later than February 17, 2012. We will attempt to meet requests after this date but cannot guarantee availability of the requested accommodation. The meeting site is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

DATES: February 29, 2012 and March 1–3, 2012.

Times: February 29: *Committee Meeting: Assessment Development Committee (ADC):* Closed Session: 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Open Session: 3 p.m.–5 p.m.

March 1

Committee Meetings

Ad Hoc Committee: Open Session 2:30 p.m.–4 p.m.

Executive Committee: Open Session: 4:30 p.m.–5 p.m.; Closed Session: 5 p.m.–6 p.m.

March 2

Full Board: Open Session: 8:15 a.m.–9:30 a.m.; Closed Session: 12:15 p.m.–1:30 p.m.; Open Session: 1:45 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings

Assessment Development Committee (ADC): Open Session: 9:45 a.m.–11:30 a.m.; Closed Session: 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (COSDAM): Open Session: 9:45 a.m. –11:30 a.m. Closed Session: 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Reporting and Dissemination Committee (R&D): Open Session: 9:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

March 3

Nominations Committee: Closed Session: 7:30 a.m.–8:15 a.m.

Full Board: Closed Session: 8:30 a.m.–9 a.m.; Open Session: 9 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Location: Hyatt Regency New Orleans, 601 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70113.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Munira Mwalimu, Operations Officer, National Assessment Governing Board, 800 North Capitol Street NW., Suite 825, Washington, DC, 20002–4233, Telephone: (202) 357–6938.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Assessment Governing Board (Board) is established under section 412 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, as amended.

The Board is established to formulate policy guidelines for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The Board's responsibilities include the following: selecting subject areas to be assessed, developing assessment frameworks and specifications, developing appropriate student achievement levels for each grade and subject tested, developing standards and procedures for interstate and national comparisons, developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating results, and releasing initial NAEP results to the public.

On February 29, 2012, the Assessment Development Committee (ADC) will meet in closed session from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to review secure items for three NAEP assessments—the NAEP 2013 NAEP operational Reading assessment at grades 4 and 8; secure items for the NAEP 2014 Pilot Civics Assessment at grades 4, 8, and 12; and computer-based tasks for the NAEP 2014 Technology and Engineering Literacy Assessment. During the closed session, ADC members will be provided specific test materials for review which are not yet releasable to the general public. Premature disclosure of these secure test items and materials would compromise the integrity and substantially impede