(TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–(800) 877–8339.

[FR Doc. 2011–31949 Filed 12–12–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Submission for OMB Review

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Comment Request.

SUMMARY: The Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Privacy, Information and Records Management Services, Office of Management, invites comments on the submission for OMB review as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before January 12, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attention: Education Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street NW., Room 10222, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503, be faxed to (202) 395–5806 or emailed to *oira_submission@omb.eop.gov* with a cc: to *ICDocketMgr@ed.gov*. Please note that written comments received in response to this notice will be considered public records.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. The OMB is particularly interested in comments which: (1) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Dated: December 7, 2011.

Darrin King,

Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Privacy, Information and Records Management Services, Office of Management.

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Type of Review: Extension.

Title of Collection: Quarterly Cumulative Caseload Report (RSA–113).

OMB Control Number: 1820–0013.

Agency Form Number(s): RSA–113.

Frequency of Responses: Annually; Quarterly.

Affected Public: State, Local and Tribal Government.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 80.

Total Estimated Annual Burden Hours: 320.

Abstract: State agencies that administer vocational rehabilitation programs provide key caseload data on this form, including numbers of persons who are applicants, determined eligible/ineligible, waiting for services, and their program outcomes. The Rehabilitative Services Administration collects this information quarterly from states and reports it in the Annual Report to Congress on the Rehabilitation Act.

Copies of the information collection submission for OMB review may be accessed from the RegInfo.gov Web site at *http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain* or from the Department's Web site at *http://edicsweb.ed.gov*, by selecting the ''Browse Pending Collections'' link and by clicking on link number 4720. When you access the information collection, click on ''Download Attachments'' to view. Written requests for information should be addressed to U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., LBJ, Washington, DC 20202–4537. Requests may also be electronically mailed to the Internet address *ICDocketMgr@ed.gov* or faxed to (202) 401–0920. Please specify the complete title of the information collection and OMB Control Number when making your request.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1 (800) 877–8339.

[FR Doc. 2011–31960 Filed 12–12–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Research Fellowships Program

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Service, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information: Research Fellowships Program; Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2012.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133F–1.

DATES: *Applications Available:* December 13, 2011.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: February 13, 2012.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Research Fellowships Program is to build research capacity by providing support to highly qualified individuals, including those who are individuals with disabilities, to perform research on the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

Note: This program is in concert with NIDRR's currently approved long range plan (the Plan). The Plan is comprehensive and integrates many issues relating to disability and rehabilitation research topics. The Plan, which was published in the **Federal Register** on February 15, 2006 (71 FR 8166), can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: *http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2006–1/021506d.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.

Priorities: This competition contains one absolute priority and two invitational priorities. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(ii), the absolute priority is from the regulations for this program (34 CFR 356.10).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2012, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants 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:

Research Fellowships Program

Fellows must conduct original research in an area authorized by

section 204 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act). Section 204 authorizes research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, the purposes of which are 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 significant disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Act.

Within this absolute priority, we are particularly interested in applications that address the following invitational priorities.

Invitational Priority: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

(1) The Secretary is particularly interested in applications from eligible applicants who are individuals with disabilities.

(2) The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that result in practical methods of improving participation and community living and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Note: The Secretary is interested in outcomes-oriented research projects that use rigorous scientific methodologies. To address this interest, applicants are encouraged to articulate goals, objectives, and expected outcomes for the proposed research activities. Proposals should describe how results and planned outputs are expected to contribute to advances in knowledge or improvements in policy and practice. Applicants should propose projects that are optimally designed to be consistent with these goals. Submission of the information identified under this paragraph is not required by law or regulation, but is desired.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(e).

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR 75.60 and 75.61, and parts 77, 82, 84, 85, and 97. (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 356. (c) The regulations in 34 CFR 350.51 and 350.52.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested $110,485,000 for the NIDRR program for FY 2012, of which we intend to use an estimated $505,000 for the Research Fellowships Program. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2013 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: $60,000 to $65,000 for Merit Fellowships and $70,000 to $75,000 for Distinguished Fellowships. (These fellowships are described in the *Eligible Applicant* section of this notice.)

Estimated Average Size of Awards: $63,000 for Merit Fellowships and $73,000 for Distinguished Fellowships.

Maximum Awards: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding $65,000 for Merit Fellowships and $75,000 for Distinguished Fellowships 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: Seven total, including both Merit Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships.

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

Project Period: Up to 12 months. We will reject any application that proposes a project period exceeding 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum project period through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Eligible individuals must: (1) satisfy the requirements of 34 CFR 75.60 and 75.61 and (2) have training and experience that indicate a potential for engaging in scientific research related to the solution of rehabilitation problems of individuals with disabilities. The program provides two categories of Research Fellowships: Merit Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships.

(a) To be eligible for a Merit Fellowship, an individual must have either advanced professional training or experience in independent study in an area which is directly pertinent to disability and rehabilitation.

Note: In the most recent competitions for this program, Merit Fellowship recipients had research experience at the doctoral level.

(b) To be eligible for a Distinguished Fellowship, an individual must have seven or more years of research experience in subject areas, methods, or techniques relevant to rehabilitation research and must have a doctorate, other terminal degree, or comparable academic qualifications.

Note: Institutions are not eligible to be recipients of Research Fellowships.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This program does 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: *http://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: *http://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 number 84.133F.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) 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. You must limit the application narrative (Part III) to the equivalent of no more than 24 double-spaced 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. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman or Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The 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; the one-page abstract; the eligibility statement; the curriculum vitae; the bibliography; the letters of recommendation; or the information on the protection of human subjects. However, the page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section (Part III).

We will reject your application if you exceed the page limit or if you apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:*

Applications Available: December 13, 2011.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: February 13, 2012.

Applications for grants under this program 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:* Applicants are not required to submit a budget with their proposal. The Merit Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships awards are one Full Time Equivalent (FTE) awards. The Fellow must work principally on the fellowship during the term of the fellowship award. We define ''one FTE'' as equal to 40 hours per week. No Fellow is allowed to be a direct recipient of Federal government grant funds in addition to those provided by the Merit or Distinguished Fellowship grant (during the duration of the Fellowship award performance period). Fellows may, subject to compliance with their institution's policy on additional employment, work on a Federal grant that has been awarded to the Fellow's institution.

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

6. *Requirements for Registering for Grants.gov and Submitting Your Application:*

All individuals applying for a Research Fellowship must register with *www.Grants.Gov* prior to submitting their application. To register with Grants.gov you must know the Funding Opportunity Number (FON) of the Grant opportunity you are applying for. This number is available on the Research Fellowship Program Notice Inviting Applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2012. Once you register with *www.Grants.gov* using the FON, you will be asked to create a profile with your username and password, which will be used to identify you within the system and create an electronic signature to have your grant application forwarded to the appropriate government agency safely and securely. Details on registering for *www.Grants.gov* as an individual are outlined in the following Grants.gov tutorial (see *http://www.grants.gov/assets/IndividualRegistrationOverview.html*).

To register for Grants.gov you do not have to provide a Data Universal Numbering System Number (DUNS), a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) or your Social Security Number. You also do not have to complete a CCR registration in order to access Grants.gov or submit your application.

However, your Social Security Number is required to complete your application for a Research Fellowship.

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 Research Fellowships Program—CFDA Number 84.133F–1 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 email 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 application for Research Fellowships Program 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 84.133F).

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 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 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 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

• The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

• You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this program 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, 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) read-only, non-modifiable format only. Do not upload an interactive or fillable .PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable .PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. Additional, detailed information on how to attach files is in the application instructions.

• 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 email. 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 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 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 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, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202–2700. FAX: (202) 245–7643.

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 84.133F–1), 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 84.133F–1,) 550 12th Street SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–4260.

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

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

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—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.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR 356.30 through 356.32 and are listed in the application package.

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 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 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 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 *http://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 review of grantee performance and products. Each year, NIDRR examines a portion of its grantees to determine the extent to which grantees are conducting high-quality research and related activities that lead to high quality products. Performance measures for the Research Fellowships program include—

- The percentage of NIDRR-supported fellows, post-doctoral trainees, and doctoral students who publish results of NIDRR-sponsored research in refereed journals;
- The percentage of grantee research and development that has appropriate study design, meets rigorous standards of scientific and/or engineering methods, and builds on and contributes to knowledge in the field; and
- The number of publications per award based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.

NIDRR evaluates the overall success of individual research and development grants through a review of grantee performance and products. NIDRR uses information submitted by grantees as part of their final performance report for these reviews. Approved final performance report guidelines require grantees to submit information regarding research methods, results, outputs, and outcomes.

VII. Agency Contact

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 email: *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 email: *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 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.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: *http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys.* 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 Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search

feature at: *http://www.federalregister.gov.* Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated: December 8, 2011.

Alexa Posny,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2011–31947 Filed 12–12–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR)—Phase I

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), Department of Education

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information

Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR)—Phase I Notice is inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2012.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.133S–1.

DATES:

Applications Available: December 13, 2011.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: February 13, 2012.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purposes of this program are to stimulate technological innovation in the private sector, strengthen the role of small business in meeting Federal research or research and development (R/R&D) needs, increase the commercial application of research supported by the U.S. Department of Education (Department), and improve the return on investment from federally funded research for economic and social benefits to the Nation.

Note: This program is in concert with NIDRR's currently approved long range plan (the Plan). The Plan is comprehensive and integrates many issues relating to disability and rehabilitation research topics. The Plan, which was published in the **Federal Register** on February 15, 2006 (71 FR 8165), can be accessed on the Internet at the following site: *http://www.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 individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved populations; (3) determine best strategies and programs to improve rehabilitation outcomes for individuals with disabilities from underserved populations; (4) identify research gaps; (5) identify mechanisms of integrating research and practice; and (6) disseminate findings.

Executive Order 13329 states that continued technological innovation is critical to a strong manufacturing sector in the United States economy and ensures that Federal agencies assist the private sector in its manufacturing innovation efforts. The Department's SBIR program encourages innovative research and development (R&D) projects that are manufacturing-related, as defined by Executive Order 13329. Manufacturing-related R&D encompasses improvements in existing methods or processes, or wholly new processes, machines, or systems. The projects supported under the Department's SBIR program encompass a range of manufacturing-related R&D, including projects leading to the manufacture of such items as artificial intelligence or information technology devices, software, and systems. For more information on Executive Order 13329, please visit the following Web site: *http://www.sba.gov/sbir/execorder.html* or contact Lynn Medley at: *lynn.medley@ed.gov.*

Background

The Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2000 (Act) was enacted on December 21, 2000. The Act requires certain agencies, including the Department, to establish SBIR programs by reserving a statutory percentage of their extramural R&D budgets to be awarded to small business concerns through a uniform, highly competitive three-phase process.

The three phases of the SBIR program are:

Phase I: Phase I projects determine, insofar as possible, the scientific or technical merit and feasibility of ideas submitted under the SBIR program. An application for Phase I should concentrate on research that will contribute significantly to proving the scientific or technical feasibility of the approach or concept. Scientific or technical feasibility is a prerequisite to the Department's provision of further support in Phase II. Phase I awards are for a period of up to six months in an amount up to a maximum total of $75,000.

Phase II: Phase II projects expand on the results of and further pursue the development of Phase I projects. Phase II is the principal R/R&D effort of the SBIR program. Applications for Phase II projects must be more comprehensive than applications for Phase I projects; Phase II applications must outline the proposed effort in detail, including the commercial potential of projects or processes developed or researched during the Phase I project. Phase II applicants must be Phase I grantees with approaches that appear sufficiently promising as a result of their efforts in Phase I. Phase II awards are for periods of up to two years in amounts up to a maximum total of $500,000 over a period of two years.

Phase III: In Phase III, the small business grantee must use non-SBIR capital to pursue commercial applications of the R/R&D. Also, under Phase III, Federal agencies may award non-SBIR follow-on funding for products or processes that meet the needs of those agencies.

All SBIR projects funded by NIDRR must address the needs of individuals with disabilities. (See 29 U.S.C. 760). Activities may include: Conducting manufacturing-related R&D that encompasses improvements in existing methods or processes, or wholly new processes, machines, or systems; exploring the uses of technology to ensure equal access to education, employment, community environments, and information for individuals with disabilities; and improving the quality and utility of disability and rehabilitation research.

Priorities: NIDRR has established five invitational priorities for this competition.

Invitational Priorities: For FY 2012 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets one of these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Each of the following invitational priorities relates to innovative research utilizing new technologies to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address one of the five invitational priorities. These invitational priorities are:

(1) Increased independence of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, recreational settings, or