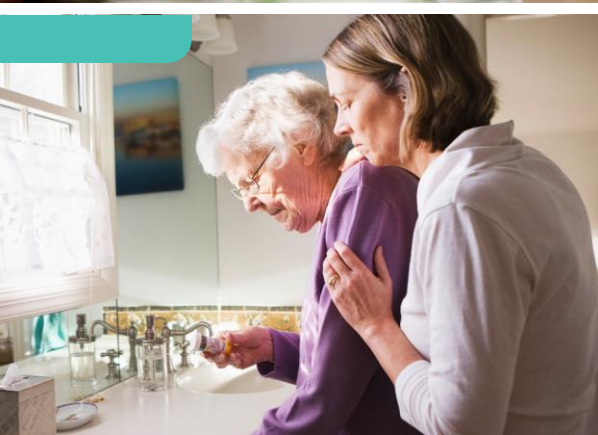




Funding Opportunity Title:
**Analyzing Relationships between Disability,
Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)
Graduate Student Research Program**

Funding Opportunity Number:
ARDRAW-DRW-24-001

Financial Assistance/CFDA Number:
96.007

Due Date for Applications:
August 2, 2024



Table of Contents

I. Program Description	3	Funding Restrictions	16
A. Overview	3	E. Other Submission Requirements	16
B. Cooperative Agreement Program	4	V: Application Review Information	17
C. Program Management Responsibilities	4	A. Criteria	17
D. Rights in Data	6	1) Adequacy of the Project Plan (35 points)	18
E. Topic Areas	6	2) Qualifications of Project Personnel (25 points)	18
II. Federal Award Information	7	3) Adequacy of the Applicant's Resources (20 points)	18
A. Type of Award	7	4) Relevance and Extent of Experience (10 points)	18
B. Award Amount and Period of Performance	7	5) Quality of Past Performance (10 points)	18
III. Eligibility Information	8	B. Review and Selection Process	19
A. Eligible Applicants for the ARDRAW Program Management Organization	8	C. Application Clarification and Feedback	19
B. Cost Sharing or Matching	8	VI. Federal Award Administration Information	20
C. Other	9	A. Award Notices	20
IV. Applicant Submission Information	9	B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	20
A. How to obtain an application package	9	C. Reporting	20
B. Content and Form of Application Submission	9	1) Progress Reports	20
1) Notice of intent to apply	9	2) Financial Status Reports	20
2) Application for project award	10	3) Federal Spending Transparency and Subaward and Compensation Data Reporting Requirement	20
3) Submission Dates and Times	15	4) Executive Compensation Requirement	20
C. Intergovernmental Review	16	VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)	21
D.			

I. Program Description

A. Overview

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers two programs that provide cash income to individuals who do not have or who have lost the ability to support themselves in the labor market due to one or more disabling conditions. These programs are the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The SSDI program provides cash and medical benefits to individuals with disabilities and their dependents. In 2019, SSDI provided benefits to approximately 9.9 million individuals with disabilities and their dependents. The SSI program provides payments and health insurance to low-income individuals who are blind or disabled. In 2019, SSI provided payments to approximately 8.1 million individuals.

SSA has a long history of seeking to assist disabled beneficiaries and recipients with habilitation and rehabilitation services so they may be able to engage in competitive employment despite their disability. This serves the dual purposes of increasing self-sufficiency of individual beneficiaries and reducing dependency on disability benefits. Each year, more than 400,000 Americans receive services from SSA's employment support programs. The agency also has a robust data collection, research and demonstration, and policy portfolio to evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of existing and proposed employment support services and incentives.

Since 2011, part of that portfolio has been a program to promote disability research by graduate students by providing small grants or stipends. In 2011, SSA awarded a 5-year grant to PRI to manage the Disability Determination Process Small Grant Program to improve the efficiency and reduce the complexity of the SSA disability determination process and to consider some groups of interest such as disabled homeless persons and veterans.

In 2016, SSA awarded a new 5-year grant to PRI to manage the Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work (ARDRAW) Small Grant Program. ARDRAW's purpose is to support innovative student research relevant to rehabilitation, work, and SSA's disability program. The two 5-year grant programs have each been managed by a grant management organization and each program provided stipend awards to competitively selected graduate student projects on relevant topics.

In 2024, SSA is looking for a new organization to help manage the ARDRAW program through a cooperative agreement. The new ARDRAW program will include one-year \$15,000 stipends for supervised independent graduate-level student research on rehabilitation, work, and disability topics to a broad spectrum of graduate students, to cultivate new scholars in the field of disability research. In accordance with recent Executive Orders to advance racial equity, support underserved communities, and increased access to federal funding opportunities (including [EO 13895](#) and [EO 14112](#)), a new objective for ARDRAW is to increase the recruitment and participation of students of color and other underrepresented populations in the research areas of work, rehabilitation, and disability, for the purpose of fostering new and inclusive perspectives on disability research.

SSA is soliciting applications from educational, policy, or research institutions to manage the program and distribute the stipends to graduate students for innovative research relevant to rehabilitation, work, and the disability program. SSA management will identify suggested priority areas of interest each year for graduate student research. The SSA funded stipend will support graduate students in producing a research project, including any necessary data collection and analysis, and a final evaluation report that will expand knowledge and understanding of issues of interest to SSA in the administration of their disability programs. The program will require that the managing organization assign a team of two or more individuals to serve as the ARDRAW program management lead team to coordinate the student research projects.

I. Program Description

B. Cooperative Agreement Program

There will be two components to this program: 1) a program management organization to manage the program and award stipends to individual graduate students, and 2) the graduate students who will conduct research on these disability related issues. This RFA is for an organization to perform program management duties. SSA is unable to provide grants or stipends directly to individuals, so a program management organization is necessary to provide research funding to graduate students.

The objective of the program is to foster analysis of work, rehabilitation, and disability issues; cultivate new scholars in the field of disability research; and increase the recruitment and participation of students of color and underrepresented populations in the research areas of work, rehabilitation, and disability, for the purpose of fostering fresh and inclusive perspectives on disability research. To assist the graduate students, SSA will provide guidance on disability issues that might be fruitful areas for research.

C. Program Management Responsibilities

The competition will require the recipient organization or association to designate a team of two or more individuals to serve as the ARDRAW program management lead team. The individuals that make up the program management lead team must possess the relevant scientific background and leadership to coordinate, supervise, and direct this disability research program. The ARDRAW program management lead team will oversee the program and the graduate student research stipend recipients located at various educational institutions throughout the nation.

The program management organization and ARDRAW program management lead team will be responsible for the following activities:

- ◇ Publicizing and disseminating information on the graduate student research stipend program to all relevant organizations across the United States,
- ◇ Encouraging and recruiting graduate students to study disability issues under this program,
- ◇ Developing benchmarks, with SSA input, for increasing minority participation and diversity of applicants including outreach to minority serving institutions (MSIs), such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs),
- ◇ Developing guidelines with SSA input for graduate students to submit research proposals for stipend funding,
- ◇ Soliciting research proposals from appropriate graduate students,
- ◇ Coordinating and hosting webinars for potential applicants to learn more about the student funding opportunity, and the public use datasets that are available from SSA as resources, such as the National Beneficiary Survey (NBS) and the Disability Analysis File (DAF),
- ◇ Providing technical assistance to potential graduate student applicants by answering questions about the funding opportunity,
- ◇ Assembling review panels for the graduate student proposals with relevant complementary expertise in the areas of rehabilitation, work, and disability,
- ◇ Ranking these proposals according to quality of proposal and potential usefulness to the disability field and to SSA disability policy,

I. Program Description

- ◇ Providing the ranked proposal abstracts to SSA for review and consultation,
- ◇ Selecting the graduate students to support under this program with input and collaboration from SSA,
- ◇ Ensuring funded graduate student research proposals obtain approval (or exemption) from appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) for each project,
- ◇ Distributing and administering the stipend awards to the graduate student researchers,
- ◇ Developing guidelines for student quarterly progress reports,
- ◇ Conducting a quarterly review of each project, including the student and his or her mentor participating,
- ◇ Involving or updating SSA on student quarterly progress reports,
- ◇ Monitoring research progress on each project and identifying issues that require attention or remediation,
- ◇ Developing research report guidelines for graduate student research stipend recipients to submit research proposals, prepare quarterly progress reports, and write a final research report,
- ◇ Reviewing each draft final report for accuracy and completeness,
- ◇ Providing research products to SSA,
- ◇ Submitting quarterly reports to SSA on program management activities,
- ◇ Collecting data for program evaluation, and
- ◇ Submitting yearly program evaluation reports to SSA.

The specific ARDRAW program management lead team members under this cooperative agreement must be designated and procedures for application, review, and award of the stipends must be in place before for the managing organization may publicize the stipends. The awarded program management organization must clearly, comprehensively, and effectively publicize the nature and intent of the program to obtain appropriate candidates. The ARDRAW program management lead team will ensure a rigorous review process and rank the submitted research proposals and collaborate with SSA on award decisions. In addition, the ARDRAW program management lead team will establish an effective monitoring procedure for student research activities that will ensure effective oversight of the funded graduate student stipend recipients (stipend recipients) located throughout the country. This monitoring will focus on the progress and quality of the students' research activity and progress of the subsequent written analysis and reporting.

We envision an award to one program management organization that can identify and recruit a sufficiently large number of qualified graduate students who will be able to prepare quality proposals and perform relevant research. Organizations and universities may coordinate their efforts to compete for this cooperative agreement, but there must be one central ARDRAW program management lead team. If the organization awarded funding for program management activities is a university, university center, or otherwise associated with a university, the organization may not favor their own students for receipt of stipends, but they will not be required to exclude them from applying for the student stipends. The program management organization must recruit students from a wide range of institutions and all applications must be subject to the same review standards.

I. Program Description

The program management organization must identify the target population for its outreach efforts to publicize this research funding opportunity to graduate students and the size of that population. It must show evidence of prior relevant experience and the success of managing other prior programs with similar requirements as described in the above list of activities for which the program management organization and ARDRAW program management lead team will be responsible.

The program management organization will be responsible for transmitting the stipends to the selected stipend recipient. In the event a stipend recipient is unable to complete the funded research, the program management organization will need to have an established procedure for recovering unexpended funds and returning these funds to SSA.

Stipend recipients will conduct their research at their home university/ research organization, rather than at any SSA facilities. The stipend recipients will be responsible for obtaining the data they need for their research analysis, computer access and any other related supplies and services. If the stipend recipient wishes to provide an incentive for their project participants, such as a small reimbursement (e.g., a gift card, transportation voucher, etc.), any funds used for this purpose would come from the recipient's stipend award or other funds available to the stipend recipient; SSA will not supply additional funding. SSA will only provide stipend recipients in this program with access to publicly available SSA data. Stipend recipients must complete research, analysis, and the final report, within one year from award notification.

D. Rights in Data

Publications and data from research funded under this program must be made publicly accessible to the extent allowable under Federal law, regulations, and directives. Exceptions from this requirement, such as for

proprietary data or data for which it is not possible to redact personally identifiable information, must be included in the student research applications. This should not be construed, however, to require disclosure where it is not allowable under Federal law, regulations, and directives.

E. Topic Areas

The disability program has operated since the 1950s and the nature of work over that period has changed as well. Work tasks, training for work performance, physical and mental demands of work, work hours and locations for performance of those tasks, terms of employment, employee consultant status, adaptive technology, legislative changes (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act), job sharing initiatives, and the role of women in the labor force, have changed over this sixty-year period. Rehabilitation technology and methods, habilitation advances, governmental policy changes and a change in perceptions and expectations of workers and the general public suggest there is more support and resources available for persons with impairments to engage in economically productive activities.

Potential research areas of inquiry include but are not limited to:

- ◇ Programs promoting work force attachment
- ◇ Programs related to SSI/SSDI beneficiaries
- ◇ Barriers faced by people with disabilities
- ◇ Children and youth with disabilities

Data about work, rehabilitation, impairments and disability, the economy, various factors affecting work (such as age), and the disability program, are available from many different sources. Two unique datasets that would provide rich data for topics of interest are produced by SSA -- the National Beneficiary Survey (NBS) and the Disability Analysis File (DAF). The NBS

7. Program Description // II. Federal Award Information

collects data from a national sample of SSDI and SSI beneficiaries that are not available from SSA administrative data or other public data bases. The DAF is a set of files containing SSA administrative data on federal disability beneficiaries, related to program participation, employment activity, and benefits for adults who have received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and children and adults who have received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The NBS and DAF are available as public use files on Data.gov and the SSA website in SAS format. We encourage the ARDRAW program management lead team to promote the use of the NBS and DAF, as they are the richest source of data on employment and disability issues for SSA beneficiaries. Many SSA demonstrations, such as the Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) also include public-use files.

While we encourage the use of publicly available SSA data, we note, that there are many other publicly available data sources or other research methods that researchers may use to answer these and other related research questions. The Census Bureau conducts numerous household surveys, including the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The Census Bureau may be able to grant access to the restricted SIPP Synthetic Beta (SSB) data, which link the SIPP data to SSA benefit data and Internal Revenue Service earnings data. The National Institutes on Aging funds the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), a longitudinal study of people over 50 with changes in labor force participation and health transitions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS), which provides job-related information regarding physical demands; environmental conditions; education, training, and experience; as well as cognitive and mental requirements for jobs in the U.S. economy. The Understanding America Study (UAS) is a nationally representative Internet panel administered by the University of Southern California, which has collected data on a wide variety of topics, including health, health insurance, abilities (cognitive and non-cognitive), economic well-being, and societal attitudes. Additionally,

many other State and Federal agencies sponsor data collection on health outcomes, disability status, income, and demographics of individuals, and on employers and employment conditions. We also realize individuals may conduct meaningful research using qualitative analysis from case studies or small samples of individuals.

II. Federal Award Information

A. Type of Award

SSA expects to award one cooperative agreement for a program management organization under this solicitation.

B. Award Amount and Period of Performance

Though this award is for a 5-year project, we will provide funding for this cooperative agreement on a yearly basis. The recipient of this cooperative agreement must submit a non-competing continuation application each of the four additional years of the agreement, subject to review and approval by SSA. Awards are contingent on availability of funds.

Annual funding for this cooperative agreement is \$900,000. Of that \$900,000 per year, the recipient must plan to use \$375,000 for the graduate student stipends of \$15,000 each. The recipient must plan and budget to award up to 25 one-year research stipends per year. If the program management organization has start-up costs that will reduce the amount of money available for student stipends in the first year, those costs may not exceed 5% of the total funding for the cooperative agreement and must be well documented in the proposal.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants for the ARDRAW Program Management Organization

Only organizations in the United States are eligible to apply. Eligible types of entities include:

- ◇ Research organizations;
- ◇ Universities;
- ◇ University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) programs, Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disability Research Centers (IDDRCs), and similar programs; and
- ◇ Associations of research organizations and universities.

Any applicant that currently receives other Federal funds must ensure that any awarded funds supplement rather than supplant existing funding. Only organizations in the United States are eligible to apply.

Institutions Serving Students of Color (ISSCs)

SSA relies on research to learn about the diverse people we serve, how they are affected by our programs, and ways in which we can improve our programs to better serve the public. As such, we recognize the importance of engaging with researchers who represent the diversity of the public. For this reason, SSA strongly encourages all eligible applicants identified under the eligibility section of this announcement, including ISSCs, to apply under this opportunity.

For purposes of this solicitation, the following are considered ISSCs:

1. HBCUs, as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1061(2)).
2. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b) (3) and (d)(1)).
3. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5)).
4. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; (AANAPISIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)).
5. Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs), as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6).
6. Alaska Native-serving institutions and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions (as defined in section 20 U.S.C. § 1059d(b)); and
7. Native American-serving nontribal institutions (as defined in section 20 U.S.C. § 1059f(b))

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing of at least five percent is required for the program management organization component of the award. Cost sharing is the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute). For more information, see Section 200.306 Cost sharing or matching of the OMB Uniform Grant Guidance. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind (property or services) contributions.

There is an eight percent cap on Facilities and Administration (F&A) for this program. The recipient may use the unpaid portion of F&A to fulfill the cost share requirement under this cooperative agreement.

C. Other

The recipient must follow the requirements for student stipend awards below:

- ◇ We restrict eligibility for the 12-month stipends to masters or doctoral level graduate students currently pursuing full-time or part-time research training in accredited degree programs in areas including, but not limited to, public health, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, economics, evaluation, sociology, demography, and disability related disciplines.
- ◇ Persons employed by SSA, employed by any State's Disability Determination Service (DDS), currently receiving other research funds from SSA, or who receive any pay for work done for either SSA or a DDS, are not eligible for student stipends from this program.
- ◇ The cooperative agreement allows the graduate student stipend to be added to other financial support the graduate student receives from his or her university/research organization. The stipend does not confer employment status to the student, neither with SSA, the Federal Government, nor with the program management organization.
- ◇ Student applicants may submit more than one proposal to the program management organization for consideration per year. Student research proposals must include a statement of the problem and methodology, as well as a description of the relevance of the student's research to SSA disability policy or programs. Each application must include the name and letter of agreement of a faculty member or noted researcher in the

topic area of the proposal who will review and guide the student in the pertinent research. Graduate student researchers will not receive more than one stipend in the annual review of graduate student proposals.

- ◇ At the time of stipend award, stipend recipients must be citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States (as defined in **8 USC 1408**), or must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, i.e., in possession of a currently valid Alien Registration Receipt Card I-551, or some other legal verification of legal admission as a permanent resident. Individuals on temporary or student visas are not eligible for stipend award.

IV. Applicant Submission Information

A. How to obtain an application package

This RFA, found at www.Grants.gov, contains all the information and links to forms needed to apply for funding for this cooperative agreement program.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

1) Notice of intent to apply

SSA strongly encourages organizations interested in applying to submit to SSA a Notice of Intent to Apply. Obtaining advance information about the potential number of applications, as well as the general proposed project plans, prior to the application deadline will assist SSA in developing a more efficient application review process. A Notice of Intent to Apply may be submitted via e-mail to SSA.ARDRAW@ssa.gov on or prior to July 8, 2024 at 11:59pm, EST. Please use "Intent to Apply" in the e-mail subject line and include the following information:

IV. Applicant Submission Information

- The applicant's name and address;
- A general overview of your proposed application;
- Any preliminary information identifying any potential sub-awardees;
- Total anticipated funding and total anticipated budget for the proposed project.

An applicant that does not submit a Notice of Intent to Apply may still submit an application, and an application may differ from what the applicant included in its Notice of Intent to Apply.

2) Application for project award

Proposals submitted in response to this RFA must include all the following separate and distinct parts:

- Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424);
- Budget Information – Non-construction (SF-424A);
- Budget Narrative
- Project Narrative
- Appendices/attachments to the Project Narrative

If applicable, applications must also include the following:

- SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

You must ensure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application.

Below is a description of each required part of the application.

1. SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance"

You must complete the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance." In the address field, fill out the nine-digit (plus hyphen) zip code. Nine-digit zip codes can be looked up on the USPS website at <https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action>.

The SF-424 must clearly identify the applicant and must be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant or cooperative agreement. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the applicant is considered the Authorized Representative of the applicant. As stated in block 21 of the SF-424 form, the signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Representations and Certifications section completed during [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) registration.

- Requirement for UEI, or the Entity ID
 - The federal government transitioned from using the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to uniquely identify entities in April 2022. Entities that wish to do business with the federal government will need to use a UEI created in the System for Award Management (SAM) at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

IV. Applicant Submission Information

- All applicants for federal grant and cooperative agreement funding opportunities must have a UEI and must supply their UEI on the SF-424. The UEI uniquely identifies business entities.
- If your entity is registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) today, you already have your UEI, and it is viewable in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).
- If you do not have a UEI, you can get one at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).
- Grant and cooperative agreement recipients authorized to make subawards must meet these requirements related to UEIs.
- Grant and cooperative agreement recipients must notify potential sub-awardees that no entity may receive a sub-award from you unless the entity has provided its UEI to you.
- Grant and cooperative agreement recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its UEI to you.
- Requirement for Registration with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and Complete Federal Assistance Representation and Certification
 - Applicants must register with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) before submitting an application. Find instructions for registering at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Please be aware that this is a FREE site and ends in “.gov” not “.com”.
 - Please select “Yes” for the question “Does your organization applying for Federal Financial Assistance project or program?” Federal Assistance means grants and cooperative agreements.”
 - Award recipients must maintain an active [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application under consideration. To remain registered in the SAM database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review and update the registration at least every 12 months from the date of initial registration or subsequently update its information in the SAM database to ensure it is current, accurate, and complete. For purposes of this paragraph, the applicant is the entity that meets the eligibility criteria and has the legal authority to apply for and to receive the award. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time the Grant Officer is ready to make a federal award, the Grant Officer may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant. For the purposes of this document, the Grant Officer is the SSA employee tasked with processing grant applications and awards.

2. SF-424A “Budget Information Form”

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (see Package for all forms in grant opportunity on Grants.gov). In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget request, explained in detail below.

IV. Applicant Submission Information

3. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. It must describe how the proposed budget aligns to the project work plan and identify how each milestone will be adequately funded within the proposed budget. Overhead and administrative costs must be reasonable and clearly identified, such that they can be compared to the level of funding allocated to project service coordination and delivery. The majority of project funding must be devoted to project service coordination and delivery. The budget narrative must detail how the applicant plans to meet the matching requirements.

Use the following guidance for preparing the budget narrative:

- **Personnel:** List all staff positions by title (both current and proposed). Provide the annual salary of each position, the percentage of each position's time devoted to the project, the amount of each position's salary funded by the cooperative agreement, and the total personnel cost for the period of performance.
- **Fringe Benefits:** Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.
- **Travel:** Specify the purpose, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other costs for each type of travel.
- **Equipment:** Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase which has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$5,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime

of more than one year (see 2 CFR 200.33 for the definition of Equipment). List the quantity and unit cost per item. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are supplies, not "equipment". We do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the cooperative agreement.

- **Supplies:** Identify categories of supplies (e.g., office supplies) in the detailed budget and list the quantity and unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR 200.94 for the definition of Supplies).
- **Contractual:** Under the Contractual line item, delineate contracts and sub-awards separately. Contracts are defined according to 2 CFR 200.22 as a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. A sub-award, defined by 2 CFR 200.92, means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a sub-recipient for the sub-recipient to carry out part of a federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a federal program. For each proposed contract and sub-award, specify the purpose and estimated cost.
- **Construction:** Construction costs are not allowed and this line must be left as zero. Minor alterations to adjust an existing space for activities that are part of the cooperative agreement (such as a classroom alteration) may be allowable. We do not consider this as construction and you must show the costs on other appropriate lines such as Contractual.

IV. Applicant Submission Information

- Other: Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable and allocable. List any item, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere here.
- Indirect Costs: If you include indirect costs in the budget, then you must include one of the following:
 - If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated. This explanation must include which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.
 - OR
 - If you intend to claim indirect costs using the 10 percent de minimis rate, please confirm that your organization meets the requirements as described in 2 CFR 200.414(f). Clearly, state that your organization has never received a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), and your organization is not one described in Appendix VII of 2 CFR 200, paragraph (D)(1)(b).
 - Applicants choosing to claim indirect costs using the de minimis rate must use Modified Total Direct Costs (see 2 CFR 200.68 below for definition) as their cost allocation base. Provide an explanation of which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Note that there are various items not included in the calculation of Modified Total Direct Costs. See below the definitions to assist you in your calculation.

2 CFR 200.68 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-award (regardless of the period of performance of the sub-awards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each sub-award in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Applicants must list the same requested Federal grant or cooperative agreement amount on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative. If minor inconsistencies are found between the budget amounts specified on the SF-424, SF-424A, and the budget narrative, SSA will consider the SF-424 the official funding amount requested. However, if the amount specified on the SF-424 would render the application nonresponsive, the Grant Officer will use his or her discretion to determine whether the intended funding request (and match if applicable) is within the responsive range.

4. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative must demonstrate the applicant's capability to plan and implement the proposed project in accordance with the provisions of this Announcement. It must provide a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It must be succinct, self-explanatory, and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project. Guidelines for the content of the Project Narrative are provided below.

IV. Applicant Submission Information

The Project Narrative is limited to no more than 20 double-spaced single-sided 8.5 x 11-inch pages with Times New Roman 12 point text font and standard 1-inch margins. Applicants must number the Project Narrative beginning with page number 1. Any text in call out boxes or other exhibits must be no smaller than 8 point text font. Applications must be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Applicants must use the following section headers for the Project Narrative:

- Project Design
 - Project Plan
- Organizational Capacity and Quality of Key Personnel
 - Organizational Support for Program Management Activities
 - Staffing Proposal Including Staff Utilization and Staff Background
- Organizational Experience and Partnerships

Below is a description of what must be included in each section of the project narrative.

a. Project Design

This section must include at least the following subsections:

i. Project plan

The operational plan must include a description of the planning, start-up, and management activities that will be

conducted, along with a timeline and proposed milestones, outcomes, and metrics for student recruitment and engagement.

b. Organizational Capacity and Quality of Key Personnel

This section must include at least the following subsections:

i. Organizational Support for Program Management Activities

This subsection must include information about and describe the readiness of the applicant and all partners to implement the operational plan and manage the program. Applicants must describe their capacity to effectively carry out the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative requirements. The application must describe the guiding principles of the organization and its past experience and track record of performance. All resources, personnel, and established and planned sub-awards must be identified.

ii. Staffing Proposal Including Staff Utilization and Staff Background

Applicants must provide evidence of the establishment of a Leadership Team and the applicant's strategic plan for utilizing this team.

Applicants also must include a list of key personnel, including the individual members of the ARDRAW program management lead team and any position that will function as a lead for a particular task, including service administration. Each project must include at least a Lead Project Manager, and a Outreach Coordinator. For each person on this list, applicants must describe their relevant background, their

IV. Applicant Submission Information

roles, and overall responsibilities. The application must provide the professional qualifications required of the project manager, project coordinators, program data collection lead/evaluation coordinator, and other key personnel, along with how these qualifications will be sufficient to ensure proper management of all project activities.

Résumés must be included as attachments to the Project Narrative (see below).

c. Organizational Experience and Partnerships

The applicant must demonstrate relevant experience in successfully operating projects of similar size and complexity. The applicant must also have the necessary infrastructure to effectively lead and implement the project.

The application must provide documentation that any sub-awardees will have sustained, substantial commitment and active involvement. Such documentation can be provided through signed MOUs, letters of commitment, or other similar documents. Applicants must provide documentation of the establishment of relevant partnerships and partners' relevant experience.

5. Attachments to the Project Narrative

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit specified attachments. All attachments must be clearly labeled as Attachments.

You must not include additional materials such as general letters of support. You must submit your project narrative attachments in one combined file because documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to the application for review.

Save all files with descriptive file names of 50 characters or less and only use standard characters in file names: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, and underscore (_). File names may not include special characters (e.g. &, -, *, %, /, #), periods (.), blank spaces or accent marks, and must be unique (i.e., no other attachment may have the same file name). You may use an underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) to separate a file name.

Required Attachments

- Project Logic Model
- Staffing
 - Résumés of Proposed Key Personnel (no more than 1 page per person)
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
 - If you are requesting indirect costs based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by your Federal Cognizant Agency, then attach the most recently approved Agreement. (For more information, see Section IV.B.2. and Section IV.E.1.) This attachment does not affect scoring of the application.

3) Submission Dates and Times

We must receive applications under this Announcement 11:59pm EST on Friday, August 2, 2024. To obtain an application package visit the Grants.gov website: <http://www.grants.gov/>. The application package includes the standard forms used to apply for SSA grants and cooperative agreements, i.e. SF-424, 424B and SF-111. Eligible applicants must apply via the new Grants.gov Workspace; completing all necessary forms and

IV. Applicant Submission Information

documents offline and uploading them to that site.

If you experience problems with the steps related to registering to do business with the Federal Government or application submission, your first point of contact is the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) support staff at support@grants.gov, 1-800-518-4726. If this does not resolve your [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) difficulties, you may also contact the SSA Grants Management Team at Grants.Team@ssa.gov for assistance.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372 and 12416—Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs This program is not covered by the requirements of Executive Order 12372, as amended by Executive Order 12416, relating to the Federal policy for consulting with State and local elected officials on proposed Federal financial assistance. (Catalog of Domestic Federal Assistance: Program No. 96.007, Social Security)

D. Funding Restrictions

Though this award is for a 5-year project, we will provide funding for this cooperative agreement on a yearly basis. The recipient must submit a non-competing continuation application each of the four additional years of the agreement, subject to review and approval by SSA. Awards are contingent on availability of funds.

Annual federal funding for this cooperative agreement is \$900,000, which will include funding for the program management activities and graduate student stipends of \$15,000 each. The recipient must plan to award up to 25 research stipends per year. If the program management organization has start-up costs that will reduce the amount of money available for student stipends in the first year, those costs may not exceed 5% of the yearly total cooperative agreement and must be well documented in the proposal.

E. Other Submission Requirements

We require that applicants submit an electronic application through www.grants.gov for Funding Opportunity Number ARDRAW-DRW-24-001.

These guidelines must be followed in submitting applications:

1. All applicants requesting our funds for the cooperative agreement under this announcement must submit the standard forms provided in the application kit.
2. Identify an individual authorized to act for the applicant organization and to assume for the applicant organization the obligations imposed by the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement award must execute the application.
3. Length: Applications must be as brief and concise as possible but ensure successful communication of the applicant's proposal to the reviewers. The Project Narrative portion of the application may not exceed 20 double-spaced pages (excluding the resume and outside funding appendices), equivalent to being typewritten on one side using standard (8 ½" x 11") size paper and 12-point font. Attachments that support the project narrative do not count towards the 20-page limit.

17. Applicant Submission Information // V. Application Review Information

4. Attachments/Appendices must only be included to provide supporting documentation.
5. On all applications developed by more than one organization, the application must identify only one institution as the lead organization and the official applicant. The other(s) can be included as sub-recipients or subcontractors.

V: Application Review Information

A. Criteria

This section fully describes the technical merit scoring criteria for applications received in response to this funding opportunity. In preparing applications, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the programmatic requirements. Applications will be scored on a scale of 0-100 according to the point distribution specified in the table below. Cost sharing will not be considered in the technical merit scoring, since ability to meet cost share is already required to be eligible for this award. However, if it is determined during any point in the review process that an applicant cannot meet cost sharing requirements, the application will be deemed ineligible.

Criterion	Points
Adequacy of Project Plan	Up to 35
Qualifications of Key Personnel	Up to 25
Adequacy of Applicant's Resources	Up to 20
Relevance and Extent of Experience	Up to 10
Quality of Past Performance	Up to 10
Total	Up to 100

The evaluation criteria target the program management organization component of the ARDRAW program: the ability of the applicant organization's ability to perform the function of program management and the applicant organization's relevant experience pertaining to the required activities. The application must include the program management activities planned, the personnel intended, and past performance in relevant experience. We are interested in applicant organization's experience over the past five years. The application must list concrete evidence of program management experience.

Review panel members ("panelists") will assign scores up to the point values listed in the table. Points will be deducted from those values based on any criteria listed in Section IV or Section V that the applicant has not included in the application. A perfect score for a given criterion must only be awarded if each bulleted sub-criterion for the criterion is met. Panelists must provide an identified weakness or unmet sub-criterion for any points deducted. Panelists will use the following criteria to assess applications received in response to this announcement:

V. Application Review Information

1) Adequacy of the Project Plan (35 points)

We will review applicants under this category according to their project plan for performing program management activities, specifically:

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of work, the tasks, and the objectives involved in the project,
- Established organizational procedures that support the above program management functions,
- Proposed plans to remedy any inadequacies in their current management structure to support this cooperative agreement,
- Demonstrated ability to recruit researchers and maintain cooperative relationships with researchers and research organizations,
- Demonstrated ability to monitor progress on the stipend recipients' research activity.

2) Qualifications of Project Personnel (25 points)

We will review applicants under this category according to the following:

- The proposed ARDRAW program management lead team's experience and/or qualifications to perform the project activities,
- The proposed ARDRAW program management lead team's experience and knowledge of disability issues, and

- The experience and/or qualifications of the ARDRAW program management lead team's support personnel to support the activities under this program.

3) Adequacy of the Applicant's Resources (20 points)

We will review applicants under this category according to the following:

- Amount of external organizational support available to perform this project, and
- Internal organizational support for the ARDRAW program management lead team within the organization.

4) Relevance and Extent of Experience (10 points)

We will review applicants under this category according to the following:

- The relevance and extent of the proposed program management organization's experience performing activities similar to those listed under "Program Management Organization Responsibilities" under the program description for this cooperative agreement, and
- The demonstrated ability to complete projects of similar size, scope, and complexity in the past 5 years.

5) Quality of Past Performance (10 points)

We will review applicants under this category according to the success of up to three similar projects conducted or completed by applicants in the past five years, specifically:

- Timeliness of performance,
- Personnel management,

V. Application Review Information

- Business relations, and
- Cost control.

B. Review and Selection Process

SSA will assign complete applications submitted by eligible applicants to one or more panels of subject matter experts. Review panelists may be selected from federal agencies or from appropriate private sector organizations, or both. Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest. The panel assigned to review an application will score that application in accordance with the criteria set forth in the table above, which reflects the considerations that SSA will consider when granting awards. Review panelists and applicants alike are advised to also refer Section IV.B.2.4 to assess responsiveness of this section to proposal requirements.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.205, agency officials will review the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) to determine if an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Further, as required by Appendix XII of the OMB Uniform Guidance, non-federal entities (NFEs) are required to disclose in FAPIIS any information about criminal, civil, and administrative proceedings, or affirm that there is no new information to provide. This applies to NFEs for which the total value of active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts received from all federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award or project. This means that SSA may reject an application based on the information contained in FAPIIS even if the applicant otherwise scores highly under the 100-point scale. Applicants should review the information in FAPIIS about their entity before submitting an application.

SSA will comply with the requirements of 31 C.F.R. Part 19, Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement). Additionally, as part of its risk evaluation, SSA may impose special conditions on an award that correspond to the degree of risk identified in SSA's review of the application. Criteria to be evaluated include: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Guidance; (3) the applicant's record in managing awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, if it is a prior recipient of such federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements and, if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards; (4) reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F, Audit Requirements of the Uniform Guidance, or the reports and findings of any other available audits and monitoring reports containing findings, issues of non-compliance or questioned costs; and (5) the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on recipients.

C. Application Clarification and Feedback

SSA may elect to award the cooperative agreement(s) with or without discussions with the applicant. Should a cooperative agreement be awarded without discussions, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, including electronic signature via E-Authentication on <https://www.grants.gov>, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

However, during the review process, SSA may ask some applicants to provide confirming or clarifying information. SSA uses such information to inform funding recommendations. A request for confirmation or clarification does not guarantee a cooperative agreement award. If an applicant does not respond by the deadline to a request for information, SSA may remove its application from consideration.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applicants who have been selected will receive an official electronic notice of award signed by an SSA Grants Management Officer around September 30, 2024. Notification will be sent to the email address of the Authorized Representative listed on the Application for Federal Assistance-SF. 424. Those who were not selected will be notified by official letter.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Recipients may be subject to our background checks and fingerprinting in accordance with our personnel, security and suitability requirements.

In accordance with 2 CFR 25.200 each entity that applies and does not have exemption under 25.110 is required to be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan; maintain an active SAM registration; provide its unique identifier in each application or plan it submits to the agency.

C. Reporting

1) Progress Reports

Every three months during the award period, the recipient will produce a quarterly report of progress. The recipient's quarterly progress reports must provide a concise and accurate summary of the progress being made toward completion of activities in the annual work plan. Progress reports

will follow the quarters of the federal fiscal year. Detailed instructions and a schedule will be included in the Terms and Conditions, if awarded. The recipient must pay particular attention in the reports to achieving any milestones set forth in the work plan, delays in achieving milestones, and the effect of delays on the final product, and propose actions to rectify such delays. Details regarding the format and due dates of quarterly progress reports will be provided in the Terms and Conditions at the time of award.

2) Financial Status Reports

In addition, the recipient will submit quarterly and annual financial status reports to SSA. We will provide detailed instructions for submitting financial reports and the required forms with each year's award.

3) Federal Spending Transparency and Subaward and Compensation Data Reporting Requirement

The selected recipient may only be exempt from reporting subrecipient data for this cooperative agreement, if all subawards proposed are to individuals and fall below the minimum threshold of \$25,000.

4) Executive Compensation Requirement

Organizations must report executive compensation as part of the registration profile at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/> by the end of the month following the month in which this award is made, and annually thereafter (based on the reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (P.L. 109282), as amended by section 6202 of Public Law 110-252 and implemented by 2 CFR Part 170)).

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

For further information about this RFA, please contact Dionne Mitchell at Dionne.Mitchell@ssa.gov.