

# Focus Group Input from Individuals with Disabilities and Targeted Individuals

## OMB Supporting Statement

### A. Justification

#### 1. Necessity of Information Collection

USC 29, Section 763 establishes the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) (See Attachment A for full text):

##### (a) Establishment; membership; meetings

(1) In order to promote coordination and cooperation among Federal departments and agencies conducting rehabilitation research programs, including programs relating to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design, there is established within the Federal Government an Interagency Committee on Disability Research (hereinafter in this section referred to as the "Committee"), chaired by the Director and comprised of such members as the President may designate, including the following (or their designees): the Director, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, the Director of the Indian Health Service, and the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(2) The Committee shall meet not less than four times each year.

##### (b) Duties

(1) After receiving input from targeted individuals, the Committee shall identify, assess, and seek to coordinate all Federal programs, activities, and projects, and plans for such programs, activities, and projects with respect to the conduct of research (including assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

The ICDR's goals include:

- Promote coordination and cooperation among Federal departments and agencies conducting rehabilitation research programs;
- Identify emerging topic areas in disability research that would benefit from a coordinated federal funding effort;
- Assess gaps and duplication in existing research programs, activities and plans across agencies;
- Seek to coordinate existing or planned programs, activities, or projects in a topic research area among funding agencies through sound recommendations;

- **Receive input from individuals with disabilities and/or their representatives in pursuance of its mission;** and
- Submit an annual report to the President and to appropriate committees of the Congress on recommendations with respect to coordination of policy and the development of objectives and priorities for all Federal agencies related to disability and rehabilitation research.

Consumer focus groups consisting of individuals with disabilities and/or their representatives are necessary to fulfill the mandate of the ICDR. They provide a forum for such individuals to communicate directly with ICDR support staff and to express opinions and provide information that assists the ICDR in coordinating the federal disability research effort.

The consumer focus groups represent one element of a three-pronged data collection effort. Another element is the Comment Form available on the public ICDR Website through which members of the public may express their opinions about the federal disability research effort. The remaining element consists of public Stakeholder meetings held to discuss topics in disability research.

## **2. Needs and Uses**

This application represents part of an ongoing effort. The ICDR has conducted focus groups in three previous years, between 2003 and 2005. In each of these years the ICDR selected 12 focus groups with the intention of obtaining broad representation among geographical areas, types of disability, and types of cultural or racial groups such as older Americans and Latinos. We asked each group to talk with us about their use of Assistive Technology (AT). For the purposes of this research we use the definition of AT given in the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 (available at: <http://www.govtrack.us/data/us/bills.text/108/h4278.pdf>, last accessed July 10, 2006):

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY.**—The term ‘assistive technology’ means technology designed to be utilized in an assistive technology device or assistive technology service.  
**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICE.**—The term ‘assistive technology device’ means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.  
**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICE.**—The term ‘assistive technology service’ means any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

We taped the discussion held in each focus group. We transcribed the tapes, and maintain an electronic file of each transcript on a secure server. We downloaded each transcript into the NVivo software, which is software designed for qualitative (i.e. non-numerical) analysis. We maintain the NVivo-coded transcripts on a secure server. Each year we produced a report summarizing and discussing the results of that year’s groups.

In years 2 and 3 we also produced summary reports comparing the data from the previous year(s) with the current year.

Each annual report is released internally to ICDR members by means of being posted on the ICDR internal (password-protected) Website. We also present a high level summary of the report annually at one of the quarterly ICDR meetings. As noted above, the ICDR is comprised of such members as the President may designate, including the following (or their designees): the Director, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, the Director of the Indian Health Service, and the Director of the National Science Foundation.

The new set of focus groups proposed here differs from previous groups in one regard. In the set of focus groups already conducted, the emphasis of the discussion was on use of AT in general. The proposed upcoming groups would include a general discussion of AT use, but would also ask the participants to describe their experiences with AT in preparation for, during, or following emergency situations.

This information is made available to ICDR members because they are decision-makers within their agencies in terms of planning and funding disability-related research. The information in the report and the information presented at the quarterly meeting gives ICDR members a view of the opinions and concerns of individuals with disabilities and/or their representatives, about AT. This forms one of the bases on which ICDR members may plan agency research agendas for coming years.

### **3. Information Technology**

The National Science Foundation's *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations* notes that "focus groups capitalize on group dynamics. The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to generate data and insights that would be unlikely to emerge without the interaction found in a group." (NSF, 1997. Available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm> [last accessed 4/12/06]). Because we wish to capitalize on the face-to-face interaction offered by the focus group format, it is not possible to use information technology to gather respondents' comments electronically.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that individuals with disabilities tend to have lower rates of Internet use than individuals without disabilities. A major goal of this effort is to reach individuals with disabilities who lack representation through ordinary channels such as lobbying groups or online communities. Thus it is necessary to seek out individuals who can be reached through face-to-face means of communication.

Individuals with disabilities who use the Internet will not be excluded from the ICDR's data-gathering effort. One element of the ICDR's overall feedback-collection effort is the Comment Form available on the public IDCR Website through which members of the public may express their opinions about the federal disability research effort. Information gathered through this form will complement information collected through the focus groups.

#### **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The information to be supplied by these focus groups will not be duplicated by any other information collection. Some state- and local-level surveys and interviews have been done among individuals with disabilities and/or their representatives on the subject of AT use (one example is a 2002 publication by the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers on AT use among California citizens, report available at: [http://www.atnet.org/CR4AT/PositionPapers/Position\\_Papers.html](http://www.atnet.org/CR4AT/PositionPapers/Position_Papers.html) [last accessed 4/12/06]). There are no similar efforts being conducted on a nationwide level with provisions for coverage among varying disability groups, federal regions, and ethnic groups. Nationwide surveys such as the Census may include high-level questions about disability but to our knowledge no nationwide survey offers in-depth information on assistive technology use by individuals with disabilities.

#### **5. Minimizing Burden on Small Businesses**

The focus groups will be conducted with participants who are individuals with disabilities and/or their representatives. Each individual will participate in only one focus group. There will be no impact on small businesses because no small businesses will be asked to participate in a focus group.

#### **6. Consequences if Collection is not Conducted**

In order for the ICDR to effectively coordinate federal disability research, it must obtain input from the public, as required by statute. As is discussed in the response to question #3 above, the most effective format to gain this information is through face-to-face focus groups. It is not possible to attempt to obtain this type of information from this population through electronic means.

#### **7. Special Circumstances**

This information collection effort will not result in any of the specified special circumstances occurring. This information collection is consistent with the guidelines provided in 5CFR 1320.5.

## **8. Consultation Outside the Agency**

*60-day Notice:* The 60-day notice was published on page [XX] of the [date] Federal Register (See Attachment B). There have been no comments received in response to publication of the 60-day notice [pending actual response].

*Efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported:* CESSI has provided an assurance (formally Multiple Project Assurance M-1539) to the Department of Health and Human Services that it will follow procedures to assure the protection of all human subjects involved in research projects through submission of a Federal-wide Assurance (FWA). This FWA applies to all human subject research conducted at CESSI. Each institution engaged in human subject research must contact the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) to discuss the appropriateness of obtaining its own FWA.

CESSI established the Institutional Research Board (IRB) (#IRB00002770), to review research projects that involve human subjects. The IRB consists of representatives from a variety of scientific disciplines, non-scientists and community members. The primary function of the IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and to assist investigators in this process. Investigators bear the primary responsibility for the conduct of the research study and ensuring that research meets the standards established by Federal regulation and the IRB. The IRB office and committee strive to have open lines of communication and wide accessibility for everyone involved in research.

The CESSI IRB has approved the identical methodology to be used for this year's focus groups twice previously, in 2003 and 2004.

*Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained:* We contacted six of last year's local coordinators and asked them for specific recommendations for improving the focus group methodology. We received no negative responses or specific recommendations for changes.

## **9. Payment or Gift to Respondents**

We follow a recognized focus group methodology in offering an honorarium to focus group participants. The National Science Foundation's *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations* (August 1997, NSF Directorate for Education and Human Resources, available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm> [last accessed May 8, 2006]) says of focus groups: "Participants are paid for attendance and provided with refreshments" ("Focus Groups" section, no page #).

We identified a range of comparable focus group efforts and levels of honoraria:

- National Skills Standards Board one-day focus group on the IT and telecommunications industries, \$200 per participant (available at: <http://archives.hwg.org/hwg-jobs/5.1.0.14.2.20020117124528.00a873f0@mail.mindspring.com>, last accessed May 8, 2006).
- California Digital Library, funded by the National Science Foundation, design study for an integrated Web portal for math and science content, \$75 per participant (available at: [http://www.cenic.org/dcp/dcp\\_today/DTv5\\_5.htm](http://www.cenic.org/dcp/dcp_today/DTv5_5.htm), last accessed May 8, 2006).
- USGS Focus Group Manual, \$50 per participant (available at: <http://www.uwex.edu/erc/pdf/FGManual.pdf>, last accessed May 8, 2006).
- Institute of Medicine study on Experiences with Renal Failure, \$50 per participant (available at: <http://darwin.nap.edu/books/0309044324/html/40.html>, last accessed May 8, 2006).
- Federal Trade Commission, study of the comprehensibility of forms related to the Fair and Accurate Transactions Act, “fees will not exceed \$40” (available at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-13849.pdf>, last accessed May 8, 2006).
- NIH Evaluation Design/Planning and Methodology for the NIH Web Site-Phase I, \$40 per participant (available at: [http://irm.cit.nih.gov/itmra/weptest/app\\_a7.htm](http://irm.cit.nih.gov/itmra/weptest/app_a7.htm), last accessed May 8, 2006).
- Environmental Protection Agency, Assessment of public opinions on visibility impairment due to air pollution, “subjects will be appropriately compensated for their time and effort” (available at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttncaaa1/t1/reports/visibili.pdf>, last accessed May 8, 2006).

In the studies listed above, higher dollar amounts for honoraria tend to be given to participants with specialized technical knowledge, and smaller amounts are given to individuals with general knowledge or experience. On that basis we selected \$50 as a reasonable honorarium, taking into account that individuals with disabilities may incur additional difficulties in traveling to the groups. We offer a \$50 honorarium to each focus group participant, and we reimburse normal expenses incurred by each participant to attend the group, such as bus fare or childcare fees.

In addition to honoraria for focus group participants, we will offer a \$600 payment to the local coordinator. Through our past experience in conducting focus groups, both in this study and in others, we have determined that \$600 is a reasonable compensation for the tasks involved in the role of local coordinator. We have found that, because of the time and effort involved in each task, it is often difficult to interest a director of a local disability organization to collaborate with us and either act as a local coordinator or appoint someone in their organization to do so. We have also found that this amount of compensation puts us in a position to request timely completion of the local coordinator’s necessary tasks. We are often told that the fee is subsequently spent on the organization’s needed improvements or programs.

## **10. Assurance of Confidentiality**

We will inform participants that we will protect their privacy in accordance with applicable laws.

## **11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

There will be no questions of a sensitive nature in these surveys.

## **12. Estimate of Hour Burden of Collection**

Each year we will conduct 12 focus groups. Each focus group will include up to 10 individuals, for a total of 120 individuals per year. No individual will participate in more than one focus group, either within one year or across multiple years. Each focus group will last two hours. Each person who participates will spend no more than four hours, including two hours of travel time and time to complete the brief screening instrument and consent form. The total time burden each year will be 480 hours. We base this estimate on our experience with three previous years of focus groups.

We will schedule each group at a time that is convenient for the 10 participants, especially in terms of employment. From past experience we know that the majority of participants will be unemployed or employed part-time. We will schedule the focus group at a time when no participant is scheduled to work; for example we will hold meetings in the evening if necessary. There will be no cost to participants stemming from the need to take time off from work.

## **13. Estimate of Cost Burden to Respondents**

There will be no non-reimbursed costs to respondents except for time spent traveling to and from the group. We base this estimate on our experience with three previous years of focus groups.

#### 14. Cost to the Federal Government

Federal costs associated with conducting the focus groups, analyzing the data, and writing the final report are included under a NIDRR contract for logistical, administrative, and technical support to CESSI. We estimate the annual cost of this effort to be \$57,077 or \$4,756 per focus group. The costs include the following:

Local coordination	Twelve local coordinators at \$600 fee per group	\$7,200
Participant reimbursement	120 participants at \$50 honorarium each, plus reimbursement for expenses at an average of \$29 per person	\$9,480
Staff travel	Staff travel: (air and ground transportation, lodging, per diem) at an average of \$750 times 6 (6 pairs of focus groups)	\$4,500
Transcription	12 groups at 4.5 hours each times \$38.50 per hour	\$2,079
Shipping and postage	12 meetings at \$40 per meeting	\$480
Supplies	Supplies for 12 meetings: cassette tapes, batteries, forms, envelopes, pens, at \$35 per meeting	\$420
Staff time	Moderator time, coordinating focus groups, coding transcripts, data analysis, and writing final report: 12 groups at 53 hours per group, times \$50.50 (loaded rate) per hour	\$32,118
NIDRR staff time:	16 hours times \$50 per hour	\$800
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$57,077</b>

We base this estimate on our experience with three previous years of focus groups. Please note: Interpretation service or other compensated personal assistance is paid as part of “participant reimbursement.” Local host groups provide a meeting room at no charge.



**Reason for Program Change**

This is a new application. This application adds 480 hours of annual burden to Item 13 of the OMB Form 83-I. There are no changes to Item 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

**15. Project Schedule**

In each fiscal year we will begin contacting potential groups immediately following the beginning of the year, and we will schedule groups as early as possible. Based on previous years experience we expect to begin holding groups in March and to continue holding groups through mid-July of each fiscal year. As each group is held we will transcribe the tape and begin coding the data using the NVivo software package. We will complete a draft report by mid-September of each fiscal year. A final draft will be complete by the end of September and will be submitted to the Department of Education.

As described above in Question #2, we will not use any complex analytical techniques.

The annual time schedule for the project is as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Begin</b>	<b>End</b>
Contact potential groups	1 October	1 June
Hold groups	1 March	Mid-July
Transcribe tapes	1 April	1 August
Code in NVivo	1 April	Mid-August
Prepare report	Mid-August	Mid-September
Submit draft report	---	Mid-September
Submit final draft	---	30 September

**17. Expiration Date for OMB Approval**

The expiration date will be displayed on all surveys.

**18. Certification Statement**

There are no exceptions to the certification.

**B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

Not applicable.

**Attachment A:** “a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information:”

Text available at:

[http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cascode/uscodes/29/chapters/16/subchapters/ii/sections/section\\_763.html](http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cascode/uscodes/29/chapters/16/subchapters/ii/sections/section_763.html) [last accessed April 17, 2006]

#### Section 763. Interagency Committee

##### (a) Establishment; membership; meetings

(1) In order to promote coordination and cooperation among Federal departments and agencies conducting rehabilitation research programs, including programs relating to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design, there is established within the Federal Government an Interagency Committee on Disability Research (hereinafter in this section referred to as the "Committee"), chaired by the Director and comprised of such members as the President may designate, including the following (or their designees): the Director, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, the Director of the Indian Health Service, and the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(2) The Committee shall meet not less than four times each year.

##### (b) Duties

(1) After receiving input from targeted individuals, the Committee shall identify, assess, and seek to coordinate all Federal programs, activities, and projects, and plans for such programs, activities, and projects with respect to the conduct of research (including assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

(2) In carrying out its duties with respect to the conduct of Federal research (including assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the Committee shall -

(A) share information regarding the range of assistive technology research, and research that incorporates the principles of universal design, that is being carried out by members of the Committee and other Federal departments and organizations;

(B) identify, and make efforts to address, gaps in assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design that are not being adequately addressed;

(C) identify, and establish, clear research priorities related to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design for the Federal Government;

- (D) promote interagency collaboration and joint research activities relating to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design at the Federal level, and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort regarding these types of research within the Federal Government; and
- (E) optimize the productivity of Committee members through resource sharing and other cost-saving activities, related to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design.

(c) Annual report

Not later than December 31 of each year, the Committee shall prepare and submit, to the President and to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate, a report that -

- (1) describes the progress of the Committee in fulfilling the duties described in subsection (b) of this section;
- (2) makes such recommendations as the Committee determines to be appropriate with respect to coordination of policy and development of objectives and priorities for all Federal programs relating to the conduct of research (including assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design) related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; and
- (3) describes the activities that the Committee recommended to be funded through grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms, for assistive technology research and development and research and development that incorporates the principles of universal design.

(d) Recommendations

(1) In order to promote coordination and cooperation among Federal departments and agencies conducting assistive technology research programs, to reduce duplication of effort among the programs, and to increase the availability of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities, the Committee may recommend activities to be funded through grants, contracts or cooperative agreements, or other mechanisms -

- (A) in joint research projects for assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design; and
- (B) in other programs designed to promote a cohesive, strategic Federal program of research described in subparagraph (A).

(2) The projects and programs described in paragraph (1) shall be jointly administered by at least 2 agencies or departments with representatives on the Committee.

(3) In recommending activities to be funded in the projects and programs, the Committee shall obtain input from targeted individuals, and other organizations and individuals the Committee determines to be appropriate, concerning the availability and potential of technology for individuals with disabilities.

(e) Definitions

In this section, the terms "assistive technology", "targeted individuals", and "universal design" have the meanings given the terms in section 3002 of this title.

Attachment B: Full text of Federal Register notice

FR Doc E6-14437

[Federal Register: August 30, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 168)]

[Notices]

[Page 51586-51587]

From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]

[DOCID:fr30au06-62]

=====  
=====

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

AGENCY: Department of Education.

SUMMARY: The Acting Leader, Information Policy and Standards Team, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before October 30, 2006.

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. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Acting Leader, Information Policy and Standards Team, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management, publishes that notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g. new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment. The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the

following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Dated: August 24, 2006.

Dianne Novick,  
Acting Leader, Information Policy and Standards Team, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management.

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Type of Review: New.

Title: Focus Group Input from Individuals with Disabilities and Targeted Individuals.

[[Page 51587]]

Frequency: On Occasion.

Affected Public: Individuals or household.

Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden:

Responses: 120.

Burden Hours: 480.

Abstract: Results will identify research gaps, develop research priorities, and promotes coordinated plans, programs and activities across Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) agencies. Respondents will be persons with disabilities and other targeted individuals such as caregivers.

Requests for copies of the proposed information collection request may be accessed from <http://edicsweb.ed.gov>, by selecting the "Browse

Pending Collections" link and by clicking on link number 3164. 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., Potomac Center, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20202-4700. Requests may also be electronically mailed to [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) or faxed to 202-245-6623. Please specify the complete title of the information collection when making your request.

Comments regarding burden and/or the collection activity requirements should be electronically mailed to [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov). 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. E6-14437 Filed 8-29-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P