

**SECTION  
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**SECTION CRITERIA**

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The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate an application from 34 CFR 359.

(a) Project design (20 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

- (1) There is a clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the program;
- (2) The research is likely to produce new and useful information;
- (3) The need and target population are adequately defined;
- (4) The outcomes are likely to benefit the defined target population;
- (5) The research hypotheses are sound; and
- (6) The research methodology is sound in the sample design and selection, the data collection plan, the measurement instruments, and the data analysis plan.

(b) Service comprehensiveness (20 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

- (1) The services to be provided within the project are comprehensive in scope, and include emergency medical services, intensive and acute medical care, rehabilitation management, psychosocial and community reintegration, and follow up;
- (2) A broad range of vocational and other rehabilitation services will be available to individuals with severe disabilities within the project; and
- (3) Services will be coordinated with those services provided by other appropriate community resources.

(c) Plan of operation (15 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

- (1) There is an effective plan of operation that ensures proper and efficient administration of the project;
- (2) The applicant's planned use of its resources and personnel is likely to achieve each objective;
- (3) Collaboration between institutions, if proposed, is likely to be effective;
- (4) Participation in the National Spinal Cord Injury Database is clearly and adequately described; and
- (5) There is a clear description of how the applicant will include eligible project participants who have been traditionally underrepresented, such as--
  - (i) Members of racial or ethnic minority groups;
  - (ii) Women;
  - (iii) Individuals with disabilities; and
  - (iv) The elderly.

(d) Quality of key personnel (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

(1) The principal investigator and other key staff have adequate training or experience, or both, in spinal cord injury care and rehabilitation and demonstrate appropriate potential to conduct the proposed research, demonstration, training, development, or dissemination activity;

(2) The principal investigator and other key staff are familiar with pertinent literature or methods, or both;

(3) All the disciplines necessary to establish the multidisciplinary system described in Sec. 359.11(a) are effectively represented;

(4) Commitments of staff time are adequate for the project; and

(5) The applicant is likely, as part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, to encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that traditionally have been underrepresented, such as--

(i) Members of racial or ethnic minority groups;

(ii) Women;

(iii) Individuals with disabilities; and

(iv) The elderly.

(e) Adequacy of resources (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

(1) The facilities planned for use are adequate;

(2) The equipment and supplies planned for use are adequate; and

(3) The commitment of the applicant to provide administrative and other necessary support is evident.

(f) Budget/cost effectiveness (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

(1) The budget for the project is adequate to support the activities;

(2) The costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project; and

(3) The budget for subcontracts (if required) is detailed and appropriate.

(g) Dissemination/utilization (5 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

(1) There is a clearly defined plan for dissemination and utilization of project findings;

(2) The research results are likely to become available to others working in the field;

(3) The means to disseminate and promote utilization by others are defined; and

(4) The utilization approach is likely to address the defined need.

(h) Evaluation plan (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine to what degree--

- (1) There is a mechanism to evaluate plans, progress, and results;
- (2) The evaluation methods and objectives are likely to produce data that are quantifiable; and
- (3) The evaluation results, where relevant, are likely to be assessed in a service setting.

