

Regulations and Selection Criteria for Capacity Building Programs for Traditionally Underserved Populations: 84.315 and ARRA 84.406

Sec. 21. (a) Findings

With respect to the programs authorized in titles II through VII, the Congress finds as follows:

(1) Racial profile

The racial profile of America is rapidly changing. While the rate of increase for white Americans is 3.2 percent, the rate of increase for racial and ethnic minorities is much higher: 38.6 percent for Latinos, 14.6 percent for African-Americans, and 40.1 percent for Asian-Americans and other ethnic groups. By the year 2000, the Nation will have 260,000,000 people, one of every three of whom will be either African-American, Latino, or Asian-American.

(2) Rate of disability

Ethnic and racial minorities tend to have disabling conditions at a disproportionately high rate. The rate of work-related disability for American Indians is about one and one-half times that of the general population. African-Americans are also one and one-half times more likely to be disabled than whites and twice as likely to be significantly disabled.

(3) Inequitable treatment

Patterns of inequitable treatment of minorities have been documented in all major junctures of the vocational rehabilitation process. As compared to white Americans, a larger percentage of African-American applicants to the vocational rehabilitation system is denied acceptance. Of applicants accepted for service, a larger percentage of African-American cases is closed without being rehabilitated. Minorities are provided less training than their white counterparts. Consistently, less money is spent on minorities than on their white counterparts.

(4) Recruitment

Recruitment efforts within vocational rehabilitation at the level of preservice training, continuing education, and in-service training must focus on bringing larger numbers of minorities into the profession in order to provide appropriate practitioner knowledge, role models, and sufficient manpower to

address the clearly changing demography of vocational rehabilitation.

(b) Outreach to Minorities

(1) In general

For each fiscal year, the Commissioner and the Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (referred to in this subsection as the "Director") shall reserve 1 percent of the funds appropriated for the fiscal year for programs authorized under titles II, III, VI, and VII to carry out this subsection. The Commissioner and the Director shall use the reserved funds to carry out 1 or more of the activities described in paragraph (2) through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

(2) Activities

The activities carried out by the Commissioner and the Director shall include 1 or more of the following:

(A) Making awards to minority entities and Indian tribes to carry out activities under the programs authorized under titles II, III, VI, and VII.

(B) Making awards to minority entities and Indian tribes to conduct research, training, technical assistance, or a related activity, to improve services provided under this Act, especially services provided to individuals from minority backgrounds.

(C) Making awards to entities described in paragraph (3) to provide outreach and technical assistance to minority entities and Indian tribes to promote their participation in activities funded under this Act, including assistance to enhance their capacity to carry out such activities.

(3) Eligibility

To be eligible to receive an award under paragraph (2)(C), an entity shall be a State or a public or private nonprofit agency or organization, such as an institution of higher education or an Indian tribe.

(4) Report

In each fiscal year, the Commissioner and the Director shall prepare and submit to Congress a report that describes the activities funded under this subsection for the preceding fiscal year.

(5) Definitions

In this subsection:

(A) Historically black college or university: The term "historically Black college or university" means a part B institution, as defined in section 322(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061(2)).

(B) Minority entity: The term "minority entity" means an entity that is a historically Black college or university, a Hispanic-serving institution of higher education, an American Indian tribal college or university, or another institution of higher education whose minority student enrollment is at least 50 percent.

(c) Demonstration

In awarding grants, or entering into contracts or cooperative agreements under titles I, II, III, VI, and VII, and section 509, the Commissioner and the Director, in appropriate cases, shall require applicants to demonstrate how the applicants will address, in whole or in part, the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

SECTION F

Selection Criteria for Applications

The Secretary uses the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Because no points are assigned to the selected factors, the Secretary evaluates each factor within each criterion equally.

The criteria are--

RELEVANCE TO STATE-FEDERAL REHABILITATION SERVICE PROGRAM (20 points)

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the proposed project appropriately relates to the mission of the State-Federal rehabilitation service program.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows that the project can be expected either to enhance the capacity and increase the participation of minority entities within programs that are funded under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.

SIGNIFICANCE (10 points)

The Secretary considers:

(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increase knowledge or understanding of rehabilitation programs, issues, or effective strategies;

(2) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement;

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target populations.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN (15)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;

(2) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent sustained program of capacity building;

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition.

(4) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State and Federal resources.

QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES (15 points)

(1) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(2) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are likely to improve services for individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds, as well as, increase the capacity of minority entities and minority individuals in programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.

QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN (15 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION (10 points)

In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL (10 points)

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (4) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of project consultants or subcontractors.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES (5 points)

In considering the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers:

(1) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(2) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(5) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding..