

# **Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program: Phase II**

## **Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission**

### **PART A: Justification**

**Contract ED-04-CO-0059/0032**

June 24, 2014

*Prepared for*  
Institute of Education Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education

*Prepared by*  
Westat

# Contents

## Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program: Phase II

Introduction.....	2
Overview.....	2
Evaluation Questions.....	2
Sampling Design.....	2
Data Collection Procedures.....	2
Analytic Approach.....	2
<b>Part A: Justification.....</b>	<b>10</b>
A.1 Explanation of Circumstances That Make Collection of Data Necessary.....	10
A.2 How the Information Will Be Collected, by Whom, and For What Purpose.....	10
A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden.....	11
A.4 Efforts to Identify and Avoid Duplication.....	11
A.5 Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Business or Other Entities.....	11
A.6 Consequences of Less-Frequent Data Collection.....	12
A.7 Special Circumstances Requiring Collection of Information in a Manner Inconsistent with Section 1320.5(d)(2) of the Code of Federal Regulations.....	12
A.8 <i>Federal Register</i> Comments and Persons Consulted Outside the Agency.....	12
A.9 Payments to Respondents.....	12
A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality.....	13
A.11 Questions of a Sensitive Nature.....	14
A.12 Estimates of Respondent Burden.....	14
A.13 Estimates of the Cost Burden to Respondents.....	15
A.14 Estimates of Annualized Government Costs.....	15
A.15 Changes in Hour Burden.....	15
A.16 Time Schedule, Publication, and Analysis Plan.....	15
A.17 Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval.....	17
A.18 Exceptions to Certification Statement.....	17
References.....	18

# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies that the TA&D Program will provide technical assistance, support model demonstration projects, disseminate useful information, and implement activities that are supported by scientifically based research (IDEA 2004, P.L. 108-446 Part D Section 663, 118 Stat. 2781). The federal government has been funding projects that provide technical assistance related to the education of individuals with disabilities for four decades, and the TA&D Program assumed its current structure with the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA. The TA&D Program awards grants in multiple subprogram areas, with grants ranging in size from approximately \$65,000 per year to approximately \$2.8 million per year. Program grantees are located throughout the U.S. and recipients include institutions of higher education, for-profit organizations and private nonprofit institutes and organizations.

Under contract with the National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE) in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U. S. Department of Education (ED), Westat completed an evaluation of 27 national centers that were funded under the TA&D Program, referred to in this application as Phase I of the National Evaluation. Under Phase I, data were obtained from TA&D center Project Directors; State Special Education Directors; and state-level staff who oversaw or were involved with providing technical assistance in numerous areas. Phase I of the evaluation provided detailed information about project activities, need for TA, and satisfaction with TA received in these specified areas (Daley, Fiore, Bollmer, Nimkoff & Lysy, 2013).

While robust and detailed information was obtained about *national* technical assistance and dissemination activities, Phase I of the Evaluation provided only minimal information about the State Deaf-Blind Projects. Children who are deafblind represent the quintessence of the populations that gave rise to special education: they are an extremely low incidence population, challenged as learners, and difficult to instruct under traditional conditions. In recognition of the unique needs of this population, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that the Secretary reserve a portion of IDEA Part D funds each year to address the needs of children with deafblindness (see section 682(d)(1)(A) of IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 1482(d)). The combined 52 projects make up approximately one-fifth of the annual expenditure for the TA&D Program. In collaboration with the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB), these projects play a central role in providing TA to families, professionals and paraprofessionals who serve children with deafblindness. And, while funded since the 1960s under various authorities, a formal evaluation of the State Deaf-Blind Projects has not, to our knowledge, ever been conducted.

In October 2013, a new set of 52 State Deaf-Blind Projects were awarded. These projects are each five years and range in size from \$65,000 per year to \$575,000 per year. As per the priority identified for these projects, they provide direct, targeted, and intensive TA to staff in LEAs, schools, EIS providers, and classrooms, where children who are deaf-blind are served. While the projects all share similar features, there is also variability in the structure, specific activities, and population served, as well as in other areas. Phase II of the Evaluation will include two questionnaires that are designed to describe this variability as well as better understand the population of providers who work with students with deafblindness in school and related settings. A State Deaf-Blind Project grantee questionnaire will yield detailed descriptive information about projects, including the topic areas on which they focus, the technical assistance services provided by the projects and to whom they provide these services, and the

collaborative relationships in which the projects engage. A questionnaire administered to service providers who are known to have worked with children with deafblindness will offer information about the needs that these individuals have for technical assistance to support children with deafblindness and their families. A short set of questions administered to service providers who have received targeted technical assistance from the projects will allow an assessment of satisfaction with individualized, direct, and intensive TA services provided by the projects. The evaluation questions appear below.

## Evaluation Questions

- 1) What technical assistance and dissemination activities do State Deaf-Blind Projects provide and how does this vary across the states?**
  - a. What types of technical assistance and dissemination activities do projects provide?
  - b. To what extent do projects focus on the specific initiatives promoted by NCDB?<sup>1</sup>
  - c. To whom do projects provide TA?
  - d. How do projects determine which children are eligible for and who will receive TA services?
  
- 2) How do State Deaf-Blind Projects collaborate across the program, within their individual states, and with other TA providers?**
  - a. Within the network of projects, with whom do projects collaborate and in what ways?
  - b. Outside the network of State Deaf-Blind Projects, with which other TA providers do projects collaborate and in what ways?
  
- 3) What are the needs for TA among service providers of children who are deafblind and how do needs vary?**
  - a. What are the needs for TA among service providers?
  - b. How does need for TA vary by individual characteristics of service providers?
  - c. How does need for TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?
  
- 4) How satisfied are service providers with services provided by the State Deaf-Blind Projects?**
  - a. How does service provider satisfaction with TA vary across projects?
  - b. How does service provider satisfaction vary based on characteristics of the project?
  - c. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers?
  - d. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?

Data to address the research questions above will come primarily through the two questionnaires, and we will use project proposals as an extant data source to provide some descriptive information about the projects.

## Sampling Design

A detailed discussion of our sampling design is provided in the Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission, Part B of this package. Exhibit A-1 provides a summary of the sample populations proposed for this study, and Exhibit A-2 shows the relationship between the Provider sample and the TA Recipient sample.

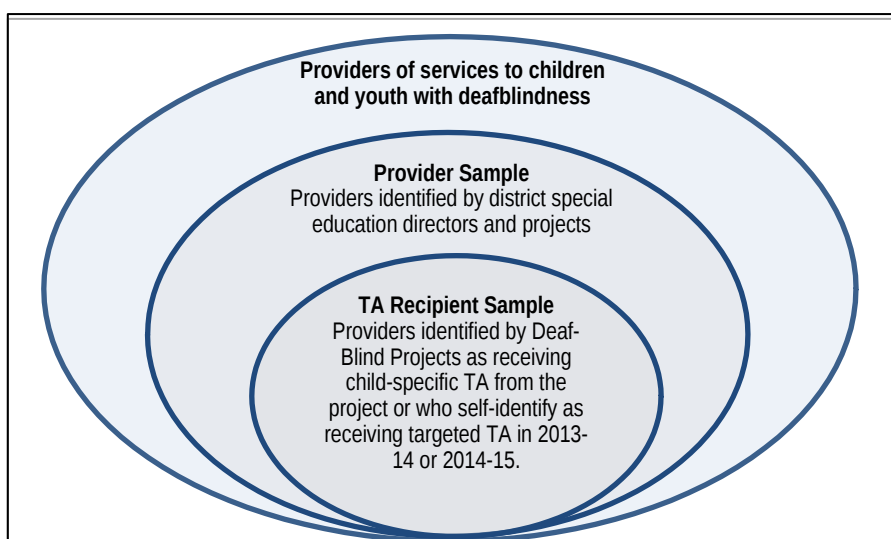
---

<sup>1</sup> The relevant NCDB initiatives are: Early identification and referral, Intervener services, Transition, Family engagement, Literacy, and Technology solutions.

## Exhibit A-1. Main Study Components and Proposed Sample

Survey Name	Sample
Grantee Questionnaire	Project directors of all 52 State Deaf-Blind Projects, with assistance from key staff as they deem necessary.
Provider Questionnaire	Providers who are designated by the district special education director as having provided at least weekly services to 6-21 year old children and youth with deafblindness.
TA Recipient Supplement	A subset of Providers who self-report or are identified by the State Deaf-Blind Project as having received targeted assistance from the project to serve a child or youth between the ages of 6-21. The TA Recipient Supplement consists of a short set of questions focused on experiences with the projects.

## Exhibit A-2. Relationship of the Provider and TA Recipient Samples



## Data Collection Procedures

Data collection instruments for the State Deaf-Blind Project Grantee Questionnaire and the Provider Questionnaire and TA Recipient Supplement are included in Appendices A and B. Exhibit A-3 provides an overview of the data collection procedures for this evaluation.

### Exhibit A-3. Summary of Data Collection Procedures

Sample	Description	Data Collection Timeline
Grantees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of schools at which children were served based on the 2013 NCDB Child Count, used to construct the Provider sampling frame.</li> </ul>	Upon OMB approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of providers who received child-specific specific technical assistance during since October 2013, used to inform the Provider sample and TA Recipient sub-sample</li> </ul>	Upon OMB approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web-based survey (Grantee Questionnaire)</li> </ul>	Fall 2014
Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web-based survey (Provider Questionnaire)</li> </ul>	2014-15 School year
TA Recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web-based survey supplement (TA Recipient Supplement)</li> </ul>	2014-15 School year

## Analytic Approach

This evaluation is intended to provide descriptive data about the State Deaf-Blind Projects, need for assistance among providers who work with this population, and satisfaction with technical assistance that is received by providers from the projects. Consistent with this, analyses will consist primarily of percentages, means, and frequencies, similar to the analyses conducted in Phase I of this evaluation. Since the Grantee data is a census of that population, there is no need for calculation of standard errors or confidence intervals. For the Provider and TA Recipient data, which will be collected by sampling (with the TA Recipient sample selected with certainty), we will present the standard error of an estimate. The respondent survey data for the provider sample will be weighted by a base weight (the inverse of sampling probability).

We anticipate that some providers serve more than one school and that a very small number of providers may be nominated to complete the survey by more than one district administrator. All respondents will be instructed to complete the survey only once and only one response will be considered an eligible unit for weighting.

Below, the letters **PQ** indicates data come from participant responses to the Provider Questionnaire and **RS** indicates that data come from participant responses to the TA Recipient Supplement. **GQ** indicates that data come from the Grantee Questionnaire.

For some questions, the use of open-ended responses is warranted, and two types of open-ended questions appear in these instruments. The use of the “Other” option in closed-ended questions allows for the wide heterogeneity in respondents and respondent experiences that we anticipate. For example, the majority of providers may work in a setting that fits into the categories described in PQ #3. However, a provider who evenly splits her time in two settings, or a provider who works in classroom in which half the students are typically developing and half are students with disabilities will need the ability to explain this. The standard approach to dealing with ‘Other’ responses is to upcode them as appropriate, and to provide the responses in a descriptive manner otherwise. The other type of open-ended question are items for which closed-ended responses are not possible to develop, because the answer is unknown and closed-ended responses cannot be developed (such as the way in which projects make decisions about who will receive child-specific TA), or where they would not be an effective way to obtain information (such as describing key activities or products of the grantees). Analysis of these questions will involve developing themes and codes tied to these themes. We will use the software program Dedoose for analysis of these data, which has built-in capabilities to establish reliability for coding and other analytic tools.

In addition to open-ended data, this study will involve data of different types: both categorical and continuous variables, which we may choose to analyze as categorical variables in some situations. There are also constructs for which we may consider combining multiple indicators to create a single variable for analytic purposes, although we will also present the descriptive data either in the body or appendices of the report. These are:

- Extent of experience with deafblindness (derived from PQ #6, 7a, 8, 10, 12, 21)
- Extent of experience with the project (derived from RS #25, 27, 28)

A decision about whether to proceed in this direction will be made in consultation with ED and Technical Working Group members.

We provide a brief description for planned analyses for each evaluation question in the following section. Exhibit A-4 presents each source of data that will be used to address each of the evaluation questions and sub-questions for this data collection.

**Exhibit A-4. Evaluation Questions and Corresponding Survey/Questionnaire/Interview Items**

Evaluation Question and Sub-Question	Data collection tool
<b>1. What technical assistance and dissemination activities do State Deaf-Blind Projects provide and how does this vary across the states?</b>	
a. What types of technical assistance and dissemination activities do projects provide?	Grantee Questionnaire
b. To what extent do projects focus on the specific initiatives promoted by NCDB?	Grantee Questionnaire
c. To whom do projects provide TA?	Grantee Questionnaire TA Recipient Supplement
d. How do projects determine which children are eligible for and who will receive TA services?	Grantee Questionnaire
<b>2. How do State Deaf-Blind Projects collaborate across the program, within their individual states, and with other TA providers?</b>	
a. Within the network of projects, with whom do projects collaborate and in what ways?	Grantee Questionnaire
b. Outside the network of State Deaf-Blind Projects, with which other TA providers do projects collaborate and in what ways?	Grantee Questionnaire
<b>3. What are the needs for TA among service providers of children who are deafblind and how do needs vary?</b>	
a. What are the needs for TA among service providers?	Provider Questionnaire
b. How does need for TA vary by individual characteristics of service providers?	Provider Questionnaire
c. How does need for TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?	Provider Questionnaire
<b>4. How satisfied are service providers with services provided by the State Deaf-Blind Projects?</b>	
a. How does service provider satisfaction with TA vary across projects?	TA Recipient Supplement
b. How does service provider satisfaction vary based on dimensions or characteristics of the project?	TA Recipient Supplement
c. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers?	TA Recipient Supplement
d. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?	TA Recipient Supplement

**RQ1a. What types of technical assistance and dissemination activities do projects provide?**

Frequencies will be used to describe the following, based on Grantee report:

- Products and services provided by the project (GQ #10, #11)
- Topics for which their project provides TA (GQ #21, #22)
- Activities undertaken by the project in the area of system capacity development (GQ #19)
- Whether projects participate in a state-level task force or advisory committee (GQ #20)

Analysis of GQ #12, which asks grantees to describe signature products or activities, will be coded using standard qualitative coding techniques described above. Similarly, data from GQ

#13 will be used to describe challenges reported by the projects in providing services to children, youth and families.

**RQ1b. How do projects determine which children are eligible for and who will receive TA services?**

We will address this question using data from three items within the Grantee questionnaire:

- The percentage of students who access services through different processes (GQ #8)
- Frequency of responses to GQ #9, which asks grantees to report how true are different barriers to providing services for their state.

**RQ1c. To whom do projects provide TA?**

Frequencies will be used to address this sub-question using two sources of data:

- Children and youth served in different age groups since October 2013 (GQ #5; using GQ #4 to provide the denominator)
- TA recipients served through TA, as reported by the grantees (GQ #6, #7)
- Descriptive characteristics of all respondents identified as recipients of targeted TA (PS #1-12)

**RQ1d. To what extent do projects focus on the specific initiatives promoted by NCDB?<sup>2</sup>**

Frequencies will be used to report whether grantees have engaged or plan to engage in a series of specific activities tied to each of the five NCDB initiatives. (GQ #15-20)

**RQ2a. Within the network of projects, with whom do projects collaborate and in what ways?**

To examine collaboration within the network of State Deaf-Blind Projects, we will draw from GQ #23-33. The primary analytic tool will be Social Network Analysis (SNA), using data from GQ #23. SNA is a set of methods for gathering and analyzing data on the relationships within a network such as the State Deaf-Blind Projects. In SNA terminology, a *network* is a set of members, actors, or nodes; a relationship defines the connections, ties, or lines that exist between members. Relationships build from dyads – a connection between two members of the network. As connections (ties) build between members, a structure develops that can be measured. Sociograms visually depict relationship structures, and quantitative measures provide details. Each relationship has its own relationship structure, which may or may not be similar to other relationship structures for a network.

Understanding a relationship structure generally requires multiple SNA measures. Some are individual measures because they capture information about each member in a network. Others are network measures because they capture information about the entire relationship structure. Each relationship on the network has its own measures. For our analysis of the State Deaf-Blind Project network, we will rely on several indicators, which are likely to include density (the extent to which members are connecting to each other), cliques (subgroups of at least three members who directly connect to each other), Freeman Centrality (a measure of the *popularity* of each network member within a particular relationship structure), components (a network measure of *structural cohesion*), and centralization (a network measure of the *diffusion* or spread of the SNA is only possible if all members of a network provide responses about all other members.

---

<sup>2</sup> The relevant NCDB initiatives are: Early identification and referral, Intervener services, Transition, Family engagement, Literacy, and Technology solutions.



Our question about collaboration among projects is structured in a way to permit effective SNA and describe collaboration among the State Deaf-Blind Projects.

**RQ2b. Outside the network of State Deaf-Blind Projects, with which other TA providers do projects collaborate and in what ways?**

We will not be able to use SNA to address RQ2b, because it requires that all members in a network are able to provide responses about all other members, whereas our data to address this question will be based only on Grantee report in GQ #34, where we will present the frequency of responses.

**RQ3a. What are the needs for TA among service providers?**

To address this question, we will present the needs for TA (PQ #16) among providers and provide descriptive data on where providers usually turn for TA (PQ #19).

**RQ3b. How does need for TA vary by individual characteristics of service providers?**

We will collect information from providers that will allow us to analyze need for TA by the following provider characteristics:

- Profession (PQ #1)
- Number of children with deafblindness worked with throughout career (PQ #8)
- Years of experience (PQ #9)
- Educational background (PQ #11)
- Degree to which provider feels knowledgeable about deafblindness (PQ #12)

**RQ3c. How does need for TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?**

We will collect information from providers that will allow us to analyze need for TA by the following provider characteristics:

- Primary type of setting (PQ #3)
- If the provider works in a special school (PQ #4) and degree of clustering of students with deafblindness within the district (information obtained from the sample frame)
- Setting of students with deafblindness (PQ #14)
- Level of functioning of students (PQ #15)
- Physical distance from project location (using GPS coordinates)
- Characterization of the school according to rural/remoteness

**RQ4a. How does service provider satisfaction with TA vary across projects?**

Satisfaction will be measured through items 31 and 32 of the TA Recipient Supplement. We will average responses for each dimension of satisfaction across TA recipients from each project to provide a mean rating for each of the 10 components of satisfaction in item 31, as well as an overall mean satisfaction based on item 32. These means will be displayed by state. Overall satisfaction with TA (RS #32) will be used in conjunction with each of the variables listed below, either using t-tests where there are two groups, or ANOVAs where there are more than two groups. In some cases, we will consolidate data to create appropriate analysis groups, for example, in the case of profession we will provide descriptive data on the specializations but may collapse all related service providers into one group. At this time, we do not plan to use the satisfaction items as a scale, but we will explore this option during the analysis period. For satisfaction items, only providers who have received targeted TA answer questions about

satisfaction. Analyses of satisfaction items will include all providers who are identified or self-identify as receiving targeted TA from a State Deaf-Blind Project.

**RQ4b. How does service provider satisfaction vary based on characteristics of the project?**

Using RS #32, we are able to examine satisfaction in conjunction with the following aspects of each project:

- Project funding level (Obtained from the proposal; we can choose to use this as either a continuous or categorical variable)
- Project FTEs dedicated to the project work (Obtained from the proposals; we can choose to use this as either a continuous or categorical variable)
- Whether the project is housed in the SEA, IHE or other location (GQ #1, categorical)
- Model of TA delivery (GQ #2, categorical)

**RQ4c. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers?**

We will collect information from providers that will allow us to analyze satisfaction by the following TA recipient characteristics:

- Profession (RS #1)
- Education level (RS #11)
- Years of experience (RS #9; we can choose to use this as either a continuous or categorical variable)
- Experience with deafblindness
  - o Degree to which provider feels knowledgeable about deafblindness (RS #12, continuous)
  - o Number of children with deafblindness throughout career (RS #8, we can choose to use this as either a continuous or categorical variable)
- Experience with the project
  - o Setting in which assistance was delivered (RS #26)
  - o Additional services received from project (RS #21; we can choose to use this as either a continuous or categorical variable)
  - o Length of contact with project (TQ #27)
  - o Recency of contact with project (TQ #28)

**RQ4d. How does satisfaction with TA vary by characteristics of service providers' settings?**

We will analyze satisfaction by the following TA recipient characteristics:

- Primary type of setting (RS #3)
- Whether the provider works in a special school (RS #4)
- Physical distance from project location (using GPS coordinates)

## **Part A: Justification**

This package requests approval for a data collection for the second phase of the National Evaluation of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) Program. Data collection will focus on gathering relevant information on the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-funded State Deaf-Blind Project grantees and from eligible and actual providers served by these projects.

### **A.1 Explanation of Circumstances That Make Collection of Data Necessary**

The National Evaluation of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) Program is part of the National Assessment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (hereafter referred to as the National Assessment) being conducted by NCEE. Section 664b of IDEA 2004 requires the National Assessment to evaluate “the effectiveness of schools, local educational agencies, States, other recipients of assistance under this title, and the Secretary in achieving the purposes of this title,” by: (i) improving the academic achievement of children with disabilities and their performance on regular statewide assessments as compared to nondisabled children, and the performance of children with disabilities on alternate assessments; (ii) improving the participation of children with disabilities in the general education curriculum; (iii) improving the transitions of children with disabilities at natural transition points; (iv) placing and serving children with disabilities, including minority children, in the least restrictive environment appropriate; (v) preventing children with disabilities, especially children with emotional disturbances and specific learning disabilities, from dropping out of school; and (vi) addressing the reading and literacy needs of children with disabilities. To date, NCEE has awarded five other contracts to support studies that are part of the National Assessment. Of the National Assessment studies, this evaluation is the only one that is focused on the role of the TA&D Program and its relation to implementation of IDEA.

### **A.2 How the Information Will Be Collected, by Whom, and For What Purpose**

The data collected for Phase II of the National Evaluation of the TA&D Program will be used by ED to report to Congress as part of the National Assessment. Failure to collect these data may result in ED being unable to adequately report to Congress on the National Assessment. Additionally, if this evaluation were not completed, ED and Congress would not have an accurate understanding of the relationship between the State Deaf-Blind Projects and early intervention/special education policy and practices. The information from the evaluation will assist Congress in the reauthorization of the IDEA and to further improve early intervention and special education services with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for children with disabilities.

This data collection will provide unique, detailed data on local needs for technical assistance in the area of deafblindness; the services provided by the TA&D State Deaf-Blind Projects; the extent of collaboration among the State Deaf-Blind projects; the technical assistance services that local providers receive from State Deaf-Blind Project grantees; and how satisfied they are with these services. These data are not currently available from other sources but are necessary in order to accurately understand and improve upon the role that the TA&D Program

plays in supporting state agencies in their implementation of IDEA for students with deafblindness.

### **A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

All questionnaires will be administered using web-based surveys so they are easily accessible to respondents. Administration of web-based surveys enables reduced burden through complex skip patterns that are invisible to respondents, as well as prefilled information based on responses to previous items when appropriate. In addition, web-based surveys allow for multiple respondents to easily complete the various modules of the survey. Additional costs associated with data entry are not incurred as the respondent enters data while completing the survey, leading to improved data quality as well. The nature of data entry in web-based surveys also leads to decreased costs associated with processing and increased data collection speed. Paper and phone survey options will be offered to respondents as part of the nonresponse follow-up effort and will be available to any respondent who prefers a paper mode. Any follow-up questions that are needed for clarification will take place through email and telephone to eliminate any requirements for participant travel.

### **A.4 Efforts to Identify and Avoid Duplication**

The detailed information to be collected through these instruments does not currently exist within ED or other agencies in a systematic format. Any relevant data that do exist will be obtained from OSEP and will be used in addition to the data collected through the instruments. For example, grantee proposals from the State Deaf-Blind Projects have been obtained, and information from these documents as well as project websites will be used to supplement the data collected through the questionnaires, as appropriate. Descriptive information about schools is available from the Common Core of Data, eliminating the need to ask respondents questions about their school characteristics. However, these sources alone do not provide the systematic data required to completely address the evaluation questions, and therefore a new data collection is needed.

### **A.5 Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Business or Other Entities**

No small businesses will be involved as respondents. Every effort has been and will be made to minimize the burden on State Deaf-Blind Project grantees and local provider staff. We have obtained the grant proposals for each State Deaf-Blind Project, and will extract information from these documents so that we do not have to ask this information from projects. Extracted information will include:

- Project funding amount from ED
- Number of full time staff associated with the project
- Number of part time staff associated with the project
- Total FTEs supported through the grant
- Total FTEs supported through external sources

Also as described in section A.3, we will administer questionnaires via the web, so they will be easily accessible to respondents. Burden will be reduced with the use of prefilled information based on responses to previous items when appropriate. We are also attempting to reducing burden on the providers by identifying individuals who work most closely with students with deafblindness, as opposed to having an individual with limited direct contact with this population complete the survey.

## **A.6 Consequences of Less-Frequent Data Collection**

The data collection will occur only once. If the data collection is not completed, OMB, administrators, policymakers, and the public will not have systematic data about the activities of the State Deaf-Blind Projects.

## **A.7 Special Circumstances Requiring Collection of Information in a Manner Inconsistent with Section 1320.5(d)(2) of the Code of Federal Regulations**

There are no special circumstances associated with this data collection.

## **A.8 *Federal Register* Comments and Persons Consulted Outside the Agency**

The data collection instruments were developed by the evaluation research team led by Westat, under the direction of the IES COR. The TA&D State Deaf-Blind Project Questionnaire was tested with 9 individuals familiar with state projects. The Provider Questionnaire and TA Recipient Supplement were tested with 9 school and district-level providers to examine the survey items and assess potential burden. These procedures informed our time estimates and the comments from the pilot test respondents were addressed in the revised instruments.

Group and individual calls were held with Technical Working Group members during December 2013 and January 2014 to discuss the evaluation design and the data collection activities and instruments. Members of the TWG include:

- John Killoran, Western Oregon University
- Mark Schalock, National Center on Deaf-Blindness
- Robbie Blaha, retired director of the Texas Deaf-Blind Project
- Kathleen Scoggins, retired director of the Washington Deaf-Blind Project

## **A.9 Payments to Respondents**

There will be no payments made to State Deaf-Blind Project grantees.

The Provider Questionnaire and TA Recipient Supplement are the sole source of data for Evaluation Questions 3 and 4; therefore it is important to achieve a high response rate. Studies have shown that when used appropriately, incentives are a cost-effective means of significantly increasing response rates (e.g., Dillman, 2000). Surveys that use incentives can result in lower costs than those that do not, since expensive follow-up can be minimized through the up-front investment of the incentives. Moreover, the use of an incentive was strongly recommended by both our Technical Working Group members and the individuals who assisted with cognitive testing.

To boost the survey response rate and to compensate for respondents' time, the study has planned to provide incentives for respondents of the Provider Questionnaire and TA Recipient

Supplement. The planned incentive amount is \$20 per respondent for a maximum total cost of \$55,000, assuming 2,750 providers complete the survey. The amount of incentive planned for the survey respondents is consistent with that proposed in the NCEE memo Guidelines for Incentives for NCEE Evaluation Studies, dated March 22, 2005, and is consistent with other ED-funded studies.

## **A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality**

Other than the names and contact information for the respondents, which is information typically already available in the public domain (i.e., district and school websites), no data collected will include information that could identify an individual respondent. In reporting, no State Deaf-Blind Project grantee staff and no providers will be named. No names and contact information will be released.

An explicit statement regarding confidentiality will be communicated to all respondents. The following statement will be included in the cover letter of the State Deaf-Blind Project Questionnaire:

Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of data collected through this study. Reports on this evaluation will not name individuals and will not include any information that could be used to identify individual respondents. We will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team.

ED, in the conduct of the study, will follow procedures for ensuring and maintaining participant privacy, consistent with the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. Title I, Part E, Section 183 of this Act requires, “All collection, maintenance, use, and wise dissemination of data by the Institute” to “conform with the requirements of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, the confidentiality standards of subsection (c) of this section, and sections 444 and 445 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g, 1232h).” These citations refer to the Privacy Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. Respondents will be assured that confidentiality is maintained. Specific steps to guarantee confidentiality include the following:

- Identifying information about respondents (e.g., respondent name, email address, and telephone number) will at no point be stored in the same file as the survey data. Through the web-based system, those data will be automatically extracted into a separate file and will be password protected. A unique identification number for each respondent will be used for building raw data and analysis files.
- Participants will be referred to by unique identification number. Files containing more information will be password protected.
- Confidential materials will be printed on a printer located in a limited access field room. When printing documents that contain confidential information from shared network printers, authorized study staff will be present and retrieve the documents as soon as printing is complete.
- In public reports, findings will be presented in aggregate by type of respondent (e.g., special education teachers; occupational therapists). No reports will identify individual respondents.

- Access to the sample files will be limited to authorized study staff only; no others will be authorized such access.
- All members of the study team will be briefed regarding confidentiality of the data and will sign a statement with the following information:
  - I will not reveal the name, address, or other identifying information about any respondent to any person other than those directly connected to the study.
  - I will not reveal the contents or substance of the responses of any identifiable respondent or informant to any person other than a member of the project staff, except for a purpose authorized by the project director or authorized designate.
  - I will not contact any respondent or informant except as authorized by a member of the project staff.
  - I will not release a dataset or findings from this project (including for unrestricted public use or for other, unrestricted uses) except in accordance with policies and procedures established by the project director or authorized designate.
- A control system will be in place, beginning at sample selection, to monitor the status and whereabouts of all data collection instruments during transfer, processing, coding, and data entry. This includes sign-in/sign-out sheets and the hand-carrying of documents by authorized project staff only.
- All data will be stored in secure areas accessible only to authorized staff members. Computer-generated output containing identifiable information will be maintained under the same conditions.
- When any hard copies containing confidential information are no longer needed, they will be shredded.

## **A.11 Questions of a Sensitive Nature**

The questions included on the data collection instruments for this study do not involve sensitive topics.

## **A.12 Estimates of Respondent Burden**

In all, responses will be required one time from a maximum total of 3,702 respondents (52 TA&D State Deaf-Blind Project Directors, 900 principals or special education directors who identify appropriate respondents, 1,250 service providers who work with students with deafblindness or their families, 1,500 providers who have received technical assistance from a State Deaf-Blind Project in 2013-14). We estimate that it will take respondents between 5 and 45 minutes to complete each instrument. Total burden is 55,620 minutes or 927 hours (see Exhibit A-5 below for a breakdown of burden by respondent type).

## Exhibit A-5. Estimates of Respondent Burden

Respondent	Total Sample Size	Time Estimate (minutes)	Total Hour Burden	Hourly Rate <sup>a</sup>	Estimated Monetary Cost of Burden
State Deaf-Blind Project Director	52	45	39	\$50	\$1,950
School Principals/ Special Education Directors <sup>b</sup>	900	5	75	\$50	\$3,750
Providers who are TA Recipients	1,500	20	500	\$43	\$21,500
Providers who are not TA Recipients	1,250	15	313	\$43	\$13,438
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,702</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$40,638</b>

<sup>a</sup>Hourly rates are based on the 2012 national data from the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages

<sup>b</sup>School principals/Special Education Directors provide contact information but are not true respondents in this study in that they provide no information that is used to address the Evaluation questions. While directed to principals, in some cases, the principal may forward the letter to the Special Education Director to complete.

### A.13 Estimates of the Cost Burden to Respondents

There are no additional respondent costs associated with this data collection beyond the hour burden estimated in Item A12 (i.e., 45 minutes for the Grantee Questionnaire, 15 minutes for the Provider Questionnaire, and 5 minutes for the TA Recipient Supplement). There are no annualized capital/startup or ongoing operation and maintenance costs associated with collecting the information.

### A.14 Estimates of Annualized Government Costs

The estimated cost for this study, including development of a detailed study design, data collection instruments, justification package, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation, is \$1,423,056 for the two years, or approximately \$711,526 per year.

### A.15 Changes in Hour Burden

Phase I of this evaluation has now been completed and we are requesting approval for phase II. We currently have 1,028 burden hours approved but will require only 927 burden hours for this portion of the study. Therefore, this request represents a reduction of 101 burden hours.

### A.16 Time Schedule, Publication, and Analysis Plan

#### Time Schedule

The schedule shown below in Exhibit A-6 displays the sequence of activities required to conduct the data collection activities, including key dates for activities related to instrument design, data collection, analysis, and reporting.



## Exhibit A-6. Time Schedule for Key Project Activities

Activities	Date
Provider Questionnaire and TA Recipient Supplement fielded	September 2014-March 2015
State Deaf-Blind Project Questionnaire administered	October 2014
Analyze data	March-June 2015
TWG meeting	September 2015
First draft of report	December 2015
Second draft of report	February 2016
Final report	July 2016

## Publication

For the final report, we will follow the principles of the Federal Plain Language Action and Information Network and adhere to the requirements of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Statistical Standards (2002), IES Style Guide (2005) and other IES guidance and requirements for public reporting. The Phase II final report will address the evaluation questions and sub-questions using information from all three questionnaires, and will follow the format of the Phase I report. Namely, the report will start with highlights of the findings in an Executive Summary. The report will then provide a discussion of the context for understanding the findings, the data sources used and their limitations, the data collection methodology, the analyses conducted, and findings. The last chapter will include a one-page summary of each project using the same key variables in each profile, allowing for comparisons across projects. Appendices will provide the questionnaires and detailed information on any data that are identified to be of interest primarily to special groups as opposed to by a broad set of stakeholders. An overview of the report appears in Exhibit A-7.

## Exhibit A-7. Report Outline

Chapter	Topic covered
Executive Summary	Study background and design, key findings by evaluation question
1	Study Background and Design
2	Characteristics of the Projects (RQ1)
3	Collaboration Among Projects (RQ2)
4	Characteristics of Providers and their Need for Technical Assistance (RQ3)
5	Satisfaction with Technical Assistance (RQ4)
6	Individual State Project Profiles (a 1-page summary of key data points, presented for each state)

Findings from the project will be presented using both tables and graphs, as appropriate to the data. An example of presentation in a table format appears in Exhibit A-8. In general, the presentation of information will be very similar to the Phase I report of this evaluation.

Question 14 reads, *“In the area of Intervener Services, are any of the following activities part of your project? For each row, select one option.”* Respondents indicate whether they have worked

on this, plan to work on it, or if it is not part of their project for each of nine reasons. Responses with “other” are specified and will be examined separately.

**Exhibit A-8. Example Table Shell: Activities Reported by Grantees Related to Intervener Services**

Reason	Have worked on this since October 2013		Have not worked on this yet, but plan to do so by completion of project		Not part of project	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Disseminate information intended to increase recognition/understanding of intervener services						
b. Provide intervener training/professional development to interveners or people interested in becoming interveners						
c. Provide training/professional development about intervener services to administrators and educational team members						
d. Develop intervener learning modules						
e. Participate in a credentialing process at the state level						
f. Develop other products related to intervener services (e.g., definition, IEP guidelines)						
g. Present webinars on intervener services						
h. Pilot an intervener model in selected districts						
i. Other						

**A.17 Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval**

All data collection instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

**A.18 Exceptions to Certification Statement**

No exceptions are requested.

## References

- Daley, T. C., Fiore, T. A., Bollmer, J., Nimkoff, T., Lysy, C. 2013. National Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance & Dissemination Program (NCEE 2014-4000). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. [Available online at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20144000/>, last accessed 3/11/2014.]
- Dillman, D. A. (2000). Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method. New York: John Wiley.