

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 IC Clearance Official, 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: May 8, 2007.

Angela C. Arrington,

IC Clearance Official, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management.

#### **Institute of Education Sciences**

*Type of Review:* Extension.

*Title:* Impact Evaluation of Upward Bound's Increased Focus on Higher-Risk Students—Baseline Data Collection Protocols.

*Frequency:* One time.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or household.

*Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden:*

*Responses:* 10,890.

*Burden Hours:* 3,900.

*Abstract:* This evaluation will focus on the impacts of Upward Bound on students applying to enter the program as early as the summer of 2007. The current OMB package requests clearance

for the instruments to be used in gathering information.

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 3345. 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. E7-9199 Filed 5-11-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

#### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

##### **Office of Postsecondary Education; Overview Information; Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education—Comprehensive Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007**

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:* 84.116B

**DATES:** Applications Available: May 14, 2007.

*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* June 13, 2007.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* August 13, 2007.

*Eligible Applicants:* Institutions of higher education (IHEs) or combinations of those institutions and other public and private nonprofit institutions and agencies.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$3,400,000.

*Estimated Range of Awards:* \$100,000–\$250,000 per year.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:* \$160,000 per year.

*Maximum Award:* We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$250,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 16–20.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to 36 months.

#### **Full Text of Announcement**

##### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

*Purpose of Program:* The Comprehensive Program supports innovative grants and cooperative agreements to improve postsecondary education. It supports reforms, innovations, and significant improvements of postsecondary education that respond to problems of national significance and serve as national models.

*Priorities:* In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(i), we are particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priorities.

*Invitational Priorities:* For FY 2007 these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

##### *Invitational Priority 1:*

Projects encouraging higher levels of access, persistence, and completion of graduation requirements for higher education.

##### *Invitational Priority 2:*

Projects aligning curriculum on a state or multi-state level between high schools and colleges, and between two-year and four-year postsecondary programs, to ensure continuing academic progress and transferability of credits.

##### *Invitational Priority 3:*

Projects improving the mathematics and science proficiency of postsecondary students including preservice math and science teachers.

##### *Invitational Priority 4:*

Projects to enable postsecondary students, including preservice teachers, to achieve proficiency or advanced proficiency or postsecondary institutions to develop programs in one or more of the less commonly taught languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, and languages in the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic language families.

##### *Invitational Priority 5:*

Projects designed to disseminate successful strategies to achieve the goals of any of the above invitational priorities serving postsecondary education.

**Program Authority:** 20 U.S.C. 1138–1138d.

*Applicable Regulations:* The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in

34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

## II. Award Information

*Type of Award:* Discretionary grants or cooperative agreements.

*Estimated Available Funds:*  
\$3,400,000.

*Estimated Range of Awards:*  
\$100,000–\$250,000 per year.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:*  
\$160,000 per year.

*Maximum Award:* We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$250,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 16–20.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to 36 months.

## III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* IHEs or combinations of those institutions and other public and private nonprofit institutions and agencies.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* Although this program does not require cost sharing or matching for eligibility, it is expected that applicants will provide an institutional financial commitment to the project.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* Levenia Ishmell, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6147, Washington, DC 20006–8544. Telephone: (202) 502–7668 or by e-mail: [Levenia.Ishmell@ed.gov](mailto:Levenia.Ishmell@ed.gov).

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program.

*Page Limit:* The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection

criteria that reviewers use to evaluate the application. You must limit your narrative to the equivalent of no more than 20 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” x 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be outside of the 1” margin.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, *except* titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions. Charts, tables, figures, and graphs in the application narrative may be singled spaced and will count toward the page limit.
- Use a font that is either 12-point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). However, you may use a 10-point font in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will be rejected.
- The page limit does not apply to Part I, the Title Page; Part II, the Budget Summary form (ED Form 524); Part IV, the assurances and certifications; the table of contents, the appendix, which shall only include letters of support, or the response to section 427 of the Department of Education’s General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). If you include any attachments or appendices not specifically requested, these items will be counted as part of the program narrative (Part III) for purposes of the page limit requirement.

We will reject your application if:

- You apply these standards and exceed the page limit; or
- You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:* Applications Available: May 14, 2007. Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 13, 2007. Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: August 13, 2007. Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site ([Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or by hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 6. Other Submission Requirements in this notice.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed

## under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

**CONTACT** in Section VII of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under the Comprehensive Program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

### a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under the Comprehensive Program, CFDA Number 84.116B must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under *Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement*.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Comprehensive Program at: <http://www.Grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number’s alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.116, not 84.116B).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this program to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at:

<http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp)). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to submit successfully an application via Grants.gov. In addition you will need to update your CCR registration on an

annual basis. This may take three to five days to complete.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically including all information you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Please note that two of these forms—the SF 424 and the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424—have replaced ED 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance).

- You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified in this paragraph or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department will then retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

*Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System:* If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m.,

Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, please contact the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

**Note:** Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

*Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement:* You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—

- You do not have access to the Internet; or

- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system; and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Levenia Ishmell, FIPSE Comprehensive Program Assistant, U.S.

Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6147, Washington, DC 20006-8544. FAX: (202) 502-7877.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

*b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

*By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.116B), 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260; or

*By mail through a commercial carrier:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center—Stop 4260, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.116B), 7100 Old Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

**Note:** The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

*c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand,

on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.116B), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260. The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

**Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications:** If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

**V. Application Review Information**

*Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

**VI. Award Administration Information**

*1. Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

*2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

*3. Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by

the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118. Grantees are required to use the electronic data instrument provided by the program office to complete the annual and final reports.

*4. Performance Measures:* Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the following measures will be used by the Department in assessing the performance of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education's Comprehensive Program:

(1) The percentage of projects that are adopted in full or in part, or whose materials are used by other institutions; and

(2) The percentage of projects with a high likelihood of sustainability beyond Federal funding, based on the project officer's determination.

If funded, you will be asked to collect and report data in your project's annual performance report (EDGAR, 34 CFR 75.590) on steps taken toward these goals. Consequently, applicants are advised to include these two indicators in conceptualizing the design, implementation and evaluation of the proposed project. Consideration of the two performance indicators is an important part of many of the review criteria. Thus, it is important to the success of your application that you include these indicators. Their measure should be a part of the project evaluation plan, along with measures of goals and objectives specific to your project.

**VII. Agency Contact**

*For Further Information Contact:*

Levenia Ishmell, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6147, Washington, DC 20006-8544. Telephone: (202) 502-7668 or by e-mail: [Levenia.Ishmell@ed.gov](mailto:Levenia.Ishmell@ed.gov).

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed in this section.

**VIII. Other Information**

*Electronic Access to This Document:* You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>.

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

**Note:** The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Dated: May 8, 2007.

**James F. Manning,**

*Delegated the Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 07-2341 Filed 5-11-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Overview Information; Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:* 84.325Q.

*Dates:*

*Applications Available:* May 14, 2007.

*Deadline for Transmittal of*

*Applications:* June 13, 2007.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental*

*Review:* August 13, 2007.

*Eligible Applicants:* Institutions of higher education (IHEs).

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$500,000.

*Maximum Award:* We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

*Number of Awards:* 1.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to 60 months.

## Full Text of Announcement

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

**Purpose of Program:** The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for highly qualified personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with infants or toddlers with

disabilities; or children with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge—derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful—that are needed to serve those children.

**Priority:** In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662(d) and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)).

**Absolute Priority:** For FY 2007 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is: *National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development.*

### Background

While Federal law requires educators to meet the highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements, States and school districts struggle to retain such teachers. The likelihood that teachers will remain in their positions beyond the first years of employment is affected by a wide variety of factors, including the policies and practices of teacher preparation programs, States, and school districts.

The retention of teachers is a major concern among educators because teacher turnover creates multiple challenges for schools. Several recent studies report the costs of teacher turnover are high because it not only affects the quality of instruction, but turnover also means additional costs for preparing, recruiting, and inducting highly qualified teachers to replace those who have left (Boe, Cook, and Sutherland, 2006; Billingsley, 2005; Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson, 2005). On the whole, there is broad consensus among policymakers that significant efforts are needed to improve the preparation and retention of highly qualified teachers.

Teacher preparation that is of high quality is a strong predictor of both teacher retention and good teaching practice (NCTAF, 2006), and research has consistently found that new teachers make important gains in teaching quality in the first year and smaller gains over the next few years of their careers (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 2005, p. 449 as cited in Condition of Education, NCES, 2005). In addition, high quality teacher preparation, along with quality induction and mentoring during the first years of employment, appear to be even more important in urban school districts where data from the last several decades show that from 40 to 50 percent of new teachers will leave the profession within five years

(Darling-Hammond and Schlansky, 1996; Ingersoll, 2003; National Education Association, 2006; Farber, 2006).

Research suggests that there are a variety of effective ways to improve retention rates for beginning special educators, as well as strategies that improve the quality of pre-service training and professional development for special educators. To this end, the Secretary proposes a National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development.

**Priority:** This priority supports a National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development (Center). The purposes of this Center are to: (a) Inform special education teacher preparation policy and practice by examining and recommending to IHEs, State educational agencies (SEAs), and local educational agencies (LEAs) those policies and practices that improve retention of beginning special education teachers, such as high quality induction, mentoring, and collaborative teaching experiences; and (b) recommend implementation strategies for policies and practices that provide beginning special education and regular education teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively support students with disabilities in different classroom settings, including collaborative practices in regular classroom settings.

The Center must:

(a) **Identify needs and existing resources:** Identify critical issues, needs, and existing resources that relate to improved support for beginning special educators through: (1) A comprehensive review of current policy, scientifically based research, and evidence-based practice literature on retention strategies such as the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers of students with disabilities and collaborative teaching practices; and (2) coordination with other U.S. Department of Education (ED) funded grants related to highly qualified teacher induction, mentoring, and retention (e.g., National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (<http://www.ncctq.org>); Center for Improving Teacher Quality (<http://www.centerforteacherquality.org>); National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers (<http://www.personnelcenter.org>); and Faculty Enhancement Center (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>);

(b) **Identify critical gaps in the knowledge base:** Identify the most significant gaps in the current knowledge base, considering the critical issues and needs identified in paragraph (a), and utilize this information to develop an agenda that identifies and