

Regional Resource and Federal Centers Program (CFDA No. 84.028)

I. Legislation

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended, Part C, Section 621, P.L. 101-476 (20 U.S.C. 1421), expired September 30, 1995; operating under the authorization of the appropriations acts.

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1969	\$5,000,000	1987	\$6,700,000
1970	3,000,000	1988	6,415,000
1975	7,087,000	1989	6,338,000
1980	9,750,000	1990	6,510,000
1981	2,950,000	1991	6,620,000
1982	2,880,000	1992	7,000,000
1983	2,880,000	1993	7,218,000
1984	5,700,000	1994	7,218,000
1985	6,000,000	1995	7,218,000
1986	6,029,000	1996	6,641,000

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The Regional Resource and Federal Centers Program supports Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) that provide consultation, technical assistance, and training to state education agencies (SEAs) and, through the SEAs, to local education agencies and other appropriate public agencies. The purpose is to help these agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families. The program is designed to provide services to all states and territories, the District of Columbia, and the schools of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, through six service regions. A national coordination technical assistance center, the Federal Resource Center, is designed to synthesize information about needs, issues, and trends concerning the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities, across the six RRCs.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

Regional Resource Centers. The national focus of the RRC program is to support changes in state policies, procedures, and practices that affect local programs and services to children with disabilities and their families. The RRCs accomplish this mission by helping the region's SEAs to (1) identify and analyze persistent problems that interfere with the provision of quality services; (2) gain access to current special education research, technology, and practices for solving problems; (3) work with

other states to develop solutions to common problems; (4) adopt new technologies and practices through consultation and the provision of relevant information; and, (5) improve the cooperation between professionals and parents of children with disabilities.

The RRCs produce and disseminate products within their region that are designed to improve services to children with disabilities, address legislative mandates, help reduce duplication of services, fill gaps in services, improve the sharing of information among cooperating service providers, and maintain continuity in services and pool resources during a time when such resources are becoming more limited. Each center serves 7 to 14 states and U.S. territories (outlying areas). Key issues at this time are (1) meeting the needs of a diverse group of students with disabilities, such as minority and medically fragile children, (2) serving children with disabilities in general education settings, and (3) improving the outcomes for students with disabilities as they make the transition from school to the work place.

Federal Resource Center. A major support to the RRC network is the Federal Resource Center (FRC), which helps coordinate activities among the RRCs to ensure that the technical assistance and information that the various Regional Resource Centers provide to state educational agencies reflect a national perspective, and is consistent in terms of content and strategy. The FRC provides information on national issues and trends, current technical assistance activities, and promising special education practices to each of the RRCs to ensure better results for children. A major function of the FRC is to help link RRCs with other technical assistance projects funded by the Department's Office of Special Education Programs, including health-related entities and organizations representing persons with disabilities, professional organizations, and projects involving parents.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

A performance measures workgroup has begun approaching the development of performance measures in a way that is generally aligned to the proposed reauthorization of IDEA, but would be useful regardless of the legislative structure. It assumes that discretionary activities would fall under seven major categories of activities: research, demonstration, outreach, professional development and parent training, systems change, technical assistance, and dissemination. Indicators are being developed.

IV. Planned Studies

The Department has requested funds under a proposed set-aside authority for funds available under state grants to carry out a national assessment of the implementation of IDEA, as well as other studies and evaluations related to the implementation of IDEA. The national assessment would evaluate the extent to which its discretionary programs support the goals of the IDEA. The Department has yet to determine if a national assessment would include an evaluation of the Regional Resource Centers and the Federal Resource Center.

V. Sources of Information

1. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Program Funded Activities Fiscal Year 1995 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

2. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1995. Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1995).
3. Program files.

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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