

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

President Obama is committed to fostering a society that values the contributions of all people, including individuals with disabilities. Although we have made advances in education, employment, and civil rights for individuals with disabilities, we must do more to fulfill the promise of equal access and equal opportunity. Educational, economic, and health outcomes for people with disabilities are still much lower than their peers without disabilities, and ensuring that individuals with disabilities are achieving to the highest levels possible is a national imperative.

The Administration has proposed changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are addressed throughout ESEA, and has continued to include students with disabilities in all of its education reform efforts. The Administration is also working to improve the participation of individuals with disabilities in our nation's public workforce system and increase the employment of individuals with disabilities, including by providing grants to States and other entities to create innovative models for service delivery that are likely to improve their employment outcomes.

The President's fiscal year 2014 budget request provides increased investments in education for children with disabilities as well as targeted investments that encourage innovation and advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

- **IDEA Part B Grants to States (\$11.6 billion).** These formula grants support States and districts in providing special education and related services to students with disabilities. The grants are critical to the efforts of states and districts to provide the more than 6.5 million students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 served by Part B a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that meets their unique needs. By maintaining significant support for Part B, the Administration is helping to ensure that students with disabilities receive the special education and related services necessary to participate in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible and are prepared for college and careers.
- **IDEA Part C Grants for Infants and Families (\$463 million).** These formula grants help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services to assist all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through age two and their families. These funds would increase the average State allocation by over \$300,000, help States serve an estimated 337,000 infants and toddlers, encourage States to extend early intervention services to children through age 5, and help States coordinate with early childhood programs that are part of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge and Preschool for All. Additionally, this request would allow the Department to award up to \$2.7 million for State Incentive Grants to facilitate a seamless system of services for children with disabilities from birth until kindergarten entry.
- **IDEA Part B Preschool Grants (\$373 million).** These formula grants help States provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment to all children with disabilities ages 3 through 5.

This request, supplemented by the funds requested for the IDEA Part B Grants to States program, would help ensure that over 745,000 young children with disabilities will be ready to succeed when they enter school. In addition, this request would help States coordinate with preschool programs for children with disabilities within the broader Preschool for All program.

- **National Activities under IDEA (\$236 million).** These funds would be used to improve services and supports for children with disabilities and advance the field through funding for technical assistance, personnel development and preparation, parent information centers, and educational technology, media, and materials. The National Activities programs link States, school systems, and families to best practices to improve results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program (\$3.2 billion).** These grants help States and tribal governments increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The \$71.081 million increase over the fiscal year 2013 mandatory level would more than offset the reduction in funds resulting from the Administration's proposal to eliminate separate funding authorities for several smaller VR-related programs. The VR State Grants program can also carry out the activities of the smaller programs. Eliminating them would reduce duplication of effort and administrative costs, streamline program administration at the Federal and local levels, and improve accountability.
- **Improving the achievement of students with disabilities.** The Administration believes strongly that all students, including students with disabilities, should enter school ready to learn and have access to high-quality interventions and effective teachers. The President's 2014 budget request includes funds for programs that would support these goals, such as:
 - **College- and Career-Ready Students program (\$14.5 billion).** This program would strengthen school, district, and State accountability by continuing to require disaggregated reporting of achievement data for students with disabilities, asking States to implement meaningful interventions in schools with the largest achievement gaps, and measuring student growth as well as achievement.
 - **Preschool for All (\$75 billion over 10 years).** This new initiative would provide universal access to high-quality preschool for four-year-old children from low and moderate income families, including children with disabilities. The program would give more children with disabilities and developmental delays the opportunity to participate in inclusive, high-quality preschool programs to prepare them for success in school and in life.
 - **Presidential Teaching Fellows program (\$190 million).** This program would support scholarships for talented teaching candidates to attend top-tier teacher preparation programs and teach in high-need schools and high-need subjects or

fields, including special education. The program would help ensure that students with disabilities, along with low-income students, minority students, and English Learners, have access to effective teachers.

- **Disability Innovation Fund.** The FY 2014 request includes language that would allow the Secretary to use funds that remain available after the reallocation of funds to States under the VR State Grants program to support innovative activities aimed at improving services and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with disabilities under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program. These activities include:
 - **The Promoting Readiness of Minors in Social Security Income (PROMISE) program.** This joint pilot demonstration program with the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor would improve the education and post-school outcomes of children who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families. This program would fund pilots in select States to improve the provision and coordination of services for these individuals.
 - **Support for Disconnected Youth and At-Risk Individuals.** Of the total amount of VR funds that remain available at the end of FY 2014, the Administration proposes to set-aside \$5 million to support projects targeting disconnected youth with disabilities under the Disconnected Youth Initiative. The Administration would also set aside part of the remaining funds to support a pilot demonstration project with the Social Security Administration that would incentivize State efforts to utilize an array of State and federal programs and funding streams, such as the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program, to provide early intervention employment-related services to at-risk individuals with disabilities.