children with disabilities and their families

ADD is interested in funding projects reflecting these values in culturally competent, inclusive, family-centered and measurably outcome-oriented approaches that can establish ongoing relationships.

In addition, ADD is interested in joint efforts of projects such as the Americorps program of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the JOBS program, whereby young adults with disabilities may participate in jobs and community service as personal assistants and inclusion aides.

Proposed Fiscal Year 1995 Priority Area 5: Building a Multi-Cultural Network Within the Developmental Disabilities System

The reality of an American society in which racial and ethnic cultural minorities are increasing in numbers and influence is becoming more evident each day. There are more than three million American children and adults with developmental disabilities, including a large number who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. Many of these individuals and families from culturally diverse backgrounds remain outside of the various disability systems designed for their benefit; they are unable to gain access to the service systems, let alone fully participate in or benefit from them. Successful individuals of color with disabilities are often not encouraged or identified to serve as role models for other individuals having disabilities. In large part, the developmental disabilities network does not reflect this new multicultural reality—not among faculty, planners, staffs, trainees, or advocates. As a first step in addressing this situation, ADD established a multicultural committee with the mission of advising and providing resources to the Commissioner of ADD on all matters that may influence the implementation of a culturally competent service system for persons with disabilities.

Therefore, ADD is proposing to fund projects that will enable the developmental disabilities network to gain and maintain the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to serve a culturally diverse constituency. These projects should assist the components of the developmental disabilities network (Developmental Disabilities Councils, Protection and Advocacy Agencies, and University Affiliated Programs) in obtaining appropriate tools to identify areas of need and to develop action strategies that will address not only current needs but have as a goal

institutionalizing cultural competency in every aspect of our programs. For some components, assistance in cultural competence should be implemented at the community or policy/advocacy level while other programs will need assistance at a more basic internal/programmatic level. Within and outside the developmental disabilities system are existing resources, both material and human, that these projects should collect and utilize through a cadre of consultants with expertise in this area.

At the local level, building linkages or connections among and between the Developmental Disabilities Councils, P&As, and UAPs with cultural/ethnic organizations that are representative of community demographics will be essential as these components of the developmental disabilities network develop and implement action strategies. Therefore, ADD is particularly interested in fostering Statelevel coalitions between Developmental Disabilities Councils, Protection and Advocacy Systems, University-Affiliated Programs, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other institutions of higher education with high minority student enrollment, major civil rights organizations, and cultural/ethnic associations. Without the involvement of these types of organizations, the ability and capacity to understand and thus serve individuals and families from different racial/ethnic backgrounds would be severely hindered.

Key to the operation and long-term effect of these projects is the dissemination of knowledge, best practices, materials, and experiences between the networks and beyond. This needs to occur not only during the length of the projects but at the end as well. ADD is interested in dissemination activities that would maintain and share ongoing information, existing resources of consultants/experts, curriculum/ materials with funded projects and within the network. At a national level the experiences of these projects should be shared with the developmental disabilities network and the disability field, as well as with major civil rights organizations, other minority organizations, and institutions of higher education such as HBCUs, leading to further collaboration and partnership at the State level in the continued development of cultural competency.

Of particular interest are projects that have as a focus the professional recruitment and retention of individuals who are from culturally diverse backgrounds with disabilities into all aspects of the three components of the DD network, especially in research,

training, policy, and administration. Only in this way will people with developmental disabilities be empowered and the system made to reflect their vision.

Proposed Fiscal Year 1995 Priority Area 6: Accessing Telecommunication Services for Persons With Developmental Disabilities

With the advancement in technology as it relates to the telecommunication information superhighway, the availability of service information for individuals with disabilities has become more accessible. This accessibility opens up the possibility for greater utilization of services to families and individuals with developmental disabilities through the use of computer technology.

Consumers and their families need, along with the private sector, to be apprised of the services that are available. Computer bulletin board service providers such as Internet, Compuserve, Prodigy, and others are mechanisms which provide a wealth of information. These services also have the ability to enable individuals with disabilities to access information on governmental programs serving their population, available treatment facilities, medical breakthroughs, best practices, and the sharing of concerns on issues regarding disabilities.

Therefore, ADD is interested in funding projects to develop strategies which would reach individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, and underserved individuals using computer linkages. ADD is also interested in funding projects that will provide information and other assistance to organizations that want to set up telecommunication systems that link advocacy groups, service providers, consumers, and parents on a national basis. ADD is aware that a number of computer bulletin boards already exist, but which ones are targeted to developmental disabilities consumers and their families is unknown. In addition, how individuals with disabilities would access and utilize information from these systems is not known.

Proposed Fiscal Year 1995 Priority Area 7: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Individuals With Developmental Disabilities

Meeting the mental health needs of individuals with developmental disabilities is a "quality of life" goal, but, often community service personnel neither have the skills nor the desire to effectively treat individuals with developmental disabilities who have