

## CONGRESSIONAL REFERRAL FOLLOW-UP

MEMBER/STATE: FY2001 House Referrals

REFERRAL NO.: 42

SHORT TITLE: Human Factors Research

**ACTION REQUESTED:** I have a request of \$2.5 million to fund a study employing distance learning strategies to shorten the time required to prepare certified airframe and power plant maintenance technicians. This study would be conducted by the John D. Rockefeller IV Vocational Technical Center in New Cumberland, West Virginia. What is the FAA's current involvement with this technical center and are there any funds requested in the 2001 budget? Does the FAA support such a study? What would be an appropriate amount for the proposed activity if funding were added to the 2001 request?

**A. BACKGROUND**

1. In FY 2001 President's budget:  
(If yes, briefly describe request) YES  NO
2. Previous funding received: YES  NO
3. Project application, funding request,  
or other notification received by DOT:  
(If yes, briefly describe status) YES  NO

- B. FEDERAL FUNDING ELIGIBILITY** (current law) YES  NO   
(if yes, describe project eligibility and availability of other funds (e.g. entitlements) that could be used for the requested project)

**C. EVALUATION FACTORS** (where applicable):

1. Benefit/cost ratio Not applicable
2. Non-federal funding commitment Not applicable

**D. AUTHORIZATION STATUS**

1. General Fund/Trust Fund Appropriation YES  NO   
Amount (\$000) \$237M  
Statutory Citation Public Law 106-181

**E. OTHER INFORMATION**

Response: Last year, representatives from the FAA's Office of the Chief Scientist for Human Factors visited the Rockefeller Center to provide recommendations on research topics, preparing research grant proposals, and conducting research. In February 2000, the FAA Grants Office at the William J. Hughes Technical Center reviewed a Rockefeller Center grant proposal for distance learning (DL) research, and determined that it did not meet criteria for grant consideration. Based on currently programmed high priority human factors research, funding for research proposed by the Rockefeller Center is not included in the FY 2001 human factors research budget, and resources will not be available to fund this project.

The quality of aviation maintenance training varies greatly among technical schools, and hiring organizations are burdened with varying lengths of on-the-job-training (OJT)

before personnel are operationally qualified. In an effort to develop a solution to these issues, the FAA has identified two potential research questions for evaluation: (1) Would the introduction of DL technology and procedures allow consistent quality training, and (2) Would OJT be significantly affected. This potential research will require funding estimated at between \$200,000 and \$300,000 per year for three years, and other resources and expertise not currently available at the Rockefeller Center, but which may be available at other institutions with established DL research programs.