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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Rehabilitation Services Administration

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2003

Report on Federal Activities Under
The *Rehabilitation Act*

REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2003

REPORT ON FEDERAL ACTIVITIES
UNDER THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

U.S. Department of Education

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May 2007

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ABBREVIATIONS

AART	Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training
ABA	<i>Architectural Barriers Act</i>
ADA	<i>Americans with Disabilities Act</i>
AIVRS	American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
BAC	Business Advisory Councils
BEP	Business Enterprise Program
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CAP	Client Assistance Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CM	Common Measure
CoE	Center of Excellence
CRD	Civil Rights Division
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Programs
CSPD	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
DBTAC	Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center
<i>DD Act</i>	<i>Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000</i>
DRRP	Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Related Projects
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
FIP	Field-Initiated Projects
FR	<i>Federal Register</i>
FY	Fiscal Year
GPRA	<i>Government Performance and Results Act</i>
GSA	General Services Administration
ICDR	Interagency Committee on Disability Research
IL	Independent Living

IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
IRI	Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
KDU	Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization
MSI	Minority Serving Institutions
NCD	National Council on Disability
NCRTM	National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
NIDRR	National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
NVRTAC	National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center
OCIO	Office of Chief Information Officer
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OFCCP	Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
PAIR	Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights
PART	Program Assessment Rating Tool
PWI	Projects With Industry
RERC	Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
RRCEP	Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs
RRTC	Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SCI	Spinal Cord Injury
SILC	Statewide Independent Living Council
SILS	State Independent Living Services
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
UI	Unemployment Insurance
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIA	<i>Workforce Investment Act</i>

FOREWORD

The *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended (the act), provides the legislative basis for programs and activities that assist individuals with disabilities in the pursuit of gainful employment, independence, self-sufficiency and full integration into community life.

This report is intended to provide a description of accomplishments and progress made under the act during fiscal year 2003 (October 2002 through September 2003). To that end, the report identifies major activities that occurred during that fiscal year and the status of those activities during that specific time period.

The report provides a description of the activities of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), a component of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education. RSA is the principal agency for carrying out Titles I, III, VI, and VII, as well as specified portions of Title V of the act. RSA has responsibility for preparing and submitting this report to the president and Congress under Section 13 of the act.

The act also authorizes research activities that are administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the work of the National Council on Disability (NCD), and includes a variety of provisions focused on rights, advocacy and protections for individuals with disabilities. A description of those activities also is provided in this report.

**THE *REHABILITATION ACT*:
AN OVERVIEW**

THE *REHABILITATION ACT*: AN OVERVIEW

Federal interest and involvement in rehabilitation issues and policy date from the *Smith-Fess Act of 1920*. The *Smith-Fess Act* marked the beginning of a federal and state partnership in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Although the law was passed shortly after the end of World War I, its provisions were specifically directed at the rehabilitation needs of persons who were industrially disabled rather than those of disabled veterans.

A major event in the history of the federal rehabilitation program was passage of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (the act). The act, as amended, provides the legislative basis for programs and activities that assist individuals with disabilities¹ in the pursuit of gainful employment, independence, self-sufficiency and full integration into community life. Under the act, the following federal agencies and entities are charged with administering a wide variety of programs and activities: the departments of Education, Labor and Justice, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board and the National Council on Disability.

The U.S. Department of Education has primary responsibility for administering the act. Within the Department, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is the administrative entity responsible for oversight of programs under the act that are funded through the Department. Within OSERS, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) share responsibility for carrying out the administration of those programs. RSA is the principal agency for carrying out Titles I, III, VI, and VII, as well as specified portions of Title V of the act. NIDRR is responsible for administering Title II of the act. (See fig. 1 for title names.)

Figure 1. The *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as Amended: Names of Titles

Title	Name
I	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
II	Research and Training
III	Professional Development and Special Projects and Demonstrations
IV	National Council on Disability
V	Rights and Advocacy
VI	Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities
VII	Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living

¹ An individual with a disability is defined, for purposes of programs funded under the act, at Section 7(20) of the act (see Appendix C: Definition of "Individual With a Disability" as listed in Section 7(20) of the *Rehabilitation Act*).

RSA staff, which in fiscal year (FY) 2003 was located in Washington, D.C. and 10 regional offices across the nation, provided technical assistance and leadership to states and other grantees in carrying out the purposes and policy outlined in the act. [These regional offices were closed on Sept. 30, 2005. RSA currently administers its programs from its headquarters office in Washington, D.C.] RSA administers grant programs that provide direct support for vocational rehabilitation, independent living and individual advocacy and assistance. The agency also supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel trained in providing rehabilitation and other services and to upgrade the skills and credentials of employed personnel.

In addition, RSA conducts model demonstrations and systems-change projects to improve services provided under the act, and evaluates programs to assess their effectiveness and identify best practices. Finally, RSA provides consultative and technical assistance services and disseminates information to public and nonprofit private agencies and organizations to facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in employment and in the community.

By far, the largest program administered by RSA is the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program, also known as the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants Program (hereinafter referred to as the VR program). This program funds state VR agencies to provide employment-related services for individuals with disabilities so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

For over 80 years, the VR program has helped individuals with disabilities prepare for and enter into the workplace. Nationwide, VR programs serve more than 1 million people with disabilities each year. Over 91 percent of the people who use state VR services have significant physical or mental disabilities that seriously limit one or more functional capacities. These individuals often require multiple services over an extended period of time. For them, VR services are indispensable to their becoming employed and reducing their reliance on public support.

Under Title II of the act, NIDRR conducts comprehensive and coordinated programs of research, demonstration projects, training and related activities. NIDRR-funded programs and activities are designed to promote employment, independent living, maintenance of health and function, full inclusion and integration into society, and the transfer of rehabilitation technology to individuals with disabilities. The intent is to improve the economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities and the effectiveness of programs and services authorized under the act.

Toward that goal, NIDRR supports rehabilitation research and development, demonstration projects and related activities, including the training of persons who provide rehabilitation services or who conduct rehabilitation research. In addition, NIDRR supports projects to disseminate and promote the use of information concerning developments in rehabilitation procedures, methods and devices. Information is provided to rehabilitation professionals, persons with disabilities and their representatives. NIDRR

also supports data analyses on the demographics of disability and provides that information to policymakers, administrators and other relevant groups. Awards are competitive, with applications reviewed by panels of experts, including rehabilitation professionals, rehabilitation researchers and persons with disabilities.

The act has been a driving force behind major changes that have since affected the lives of millions of individuals with disabilities in this country. With passage of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)*, the act was reauthorized for another five years. This report covers FY 2003 and describes all of the major programs and activities authorized under the act and the success of the federal government in carrying out the purposes and policy outlined in the act.

PROGRAMS UNDER
THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

PROGRAMS UNDER *THE REHABILITATION ACT*

RSA directly funds or supports through partnerships with other federal and nonfederal agencies, a wide variety of initiatives, programs or activities that are authorized under the act. For the purpose of this report, these initiatives, programs and activities are organized into five major areas. Within each area, the report provides a description of the discrete program, initiative or activity. Descriptions include RSA budget allocations for FY 2003 and reporting of major outcomes and accomplishments. Programs organized by these five areas are:

Employment Programs

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
- Supported Employment Services Program
- American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
- Demonstration and Training Program
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program
- Projects With Industry
- Business Enterprise Program

Independent Living and Community Integration

- Independent Living Services Program
- Centers for Independent Living Program
- Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
- Recreational Programs

Technical Assistance, Training and Support

- Program Improvement
- Capacity-building for Traditionally Underserved Populations
- Rehabilitation Training Program

Evaluation, Research and Information Dissemination

- Program Evaluation
- *American Rehabilitation Magazine*
- Information Clearinghouse
- National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

Advocacy and Enforcement

- Client Assistance Program
- Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights
- Employment of People With Disabilities
- Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
- Electronic and Information Technology
- Employment Under Federal Contracts
- Nondiscrimination Under Federal Grants and Programs
- National Council on Disability

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

RSA administers seven programs that assist individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes². Two of these programs, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (VR program) and the Supported Employment Services Program, are state formula grant programs. The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Demonstration and Training, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and the Projects With Industry programs are discretionary grant programs that make competitive awards for up to a five-year period. RSA also provides oversight of the Business Enterprise Program operated by state VR agencies for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Each of these programs is described below.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 100–111 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RSA

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services program assists states in operating VR programs as an integral part of a coordinated, statewide workforce investment system. Specifically, the VR program is designed to provide VR services to eligible individuals with disabilities so that they may achieve an employment outcome that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$2,505,055,858

The federal government covers 78.7 percent of the program's costs through financial assistance to the states for program services and administration. Federal funds are transferred to the states³ based on a statutory formula in Section 8 of the act. The formula takes into consideration a state's population and per capita income. To match the federal funds allotted to the states for the VR program, states expended \$876,668,357 of their own funds.

Each state designates a state agency to administer the VR program. The act provides flexibility to the states with respect to the organizational positioning of the VR program within the state structure. The VR program can be located in one of two types of state agencies — one that is primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of

² Employment outcome means: with respect to an individual, entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive employment ... in the integrated labor market, supported employment, or any other type of employment in an integrated setting, including self-employment, telecommuting or business ownership, that is consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest and informed choice, according to the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(16).

³ States include, in addition to each of the several states of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, according to Section 7(32) of the act.

individuals with disabilities; or in an agency that is not primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. For the latter, the act requires the agency to have a designated state unit (DSU) that is primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. The act also provides flexibility for a state to have two state VR agencies — one for individuals who are blind and one for individuals with other types of disabilities. All 56 states have VR agencies; however, in FY 2003, 24 states also had separate agencies serving blind or visually impaired individuals. Of the 80 VR agencies, 25 are primarily concerned with VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Of these, 10 are consumer-controlled agencies. Of the 55 agencies that are not primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the VR program is located in 12 education agencies; 14 labor/workforce agencies; and 28 human services/welfare agencies. For American Samoa, the act identifies the Governor's Office as the VR agency.

Each VR agency works toward establishing a seamless service delivery system that can provide uninterrupted services to eligible individuals. For that purpose, state VR agencies establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with a broad spectrum of public agencies and the private sector to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services. The VR program is committed to providing services to individuals with significant disabilities⁴ and assisting each consumer to achieve high-quality employment outcomes.

RSA in its relationships with the states has continued to emphasize the priorities of high-quality employment outcomes and increased services to individuals with significant disabilities. To this end, in FY 2003, RSA articulated the following policy priorities and principles for the VR program.

- Individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities⁵, are capable of achieving competitive, high-quality employment in integrated settings and living full and productive lives in their communities.

⁴ The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(31) defines an individual with a significant disability as an individual with a disability:

- (i) Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one of more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- (ii) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
- (iii) Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocation rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

⁵ Individual with a most significant disability means an individual with a significant disability who meets the designated state unit's criteria for an individual with a most significant disability. These criteria must be consistent with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.36(d)(1) and (2).

- The low expectations and misunderstandings that society, some service providers, or consumers themselves have about their abilities, capacities, commitment, creativity, interests and ingenuity are major barriers to the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.
- Individuals with disabilities are able to make informed choices about their own lives — including their employment options, the types of services they need, the selection of service providers — and are able to assume responsibility for their decisions.
- The primary role of VR agencies and other RSA-funded entities is to provide individuals with disabilities with information, skills training, education, confidence and support services so that the individual is empowered to make informed choices about his or her professional and personal life.
- Services are best delivered within a framework of accountability, flexibility and the least administrative burden necessary.
- Collaboration between rehabilitation service providers and community-based organizations comprised of individuals with disabilities enhances the quality of services and improves outcomes.

Initiatives

Within the context of these policy priorities and principles, in FY 2003 RSA undertook a variety of leadership, technical assistance and monitoring initiatives to strengthen the VR program. To ensure that these initiatives reflected the concerns of individuals with disabilities and other stakeholders, they were fashioned in light of the results of RSA's outreach efforts. These efforts, which included the conduct of public meetings around the nation, sought to learn what the program needed to do to more effectively carry out its mission to empower individuals with disabilities, particularly those with significant disabilities, to achieve the high-quality employment outcomes to which they aspire and choose.

Some of the key initiatives undertaken by RSA in FY 2003 to expand and enhance the provision and administration of VR services included the following.

- Creation of the Transition Work Group made up of representatives of the RSA central and 10 regional offices and the state VR agencies to develop a multiyear strategic plan to guide state VR agencies in their efforts to improve the nature and scope of their transition services to students with disabilities as they pursue postsecondary educational opportunities and prepare for meaningful careers.
- Follow-up activities by the 10 RSA regions to extend and expand upon the implementation of recommendations developed at the FY 2002 National Employment Conference, especially in regard to demonstrating evidence-based

model practices for assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment goals and aspirations.

- Identification of issues relating to the proposed FY 2003 reauthorization of the act and the formulation of reauthorization proposals for the consideration of the Department.
- Convening advocates, researchers, educators and partners that provide employment services to people with mental illness to discuss strategies that RSA could implement immediately and over a longer time period to assist state VR agencies to work more effectively with persons with mental illness and other cognitive disabilities. The meeting generated recommendations that focused on service integration, stigma, long-term employment supports, resource enhancements, applied research, and the involvement of other service provider systems. In addition, a listserv was created to provide a forum for ongoing dialogue among the various stakeholders. This meeting coincided with a RSA funded technical assistance initiative under its Institute on Rehabilitation Issues that devoted one study group to address the topic "Innovative Methods for Providing VR Services to Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities."
- Conducting the third in a series of technical assistance meetings for state VR agencies as they continued their efforts to collaborate in the implementation of the Ticket-to-Work Program that is designed to improve the employment outcomes for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients. Since approximately 90 percent of all assigned tickets were held by state VR agencies, RSA considered such technical assistance efforts crucial to support the smooth implementation of this program.
- On-site monitoring in 74 state VR agencies and requiring the other six to conduct self-assessments. This level of monitoring of state agency performance reflects key principles of RSA policy: to ensure accountability in the VR program; to support ongoing efforts to promote continuous quality improvement; and to assess the nature and scope of technical assistance needed by state VR agencies. In FY 2003, RSA focused its monitoring efforts on the following:
 - ♦ A service-record review to examine eligibility determinations, timeliness and substantiality of VR services, and quality of employment outcomes. The reviews assessed not only whether the state agencies were in compliance with legal requirements but also examined agency performance with respect to the quality of rehabilitation practice and service provision. It is anticipated that the results of this performance monitoring will provide the basis to engage state VR agencies in a dialogue to develop standards of effective practice in these critical service delivery areas.
 - ♦ Assessing state VR agency performance in the implementation of transition services to students with disabilities to help them achieve employment outcomes and to determine compliance with the assurances made in the VR

state plan. This assessment encompassed a review of agency policies and procedures regarding transition services; a review of formal interagency agreements between the VR agency and the state education agency; examination of service records in which transition services were provided to students with disabilities; and interviews with the state VR administrators, transition coordinators, VR counselors, and special education personnel. As an adjunct to these monitoring efforts, RSA staff collaborated with its sister agency — the Office of Special Education Programs — to: (1) conduct joint monitoring in two states to examine in more depth the nature and scope of collaborative efforts between the VR agencies and the schools in meeting the transition needs of students with disabilities; (2) comply with the transition-related requirements of the act and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*; and (3) collect data on promising transition practices.

- ◆ Determining whether state VR agencies had in place agreements with public institutions of higher education to identify the financial responsibilities for the provision of VR services and to promote the coordination and timely delivery of those services.
- ◆ Fiscal monitoring of state VR agency cost allocation agreements and practices under *WIA*; matching and earmarking of federal funds; financial and statistical reports; and closeout grant activities.

In addition to the monitoring activities determined by RSA as required in FY 2003, RSA regional offices, as part of their ongoing monitoring of state agency operations, had the flexibility to develop and use other monitoring instruments such as:

- An examination of a state's implementation of its workforce investment system to gauge its impact on applicants and individuals determined eligible for VR services.
- For those state VR agencies that assured in their VR state plans that they could provide the full scope of VR services to all eligible individuals, an assessment of whether an agency's performance is consistent with that determination. And, for those agencies that determined that they could not provide the full scope of VR services to all eligible individuals and implemented an order of selection, serving first those individuals with the most significant disabilities, an examination to determine whether implementation of the order of selection met all program requirements.
- A survey that tests whether a designated state unit that is responsible for the state agency's administration of the VR program — when the state agency is not primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities — is in compliance with federal legal requirements.
- Additional monitoring instruments available to the RSA regional offices in their ongoing evaluation of state agency policies and practices including: self-contained modules that focus on eligibility determination; development of the

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); exercise of informed choice; implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development; due process, including mediation; and the composition and functions of the state rehabilitation councils.

Program Performance

RSA has a long history of ensuring accountability in the administration of the various programs under its jurisdiction, especially the VR program. Since its inception in 1920, the VR program has been one of the few federal grant programs that has had outcome data on which to assess its performance, including its performance in assisting individuals to achieve employment outcomes. Over the years, RSA has used these basic performance data, or some variation, to evaluate the effectiveness of state VR agencies. In FY 2000, RSA developed two evaluation standards and performance indicators for each evaluation standard as the criteria by which the effectiveness of the VR program is assessed. The two standards establish performance benchmarks for employment outcomes under the VR program and the access of minorities to the services of the state VR agencies.

Evaluation Standard 1 focuses on employment outcomes achieved by individuals with disabilities, especially individuals who achieve competitive employment⁶ subsequent to the receipt of services from a state VR agency. The standard has six performance indicators, each having a required minimum performance level to meet the indicator. For any given year, calculations for each performance indicator for agencies that exclusively serve individuals with visual impairments or blindness are based on aggregated data for the current and previous year, i.e., two years of data. For VR agencies serving all disability populations other than those with visual impairments or blindness, or all disability populations, the calculations are based on data from the current year only, except for Performance Indicator 1.1, which requires comparative data for both years.

Three of the six performance indicators have been designated as "primary indicators" since they reflect the key policy priorities of the agency with respect to the VR program's mission of empowering individuals with disabilities, particularly those with significant disabilities, to achieve high-quality employment outcomes. High-quality employment outcomes include employment in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis and for which individuals with disabilities are compensated in terms of the customary wage (but not less than the minimum wage) and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work carried out by individuals who are not disabled.

⁶ The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(11) define competitive employment as work:

- (i) In the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
- (ii) For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

Listed below are the six performance indicators along with the minimum performance level as identified in the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.82 and 361.84. **The three primary performance indicators are highlighted by an asterisk (*)**. In order for an agency to "pass" Evaluation Standard 1, it must meet or exceed at least four of the six performance indicators, including at least two of the three primary performance indicators.

Performance Indicator 1.1

The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome [got a job] during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

Required Performance Level: Performance in current period must equal or exceed performance in previous period.

Performance Indicator 1.2

Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

Required Performance Level: For agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9 percent; for other agencies, the level is 55.8 percent.

Performance Indicator 1.3*

Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage that exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self-, or BEP [Business Enterprise Program] employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

Required Performance Level: For agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4 percent; for other agencies, the level is 72.6 percent.

Performance Indicator 1.4*

Of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

Required Performance Level: For agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0 percent; for other agencies, the level is 62.4 percent.

Performance Indicator 1.5*

The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the state's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the state who

are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on state average annual pay for the most recent available year, U.S. Department of Labor 2003).

Required Performance Level: For agencies serving individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59; for other agencies, the level is a ratio of .52.

Performance Indicator 1.6

Of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

Required Performance Level: For agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is an arithmetic difference of 30.4; for other agencies, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0.

Evaluation Standard 2 focuses on equal access to VR services by individuals from a minority background. For purposes of this standard the term "individuals from a minority background" means individuals who report their race and ethnicity in any of the following categories: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; or Hispanic or Latino. For this standard, there is only one indicator.

Performance Indicator 2.1

The service rate⁷ for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from nonminority backgrounds.

Required Performance Level: All agencies must attain at least a ratio level of .80.

If an agency had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exit the VR program during the reporting period, in lieu of calculating the required performance ratio the agency must describe the policies it has adopted or will adopt and the steps it has taken or will take to ensure that individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds have equal access to VR services.

The following table depicts the aggregate performance of the 80 state VR agencies for FY 2003 reporting period on the VR evaluation standards and performance indicators.

⁷ For purposes of calculating this indicator, the numerator for the service rate is the number of individuals whose service records are closed after they receive services under an IPE whether or not they achieved an employment outcome; the denominator is the number of all individuals whose records are closed after they applied for services whether or not they had an IPE.

Table 1 State VR Agency Performance on Employment Outcomes and Equal Access to Services, by Type of Agency and Performance Indicators, Fiscal Year 2003

Performance Indicators	General/Combined VR Agencies ^a		VR Agencies Serving the Blind ^b	
	Pass ^c	Fail	Pass ^c	Fail
Evaluation Standard 1 — Employment Outcomes				
1.1 Change in Number of Employment Outcomes When Compared to Previous Year ^d	30	26	12	12
1.2 Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services ^e	37	19	14	10
1.3 Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^f	54	2	22	2
1.4 Percentage of Competitive Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^g	55	1	23	1
1.5 Ratio of Competitive Employment Earnings to State Average Weekly Wage ^h	39	14	21	3
1.6 Percentage Difference in Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome as Opposed to Time of Application ⁱ	46	10	18	6
*Primary Indicator				
Evaluation Standard 2 — Equal Access to Services				
Ratio of .80 or Higher ^j	47		9	
Ratio of Less than .80	3		2	
Fewer than 100 Individuals From Minority Backgrounds Exiting the VR Program ^k	6		13	
^a Agencies serving persons with various disabilities as well as providing specialized services to persons who are blind and visually impaired. ^b Separate agencies in certain states providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired persons. ^c To pass standard 1, agencies must pass at least four of the six performance indicators and two of the three primary performance indicators. ^d The number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during current performance period compared with number of individuals exiting the VR program employed during the previous performance period. ^e Percentage of those who have received employment outcomes after provision of VR services. ^f Percentage of those exiting the VR program that obtained employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage. ^g See footnote 4 on page 10. ^h No state wage data exists for Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. Therefore, Indicator 1.5 cannot be computed for these VR agencies. ⁱ Time frame from application for VR services to exiting the program with competitive employment. ^j For agencies that had 100 or more individuals from minority backgrounds exiting the program, the passing value is a ratio of .80 or higher. ^k Conversely, state VR agencies that served fewer than 100 individuals from minority backgrounds exiting the VR program do not have to meet a specific ratio to satisfy standard 2.				

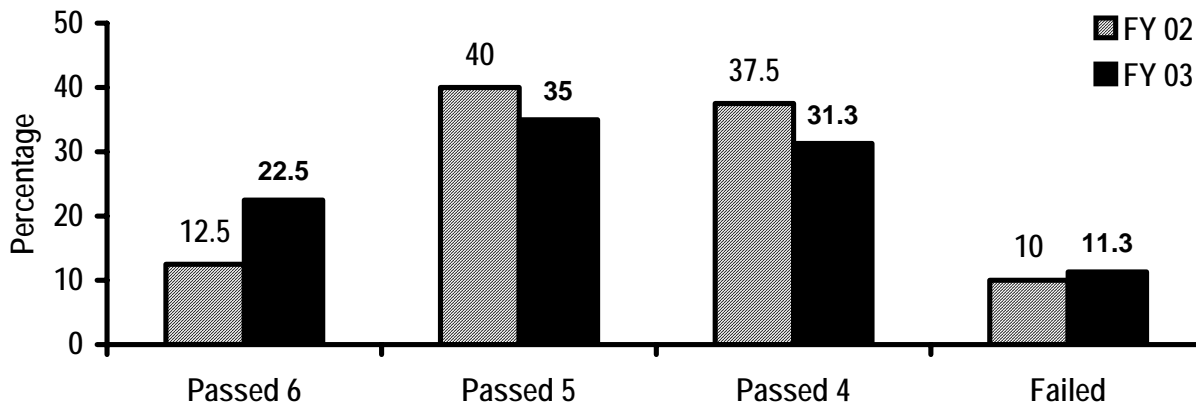
Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

For the FY 2003 reporting period, 71 agencies passed standard 1. The nine agencies that failed Evaluation Standard 1 were two agencies that serve individuals with visual impairments and blindness (Missouri and New York) and seven agencies that serve either all disability populations or disability populations other than individuals with visual

impairments (Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas, Virginia, and the United States Virgin Islands).

The following figure depicts overall agency performance for the fiscal years 2002 and 2003 reporting periods with respect to Evaluation Standard 1.

Figure 2 Overall State VR Agency Performance for Evaluation Standard 1, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003



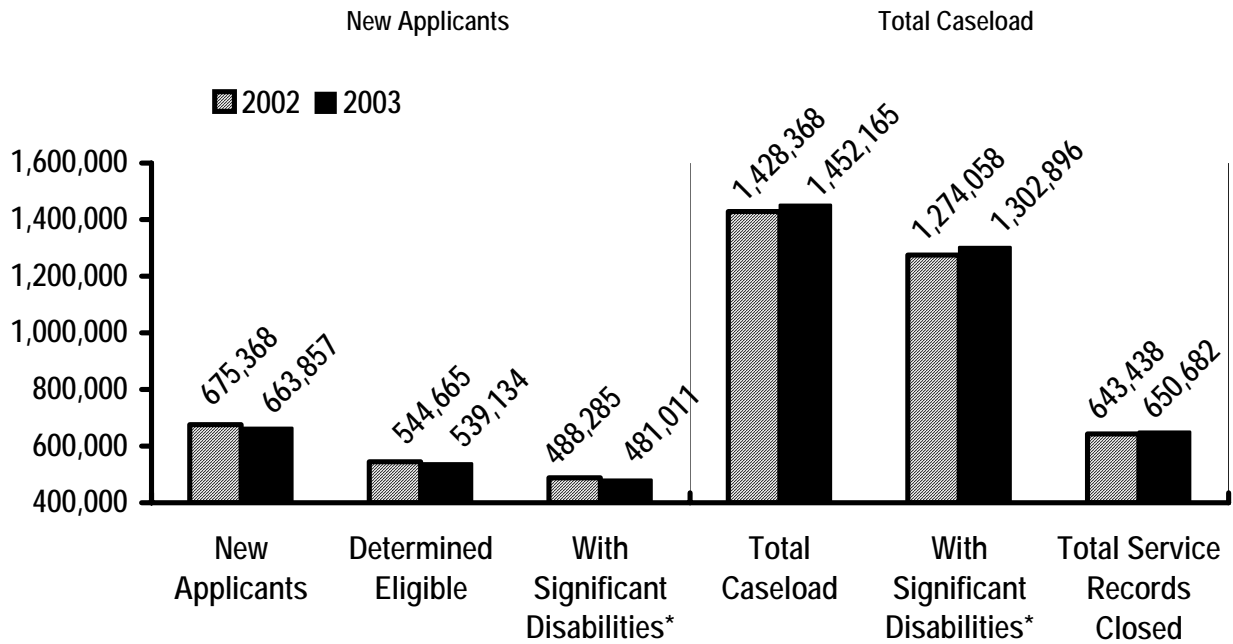
Source: USED/RSA 2003b.

For the FY 2003 reporting period, 75 agencies either passed Evaluation Standard 2 or had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exiting the VR program. The five agencies that failed Evaluation Standard 2 were two agencies that serve individuals with visual impairments and blindness (New York and South Dakota) and three agencies that serve either all disability populations or disability populations other than individuals with visual impairments (Florida, Missouri, and North Dakota).

A state-by-state breakdown of VR agency FY 2003 performance for both evaluation standards is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Figure 3 on the next page depicts fiscal years 2002 and 2003 statistical information on a variety of key indices for the VR program. In FY 2003, nearly 664,000 individuals with disabilities applied for VR services. Of this number, 539,134 individuals or 81 percent of the applicants were determined eligible to participate in the VR program. Of the 539,134 individuals determined eligible for VR services, 481,011 or 89 percent were individuals with significant disabilities. This represents a decline from the 488,285 individuals with significant disabilities determined eligible for VR services in FY 2002.

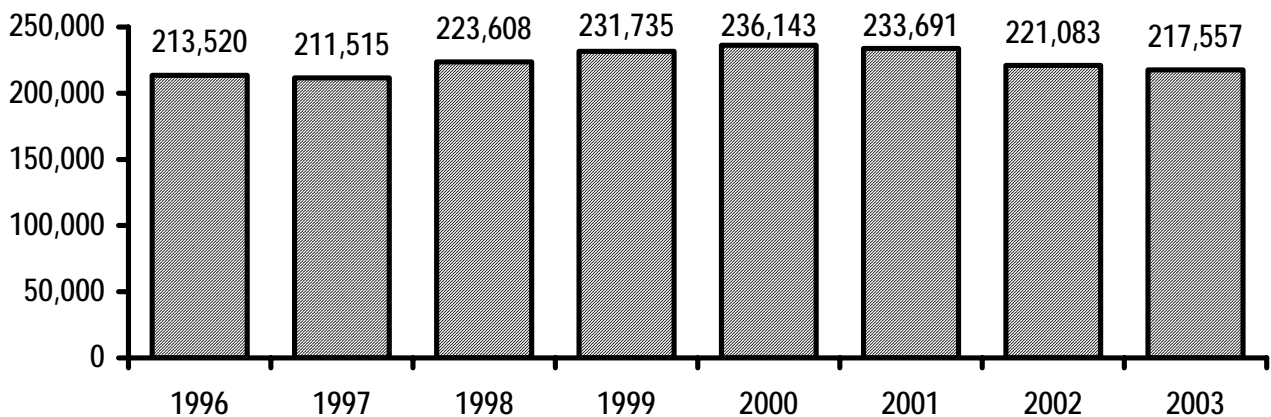
Figure 3 VR Program Participants, New Applicants and Total Caseload, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003



*See footnote 4 on page 12.
Source: USED/RSA 2003b.

During FY 2003, 1.45 million individuals were involved in the public vocational rehabilitation system. In that same year, approximately 90 percent of the individuals receiving services under an IPE were individuals with significant disabilities.

Figure 4 VR Program Participants Achieving Employment, Fiscal Years 1996–2003



Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

Figure 4 above shows for each year between 1996 and 2003 the number of individuals who achieved employment outcomes after receiving VR services. The declines

beginning in FY 2001 are judged to be the result of several factors that have impacted the VR program. Some of these contributing factors include:

- The elimination in FY 2001 of extended employment⁸ as an allowable employment outcome under the VR program. Immediately prior to the date for the implementation of this new policy, state VR agencies reported that 7,359 persons had achieved an employment outcome in extended employment.
- RSA policies raising the bar to stimulate VR agencies to serve individuals with significant disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities, and to focus efforts on assisting these individuals to achieve high-quality employment outcomes that are consistent with their aspirations and informed choices.
- Reduction in state matching funds for VR federal funds and the difficulties experienced by several states in satisfying their maintenance of effort requirements.
- VR agencies' implementation of an order of selection. Agencies operating under an order of selection must give priority to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities that is at a higher cost to the projects. Now 50 percent of all of the state VR agencies are functioning within the constraints of an order of selection with additional agencies contemplating the imposition of an order.

The success of individuals with significant disabilities achieving employment outcomes is reflected in the data provided in table 2 on the next page. The number of individuals with significant disabilities who achieved employment after receiving VR services and exiting the VR program increased each fiscal year from 1995 through 2001. While this trend was halted in FY 2002 for the reasons cited above, the number of individuals with significant disabilities as a percentage of all individuals achieving employment outcomes has increased annually since FY 1995. In that year, individuals with significant disabilities represented just 76 percent of all individuals with disabilities who obtained employment after receiving VR services. By FY 2003, nine out of every 10 individuals who got jobs after receiving VR services were individuals with significant disabilities.

⁸ Extended employment is defined as work in a nonintegrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. See 34 CFR 361.5(b)(19). Although extended employment is no longer an allowable employment outcome under the VR program, state VR agencies may continue to serve eligible individuals who choose to continue to train or otherwise prepare for competitive employment in an extended employment setting, unless the individual through informed choice chooses to remain in extended employment.

Table 2 Individuals Obtaining Employment After Exiting Vocational Rehabilitation, Fiscal Years 1995–2003

Fiscal Year	Individuals With Significant Disabilities*	Individuals Without Significant Disabilities	Percentage With Significant Disabilities
1995	159,138	50,371	76.0
1996	165,686	47,834	77.6
1997	168,422	43,093	79.6
1998	184,651	38,957	82.6
1999	196,827	34,903	84.9
2000	205,444	30,699	87.0
2001	205,706	27,985	88.0
2002	196,286	24,799	88.8
2003	195,787	21,770	90.0

* The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(31) define an individual with a significant disability as an individual with a disability

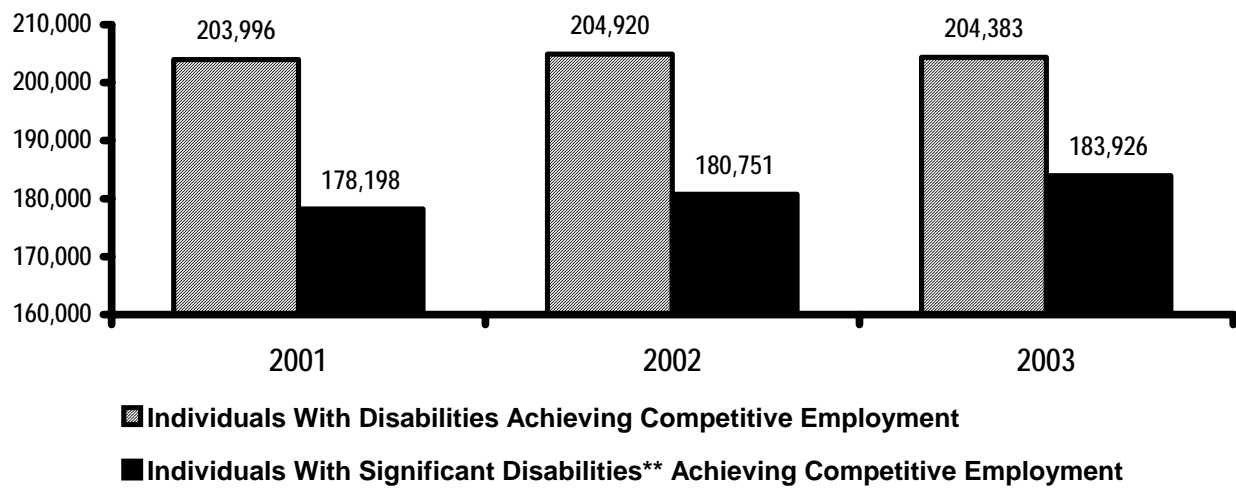
- (i) Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- (ii) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
- (iii) Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Source: USED/RSA 2003b.

In addition, the number of individuals with disabilities achieving competitive employment^{*} outcomes under the VR program has steadily increased on an annual basis since the early 1990s. As figure 5 on the next page shows, that trend has continued for the past three fiscal years. While there was a slight decrease in overall competitive employment outcomes in FY 2003, competitive employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities increased for this time period.

* See definition in footnote 6 on page 16.

**Figure 5 VR Program Participants Achieving Competitive Employment,*
Fiscal Years 2001–03**



*See footnote 6 on page 16.

**See footnote 4 on page 12.

Source: USED/RSA 2003b.

An important aspect of employment for anyone, particularly individuals with disabilities, is employer-provided medical benefits. In FY 2003, more than 132,000 individuals, of whom 121,000 were individuals with significant disabilities, got competitive jobs with medical benefits.

A more detailed, state-by-state breakdown of statistical information regarding the employment outcomes for VR program for FY 2003 is provided in Appendix B of this report. Additional information is also available by going to the RSA Web site at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/research.html or calling the State Monitoring and Improvement Division’s Data Collection and Analysis Unit at 202 245-7598.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

The VR program was one of the first programs in the Department to be assessed using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) (USED/RSA 2002). The program was formally reviewed in early FY 2003 and received an overall rating of “Adequate.” The PART assessment noted that the longitudinal study of the VR program (RTI forthcoming, a) indicated the program has been successful in achieving positive results (USED/RSA 2003c). Data from the longitudinal study showed benefits to program participants, particularly in terms of improvements in employment and earning status. Results from this study also indicated that VR consumers remained employed over a sustained period of time.

The assessment pinpointed a number of areas needing improvement, including the development of long-term goals and the use and timeliness of performance data. The

PART review noted that the VR program has performance goals that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program, but they are not ambitious long-term performance goals (USED/RSA 2003c). RSA then began the process of revising the program's annual goals and adopting long-term performance goals. RSA also developed a plan to review its programs with regard to the development of program efficiency measures.

The PART assessment acknowledged that the agency regularly collects credible performance information. RSA uses evaluation standards and performance indicators to increase state accountability while monitoring state programs and providing them with technical assistance. However, the PART identified the following concerns in relation to the performance data: (1) use of the performance data in managing the overall program; (2) delays in the receipt and reporting of the data, including its accessibility to the public; (3) wide variation in individual state agency performance; and (4) use of the data to increase federal accountability (USED/RSA 2003c).

RSA's weakness in using performance information to manage the overall program has been, in large part, due to the fact that the data were not timely. RSA is working to improve both the timeliness and accessibility of the data. RSA has taken a number of steps to improve the timeliness of its VR data and to promote the use of the data for program improvement by RSA and the state VR agencies funded under this program. Improving the timeliness of the data will enhance RSA's ability to use its data for enhanced program management and monitoring. In addition to posting the performance of state agencies on the program's standards and indicators on the Department's Web site, RSA has developed detailed data tables and outcome reports that are being used by both program staff and state VR agencies to manage the program. In addition, RSA has revised its VR program measures to address the wide variation in individual state agency performance.

Supported Employment Services Program
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 621-628 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RSA

The Supported Employment Services program has proven to be one of the most effective approaches in the rehabilitation of persons with the most significant disabilities* over the last decade. The program was developed to assist in the transition of persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities into a work setting through the use of on-site job coaches and other supports. By federal regulation, state VR agencies must provide ongoing support services needed by individuals with the most significant disabilities to maintain

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$38,152,000

* For definition, see footnote 5 on page 12.

supported employment. Such supports may include monthly monitoring at the work site, from the time of job placement until transition to extended services⁹.

Under the program, state VR agencies collaborate with appropriate public and private nonprofit organizations to provide supported employment services. State VR agencies provide eligible individuals time-limited services for a period not to exceed 18 months, unless a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been established in the IPE. Once this period has ended, the state VR agency must arrange for extended services to be provided by other appropriate state agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources for the duration of that employment. Supported employment placements are achieved when the short-term VR services are augmented with extended services by other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations.

An individual's potential need for supported employment must be considered as part of the assessment to determine eligibility for the VR program. The requirements pertaining to individuals with an employment goal of supported employment are the same in both the Title I VR program and the Title VI-B Supported Employment Services Program. A state VR agency may support an individual's supported employment services solely with VR program (Title I) grant funds, or it may fund the cost of supported employment services in whole or in part with Supported Employment Services (Title VI-B) grant funds. Title VI-B supported employment funds may only be used to provide supported employment services and are essentially used to supplement Title I funds.

Data from the FY 2003 RSA Case Service Report (RSA 911) (USED/RSA 2003a) show that a total of 37,679 individuals whose cases were closed that year after receiving services had a goal of supported employment on their individualized plan for employment at some time during their participation in the VR Program. Almost half of those individuals (48.4 percent) received at least some support for their supported employment services from Title VI-B funds. These numbers do not include those individuals who were still receiving supported employment services at the close of the fiscal year. As state VR agencies serve an increasing number of individuals with the most significant disabilities, the number of individuals receiving supported employment services will likely continue to increase.

Approximately 22,940 individuals, or about 58 percent of the total individuals with a supported employment goal (including those funded solely by Title I and those who received some Title VI-B support), achieved an employment outcome. Of those achieving an employment outcome, 10,236 individuals received funding for supported employment services solely under the Title I VR Program and 11, 700 received partial funding for supported employment services through the Title I VR Program with the remainder of their funding coming from the Title VI-B supplement.

⁹ Extended services is defined in the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(20) as ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment and that are provided by a state agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part and 34 CFR Part 363 after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the designated state unit.

Individuals with an initial goal of supported employment may obtain a supported employment outcome or they may obtain another employment outcome. Fiscal year 2003 data show that 65.6 percent of 11,700 individuals receiving some funding for supported employment services through the Title VI-B Program and achieving an employment outcome obtained a supported employment outcome.

Some individuals who have an initial goal of supported employment achieve an employment outcome other than a supported employment outcome. Of those individuals receiving some funding for supported employment services through the Title VI-B Program who obtained other types of employment outcomes, 33.5 percent were employed in an integrated setting without supports and less than 1 percent were self-employed, employed in a state VR agency managed Business Enterprise Program, or were a homemaker or unpaid family worker.

Individuals with a supported employment goal who achieve an employment outcome may be working in competitive employment (employment at least at the minimum wage in an integrated setting) or may be working in an integrated setting in order to prepare for competitive work. The *Government Performance Results Act (GPRA)* indicator for the Supported Employment Services Program assesses the effectiveness of state agency efforts to increase the number of individuals with the most significant disabilities* who have received supported employment services to achieve competitive employment outcomes. In FY 2003, 92.7 percent of individuals with a supported employment goal, including consumers who received support for supported employment services under both Title I and Title VI-B, achieved a competitive employment outcome in an integrated setting. Of those who obtained a supported employment outcome, 90.5 percent were in competitive employment. In FY 2003, the mean hourly wage for individuals with supported employment outcomes closed in competitive employment was \$7.01. RSA is encouraging state agencies to help individuals with the most significant disabilities in supported employment to achieve these competitive employment outcomes.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 121 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION AND
THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RSA

The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program provides grants to governing bodies of Indian tribes to deliver VR services to American Indians with disabilities that live on or near federal or state reservations. The term "reservation" includes Indian reservations, public domain Indian allotments, former Indian reservations in Oklahoma, and land held by incorporated Native groups, regional corporations and village corporations under the provisions of the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$28,436,000

* For definition, see footnote 5 on page 12.

Awards are made through competitive applications for a period of up to five years to provide a broad range of VR services including, where appropriate, services traditionally used by Indian tribes, designed to assist American Indians with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Applicants assure that the broad scope of rehabilitation services provided shall be, to the maximum extent feasible, comparable to the rehabilitation services provided by the state VR agencies, and that efforts will be made to provide VR services in a manner and at a level of quality comparable to those services provided by the state agencies.

The AIVRS program is supported by funds reserved by the RSA commissioner from funds allocated under Section 110, Title I, Part B of the act. As table 3 shows, the program has grown in the last several years; this growth was a result of increases in the minimum amount of funds required to be reserved for the program (excluding peer review costs).

The number of grantees funded increased from 53 in FY 1999, to 69 in FY 2002 and remained at 69 in FY 2003. The funding for each award (both new and continuations) also has increased. The average award size in FY 1999 was about \$325,300 and it was over \$411,500 in FY 2003, about a 26.5 percent increase. The existing projects that needed to recompute for the grants often requested higher funding because of their ability to effectively serve more individuals with disabilities. In addition, the grant period was increased by the 1998 amendments from three years to five years, providing more program stability. The evaluation of the program has shown that experienced grantees are more efficient and effective and continue to show improvements in their performance that are significant.

As table 4 shows, the number of American Indians with disabilities who achieved employment outcomes increased from 530 in FY 1997 to 1,452 in FY 2003. In addition, of the American Indians with disabilities who exited the program after receiving services, the percentage that achieved employment outcomes increased from 57 percent in FY 1998 to 66 percent in FY 2003.

Table 3 American Indian VR Services Grants: Numbers and Funding Amounts, Fiscal Years 1999–2003

Fiscal Year	Total Grants	Funding Amount
1999	53	\$17,243,871
2000	64	\$23,343,067
2001	66	\$23,986,113
2002	69	\$25,552,272
2003	69	\$28,398,635

Source: USED/RSA 2003d.

Table 4 Number of Individuals Achieving Employment Through American Indian VR Services, Fiscal Years 1997–2003

Fiscal Year	Number Served	Total Number Exiting After Receiving Services	Number Achieving Employment
1997	2,617	819	530
1998	3,243	1,047	598
1999	3,186	1,109	678
2000	4,148	1,530	951
2001	4,473	1,683	1,088
2002	5,003	2,047	1,311
2003	5,105	2,200	1,452

Source: USED/RSA 2003d.

Technical assistance to the tribal VR projects is provided by a variety of sources, including: RSA, state VR agencies, Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs, NIDRR and its grantees, and the capacity-building grantees funded under Section 21 of the act. The tribal VR projects, for example, are building strong relationships with the state VR agencies. These relationships, in turn, are promoting cross-training where state VR agencies are providing the tribal VR staff techniques of VR service delivery and the tribal project staff are providing the state VR agencies' staff techniques on delivering VR services designed for diverse cultures. As another example, the technical assistance network sponsors annual conferences for the AIVRS projects, focusing on training and networking. Other grantees funded under the act participate in the conferences as both trainers and learners, further promoting strong partnerships within the program and among RSA grantees.

RSA continues to monitor tribal VR projects, but has changed its monitoring strategy from the conduct of on-site reviews to the provision of self-assessment tools designed to assist tribal projects to identify issues and needs requiring training and technical assistance. In FY 1999, RSA awarded a grant for a two-year study (DAI 2003a) to initiate the first comprehensive evaluation of the AIVRS program. The study was designed to examine consumer characteristics, services provided, outcomes and management of the AIVRS program. The study also compared AIVRS program performance to the performance of the VR program.

The study results were published in a final report on Dec. 11, 2002. Study findings are being used to assist RSA in evaluating program performance and developing appropriate strategies for program improvement. Also, RSA has awarded a contract to help the projects implement the common measures and to devise methods to collect employment information for individuals who are not included in the state unemployment insurance (UI) data system.

Demonstration and Training Programs

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 303 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The Demonstration and Training Programs provide funding through competitive grants to, or contracts with, eligible entities to expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation and other services authorized under the act. The grants and contracts are to further the purposes and policy of the act and to support activities that increase the provision, extent, availability, scope and quality of rehabilitation services under the act, including related research and evaluation activities.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$20,895,292

Sections 303(a), (c), and (d) of the act authorize demonstration projects designed specifically to increase client choice in the rehabilitation process, make information and training available to parents of individuals with disabilities, and provide Braille training.

The programs that may be funded under Section 303(b) include special projects and demonstrations of service delivery, model demonstrations, technical assistance, systems change, special studies and evaluation, and dissemination and utilization of project findings. Entities eligible for grants under this section include state VR agencies, community rehabilitation programs, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, or other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations. Competitions may be limited to one or more type of entity. The program supports projects for up to 60 months. During that period, many projects provide comprehensive services that may demonstrate the application of innovative procedures leading to the successful achievement of employment outcomes.

Results of Section 303 (b) projects include strategies that enhance the way rehabilitation services are delivered by community-based programs and state VR agencies in meeting the needs of underserved populations or underserved areas. Projects have been successful in creating intensive outreach and rehabilitation support systems, including benefits counseling, career development and job placement assistance.

Although special demonstration projects are of a diverse nature, the objective for the majority of the projects funded is to provide comprehensive services that lead to an employment outcome for individuals with disabilities. One measure used to evaluate these projects is the number of individuals served and the number of individuals placed. This information for fiscal years 2001 through 2003 is shown in table 5 below.

Table 5 Special Demonstration Programs Outcome Data, Fiscal Years 2001–03			
Fiscal Year	Number of Projects	Served	Placed
FY 2001	45	8,247	1,635
FY 2002	36	6,718	1,249
FY 2003	47	11,769	3,744

Source: USED/RSA 2003e.

Thirty-three field-initiated grants were continued in FY 2003. These projects are model demonstration grants reflecting diverse and innovative approaches and methodologies that provide services for individuals with disabilities that increase employment outcomes. The projects focus on various priorities that include the provision of affordable transportation for individuals with disabilities, services to increase self-employment outcomes, increasing business ownership opportunities for Native Americans with disabilities, and employment opportunities with career advancement for individuals with disabilities who are homeless or reside in supportive or subsidized housing.

Eleven systems-change grants were continued in FY 2003. These projects are designed to identify and eliminate barriers to competitive employment for individuals with disabilities who receive public support.

Three awards to technical assistance centers that reach out to persons with disabilities, including Native Americans and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics were continued in FY 2003 to provide technical assistance leading to employment opportunities, vocational skills, and educational advancement.

Two Braille training grants received continuation funding. These projects provide training to youths and adults who are blind and promote capacity-building to service providers.

Seven parent information and training projects and the technical assistance center that supports them received continuation grants. These projects provide training and information to enable individuals with disabilities and the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or other authorized representatives of the individuals to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.

Congress also mandated the funding of 19 one-year earmarked projects. The total amount allocated to these projects was \$4,013,740.

Twenty Access to Telework Program grants totaling \$19,799,429 were awarded to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce through expanding telework opportunities by offering alternative financial mechanisms, primarily financial loan programs. Through this program, individuals with disabilities are able to obtain a loan to purchase "computers and other equipment so that they can work as an employee or contractor or to become self-employed on a full-time or part-time basis from home or other remote sites." States are required to match one dollar for every nine federal dollars received.

The Demonstration and Training Programs continued the use of the Web-based performance report instrument in FY 2003 that was put into place in FY 2000 to collect data from projects funded under Section 303 (b) of the act.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 304 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program makes comprehensive VR services available to migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities. Projects under the program develop innovative methods for reaching and serving this population. Emphasis is given in these projects to outreach to migrant camps; to provide bilingual rehabilitation counseling to this population; and to coordinate VR services with services from other sources. Projects provide VR services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and to members of their families when such services will contribute to the rehabilitation of the worker with a disability.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$2,334,725

The program is administered in coordination with other programs serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including programs under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, Section 330 of the *Public Health Service Act*, the *Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act*, and *WIA*. In addition, RSA participates as a member of the Federal Migrant Interagency Committee to share information and develop strategies to improve the coordination and delivery of services to this population.

Projects funded in FY 2003 trained migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities to develop other skills that can be applied outside the agricultural area to increase their chances of entering new occupations. In addition, funded projects worked directly with employers to create opportunities for on-the-job training and job placement. The Case Service Report (RSA 911) (USED/RSA 2003a) collects data on the number of individuals whose cases are closed by state VR agencies during a particular fiscal year. One element in the system reports on the number of persons who also participated in a migrant or seasonal farmworker’s project at some time during their VR program. In FY 2003, 561 of those whose cases were closed after receiving VR services were also participants in projects funded under Section 304. Of this total, 369 or roughly 66 percent achieved employment outcomes.

Projects under the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program can also provide services beyond the scope of vocational rehabilitation. In addition to the 561 individual cases closed by the state VR program, projects served a total of 2,831 individuals during FY 2003. For program participants who wish to continue doing farmwork, but have medical or other problems that prevent them from doing so, Section 304 grantees use VR resources to provide them with medical and other services for a quick return to work.

This population faces barriers of language, transportation, health, culture and constant mobility so that the numbers of clients placed in employment are not as high as in other programs. In delivering comprehensive VR services, this program provides eligible consumers and family members with a package of education, vocational and life-skills training services in areas such as health and wellness, personal finances, job preparation skills, and English as a second language. These services have contributed significantly to the eventual attainment of employment outcomes for participants.

Table 6 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program: Number of Grants, Fiscal Years 2000–03

Fiscal Year	Continuation Grants	New Grants	Total Grants
2000	10	4	14
2001	11	4	15
2002	11	4	15
2003	13	1	14

Source: USED/RSA 2003h.

Projects With Industry
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 611-612 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The Projects With Industry (PWI) Program creates and expands job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the participation of business and industry in the VR process. PWI projects promote the involvement of business and private industry through business advisory councils (BAC) that identify jobs and careers available in the community and provide advice on the appropriate skills and training for program participants. BACs are required to identify job and career availability within the community, consistent with the current and projected local employment opportunities identified by the local workforce investment board for the community under *WIA*.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$21,927,538

PWI grants are made to a variety of agencies and organizations, including businesses and industrial corporations, community rehabilitation programs, labor organizations, trade associations, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, designated state units and foundations. Grants are awarded for either a 3- or 5-year period, and the federal share may not exceed 80 percent of the total cost of a project. In making awards under this program, the secretary considers the equitable distribution of projects among the states.

PWI grantees must provide to RSA an annual evaluation of project operations in accordance with established program evaluation standards and performance indicators. Specifically, Appendix A to the program regulations at 34 CFR 379 established seven standards to evaluate the performance of a PWI grant.

- Evaluation Standard 1:** The primary objective of the project must be to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment. The activities carried out by the project must support the accomplishment of this objective.

- Evaluation Standard 2:** The project must serve individuals with disabilities that impair their capacity to obtain competitive employment. In selecting persons to receive services, priority must be given to individuals with significant disabilities.

- Evaluation Standard 3:** The project must ensure the provision of services that will assist in the placement of individuals with disabilities.

- Evaluation Standard 4:** Funds must be used to achieve the project's primary objective at minimum cost to the federal government.

- Evaluation Standard 5:** The project's advisory council must provide policy guidance and assistance in the conduct of the project.

Evaluation Standard 6: Working relationships, including partnerships, must be established with agencies and organizations to expand the project's capacity to meet its objectives.

Evaluation Standard 7: The project must obtain positive results in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment.

RSA also established five compliance indicators by which to measure the effectiveness of individual grants found in the program regulations at 34 CFR 379.53. A grantee must meet the minimum performance levels on the two "primary" program compliance indicators identified below and any two of the three "secondary" compliance indicators identified below.

Compliance Indicator 1 (Primary): Placement rate. (A minimum of 54 percent of individuals served by the project during FY 2003 must be placed into competitive employment.)

Compliance Indicator 2 (Primary): Change in earnings. (Based upon hours worked, projects must have an average increase in earnings of at least \$125 a week per individual placed in employment or \$100 per week for those projects in which at least 75 percent of individuals placed into competitive employment are working fewer than 30 hours per week.)

Compliance Indicator 3 (Secondary): Percent placed who have significant disabilities. (At least 50 percent of individuals served by the project who are placed into competitive employment are individuals who have significant disabilities.)

Compliance Indicator 4 (Secondary): Percent placed who were previously unemployed. (At least 50 percent of individuals who are placed into competitive employment are individuals who were continuously unemployed for at least six months at the time of project entry.)

Compliance Indicator 5 (Secondary): Average cost per placement. (The actual average cost per placement of individuals served by the project does not exceed 115 percent of the projected average cost per placement in the grantee's application.)

Three of the compliance indicators also serve as the program's measures established pursuant to *GPR*A. These measures, including FY 2003 performance results based on the reports of the 95 grantees, are provided below.

- **Placement Rate** of individuals with disabilities into competitive employment. The placement rate for FY 2003 was 54 percent.
- **Change in earnings** of individuals who are placed in competitive employment. In FY 2003, the change in earnings of individuals who were placed in competitive employment was an average of \$242 per week.
- **Percentage of individuals served who were unemployed for six months or more** prior to program entry who are placed in competitive employment. In FY 2003, 65.5 percent of individuals served who were unemployed six months or more prior to program entry were placed in employment.

In order to receive continuation funding for the third and subsequent years, PWI grantees must demonstrate compliance with the standards and indicators with submissions of data for the most recent complete fiscal year. If a grantee does not demonstrate compliance on the basis of the previous fiscal year's data, the grantee has an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the standards by submitting data from the first six months of the current fiscal year.

Table 7 Projects With Industry Program Outcomes, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Fiscal Year	2002	2003
Total projects reporting	99	95
Total persons served (new each period)	11,270	10,099
Persons served with significant disabilities	10,066	8,482
Percentage served with significant disabilities	89%	84%
Persons served who were unemployed 6 months or more	7,764	7,433
Percentage served who were unemployed 6 months or more	69%	74%
Total persons placed in employment	7,124	5,478
Percentage of total persons placed in employment	63%	54%
Persons with significant disabilities placed in employment	6,247	4,792
Percentage of total placed in employment who were individuals with significant disabilities	88%	88%
Persons who were unemployed six months or more placed in employment	5,024	4,017
Percentage of total placed in employment who were individuals unemployed six months or more	71 %	73%
Placement rate of individuals with significant disabilities	62%	57%
Placement rate of individuals who were unemployed six months or more	65%	54%

Source: USED/RSA 2003f.

Table 7 above presents selected performance information for the PWI program for fiscal years 2002 and 2003. In FY 2003, PWI projects reported that 84 percent of the 10,099 individuals served, and 88 percent of the 5,478 individuals placed, were individuals with significant disabilities. In addition, 74 percent of the 10,099 individuals served and 73 percent of the 5,478 individuals placed had been unemployed at least six months at the time of project entry. The percentage of persons placed who have significant disabilities was 88 percent for both fiscal years 2002 and 2003. The percentage of persons placed who were previously unemployed for at least six months at the time of project entry increased in FY 2003.

In FY 2003, the percentage of individuals placed was significantly lower than in recent years. About 28 percent of the projects that completed their first year of operation placed less than 52 percent of the individuals they served and did not pass the placement rate indicator. Most of these projects improved their performance in the first six months of FY 2004 and met the standards. However, seven projects did not meet the minimally acceptable standards and were not continued. Due to the fact that FY 2003 was the first reporting period for 77 projects, many projects were in a start-up mode and were less productive than they are anticipated to be in the remaining years of the grant award.

Business Enterprise Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 103(B) OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED DIVISION OF RSA

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is authorized under Section 103(b) of the act. Section 103(b) provides that VR services, when provided to groups, can include management, supervision and other services to improve businesses operated by significantly disabled individuals. Under the BEP program, state VR agencies can use funds under the VR program to support the Vending Facility Program, which is authorized under the *Randolph-Sheppard Act*. The original intent of the *Randolph-Sheppard Act* was to enhance employment opportunities for blind individuals who are trained and licensed to operate vending facilities.

Supported by a combination of RSA program funds, state appropriations, federal vending machine income, and levied set-asides from vendors, the BEP provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on federal and other property. The program recruits qualified individuals who are blind, trains them on the management and operation of small business enterprises, and then licenses qualified blind vendors to operate the facilities.

At the outset, the program placed sundry stands in the lobbies of federal office buildings and post offices selling such items as newspapers, magazines, candies and tobacco products. Through the years, the program has grown and broadened from federal locations to include state, county, municipal and private installations as well as interstate highway

rest areas. Operations have also expanded to include military mess halls, cafeterias, snack bars, miscellaneous shops and facilities comprised of vending machines.

A primary focus of RSA is on increasing the number of vendors, the number of facilities, and the average annual earnings of vendors. RSA has established standards and performance indicators to encourage state agencies to increase average earnings of individuals in the program with data to be reported for the FY 2005 program year.

The data contained in table 8 below were obtained from the Report of Vending Facility Program (RSA-15) for FY 2003. The total gross income for the program was \$475.9 million in FY 2003 compared to \$453.6 million in FY 2002, a 4.9 percent increase. The total earnings of all vendors were \$98.7 million in FY 2003 and \$96.8 million in FY 2002, an increase of 1.9 percent. The national average annual earnings of vendors increased 2.2 percent to \$38,147 in FY 2003 from \$37,323 the previous year. The number of vendors in FY 2003 was 2,631 compared to 2,681 in FY 2002, a decrease of 51 operators. There were 3,119 vending facilities in FY 2003 and 3,129 the previous year, a decrease of 10 facilities.

Table 8 Business Enterprise Program Outcomes, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

	2002	2003
Income and Earnings		
Gross Income ^a	\$453,639,203	\$475,886,540
Vendor Earnings	\$96,824,362	\$98,694,278
Average Earnings ^b	\$37,323	\$38,147
Number of Vendors		
Federal Locations	912	905
Non-federal Locations	1,769	1,726
Total Vendors	2,681	2,631
Number of Vending Facilities		
Federal Locations	1,097	1,096
Non-federal Locations	2,032	2,023
Total Facilities	3,129	3,119

a Gross income is the total amount of money received from consumers for goods and services sold and vending machine income.

b Average earnings equals total vendor earnings divided by total number of vendor person-years which is computed by adding the number of months each vendor worked (disregarding fractions of a month of two weeks or less) and dividing by 12.

Source: USED/RSA 2003g.

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The purpose of the independent living (IL) programs authorized by Title VII of the act is to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and to integrate these individuals into the mainstream of American society. Title VII authorizes financial assistance to provide, expand and improve independent living services; to develop and support statewide networks of centers for independent living; and to improve working relationships among state IL programs, centers for independent living, statewide independent living councils, other programs authorized by the act, and other federal, state, local and nongovernmental programs.

Independent Living Services Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER TITLE VII, CHAPTER I, PART B OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The State Independent Living Services (SILS) program provides formula grants, based on population, to states for the purpose of funding, directly and/or through grant or contractual arrangements, one or more of the following activities:

**FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$22,151,000**

1. Supporting the operation of Statewide Independent Living Councils;
2. Demonstrating ways to expand and improve IL services;
3. Providing IL services;
4. Supporting the operation of centers for independent living;
5. Increasing the capacity of public or nonprofit organizations and other entities to develop comprehensive approaches or systems for providing IL services;
6. Conducting studies and analyses, developing model policies and procedures, and presenting information, approaches, strategies, findings, conclusions and recommendations to federal, state and local policymakers;
7. Training service providers and individuals with disabilities on the IL philosophy; and
8. Providing outreach to populations that are unserved or underserved by IL programs, including minority groups and urban and rural populations.

To be eligible for financial assistance, states are required to establish a Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and to submit a state plan for IL jointly developed and signed by the chairperson of the SILC and the director of the designated state VR unit.

Centers for Independent Living Program
AUTHORIZED UNDER TITLE VII, CHAPTER I, PART C OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The Centers for Independent Living (CIL) program provides grants to consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability,¹⁰ nonresidential private nonprofit agencies for the provision of independent living services. At a minimum, centers funded by the program are required to provide the following four independent living core services: information and referral; independent living skills training; peer counseling; and individual and systems advocacy. Centers also may provide, among other services: psychological counseling, assistance in securing housing or shelter, personal assistance services, transportation referral and assistance, physical therapy, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, recreation and other services necessary to improve the ability of individuals with significant disabilities to function independently in the family or community and/or to continue in employment.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$69,545,000

**Centers for Independent Living
Program Accomplishments
Fiscal Year 2003**

In FY 2003, centers for independent living nationwide served over 200,433 individuals with disabilities. The following are a few examples of how the centers have benefited the individuals:

- 2,372 individuals were relocated from nursing homes or other institutions to community-based living arrangements.
- 27,657 individuals were reported as having received services that prevented the necessity of their entering into nursing homes or other institutions.
- 102,919 individuals received independent living skills training and life skills training.
- 54,005 individuals received independent living services related to securing housing or shelter.
- 40,007 individuals received services related to transportation.
- 75,443 individuals received personal assistance services.

The act establishes a set of standards and assurances that eligible centers are required to meet. To continue receiving CIL program funding, centers must demonstrate minimum compliance with the following evaluation standards: promotion of the independent living philosophy, including consumer control and equal access; provision of independent living services on a cross-disability basis; support for the development and achievement of independent living goals chosen by the consumer; efforts to increase the availability and quality of community options for independent living; provision of independent living core services; resource development activities to secure other funding sources; and community capacity-building activities, including community advocacy, technical assistance and outreach.

¹⁰ Cross-disability means: with respect to a center for independent living, that a center provides IL services to individuals representing a range of significant disabilities and does not require the presence of one or more specific significant disabilities before determining that an individual is eligible for IL services (according to the program regulations at 34 CFR Section 364.4).

A population-based formula determines the total funding available for discretionary grants to centers in each state. Subject to the availability of appropriations, the RSA commissioner is required to fund centers that existed as of FY 1997 at the same level of funding they received the prior fiscal year and to provide them a cost-of-living increase. Funding for new centers in a state is awarded on a competitive basis, based on the state's priority designation of unserved or underserved areas and the availability of funds within the state. In FY 2003, there were 323 centers for independent living receiving funds under this program operating nationwide.

**Independent Living Services
For Older Individuals Who are Blind**
AUTHORIZED UNDER TITLE VII, CHAPTER 2
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION

The Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program delivers IL services to individuals who are 55 years of age or older, and whose significant visual impairment makes competitive employment extremely difficult to attain, but for whom IL goals are feasible. The services the program delivers are designed to improve the ability of older individuals who are blind to maintain a desired level of personal independence. The program includes services designed to assist an older individual who is blind in coping with activities of daily living and that help correct vision loss. It provides adaptive aids and services; orientation and mobility training; training in communication skills; Braille instruction; information and referral services; peer counseling; and individual advocacy training.

**FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$27,818,000**

The act provides that in any fiscal year in which appropriations to this program exceed \$13 million dollars, grants to state agencies for the blind or, in states that have no such agency, to state VR agencies will be made on a formula basis rather than on a discretionary basis. Grants have been made on a formula basis since FY 2000. States participating in this program must match every \$9 of federal funds with \$1 in nonfederal cash or in-kind resources in the year for which the federal funds are appropriated.

The program experienced an increase in federal funding from \$25,000,000 in FY 2002 to \$27,818,000 in FY 2003, indicating steady growth since becoming a formula program. This increasing support of the Title VII, Chapter 2 program leads to sustainability of the state-operated programs nationwide, and builds the capacity of states to address the vastly growing numbers of older individuals with blindness and visual impairment. Approximately one in six older individuals over the age of 65 experience age-related vision loss. In FY 2003, 62,019 older individuals nationwide benefited from the independent living services provided through this program, an increase of 1,980 persons over FY 2002. The average overall nonfederal support per state program in FY 2003 was approximately \$217,111, a decrease from \$252,192 in FY 2002. The program continued

to see an increase in services delivered by state programs to consumers that have other severe or multiple disabilities in addition to a significant visual impairment. States reported that in fiscal years 2002 and 2003, 56 percent of all consumers served under the Title VII, Chapter 2 program were 80 years of age and older.

Recreational Programs

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 305 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION OF RSA

The Recreational Programs provide recreation and related activities for individuals with disabilities to aid in their employment, mobility, independence, socialization and community integration. Projects are designed to promote the development of social skills that are necessary in order to integrate individuals with disabilities into the community. Successful integration can greatly benefit an individual with a disability by developing skills, building self-esteem and reducing social barriers that can prevent the individual from seeking employment in settings where there may not be any individuals with apparent disabilities. Individuals without disabilities also benefit from integrated recreational activities through opportunities to learn about the abilities that individuals with disabilities possess.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$2,579,126

The program awards discretionary grants on a competitive basis to states, public agencies and nonprofit private organizations, including institutions of higher education. Projects funded under this program must provide recreational activities for individuals with disabilities in settings with peers without disabilities when possible and appropriate.

Grants are available for periods of up to three years. The federal share of the costs of the Recreational Programs is 100 percent for the first year, 75 percent for the second year and 50 percent for the third. Projects funded under this program authority are required to provide a nonfederal match (cash or in-kind contribution or both) for year 2, at 25 percent of year 1 federal funding; and for year 3, at 50 percent of year 1 federal funding.

Grantees must demonstrate in their applications the manner in which the program will be continued after federal funding has ended. Some recreational programs continue for lengthy periods of time after federal funding ends by relying on other funding sources. By the end of FY 2003, the Department collected data on projects that ended within the past three years to assess whether these projects have sustained operation since federal funding ceased. By the end of FY 2003, of the 24 projects that were closed since FY 2001, 19 or 83 percent have continued in operation after federal funding ended.

Table 9 Recreational Programs: Number of Grants, Fiscal Years 2001–03

Fiscal Year	Continuations	New	Total
2001	18	6	24
2002	15	10	25
2003	16	8	24

Source: USED/RSA 2003h.

One example of the type of projects funded in FY 2003 that is still in operation is Project PRIDE — Promoting Recreation for Independence, Diversity and Employment. It was funded by a grant awarded to Class LTD located in Columbus, Kan. The project goal is to increase the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in community recreation and leisure activities in order for them to have fun, meet new friends, and develop independent living skills and competencies. Class LTD is a nonprofit community disability service provider that anticipated Project PRIDE would serve approximately 61 percent of the individuals with developmental and other disabilities who receive community living, community employment, and day activity supports and services from Class LTD. The project began with a retreat that was very successful in bringing together great supporters and creative minds to develop ideas and form partnerships. Many of the retreat attendees volunteered to become members of the project’s advisory council and immediately began implementing their suggestions.

One of the suggestions adopted addressed the need to get away from the overused “mentors and volunteers concept” and try to promote friendships by referring to the helpers as “PRIDE PALS.” The new public service announcements used the idea, saying, “Be A Positive Force In Someone’s Life...Be A PRIDE PAL.” Friendships were evidenced early among participants. One PRIDE PAL took his pal to a radio station so that he could experience his dream of going on the air. The pal took to the microphone so naturally that he has been invited back to the radio station on a regular basis to develop his skills. Another pal experienced her love for the game of basketball when her PRIDE PAL introduced her to the local ladies basketball team. The team took the pal under their wings and had a special day for her, which included a visit to the ladies’ locker room, presenting her with an autographed t-shirt, posing with the team for pictures, and viewing the game from behind the team bench. These experiences built up the pal’s social skills, self-confidence and social acceptance in the community.

Another project funded in FY 2003 was located at the University of New Hampshire entitled PARTNERS: Promoting Accessible Recreation Through Networking, Education Resources and Services. The project goal was to promote socialization, mobility, independence and community integration while introducing individuals with severe physical disabilities to employment opportunities in the recreation industry. The PARTNERS project is a collaborative effort among members of the public and private recreation industry. It focuses on both the individual and the environment. The focus on the individual is to enable individuals with severe disabilities to acquire leisure skills, mobility skills, knowledge of resources and adaptive equipment, and decisionmaking skills so that they are better equipped to take independent action and enhance their

self-determination. The focus on the environment is to promote the development of inclusionary environments by the public and private recreation industry and their receptivity and competence in sustaining services for persons with physical disabilities.

For example, through the PARTNERS rental program, participants have been able to rent equipment that PARTNERS has helped adapt for water skiers, hand cyclists and hockey skaters. The participants were able to apply the rental fee toward the purchase of the already adapted equipment thus allowing them not only to use the adapted equipment but also to own it ultimately and thereby demonstrate their greater independence, mobility, socialization and community integration. These skills then can be transferred to all aspects of their daily living so that they can live more independently, play more independently, have more choices about what they want to do, expand the skills they are learning, and explore more areas of interest so that they can keep increasing their independence and integration into the community.

These projects and others funded under the Recreational Programs are helping individuals with disabilities to develop job-seeking, mobility and other important life skills.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

RSA operates and provides funding for a number of programs that support the central work of the VR program. These support programs frequently are discretionary programs that have been established to provide funding to address new and emerging needs of individuals with disabilities. They may, for example, provide technical assistance for more efficient management of service provision, open opportunities for previously underserved populations, initiate partnerships with the business community, and help establish an atmosphere of independence and self-confidence among individuals with disabilities that foster competitive employment. They include training efforts designed to qualify new personnel and expand the knowledge and skills of current professionals through recurrent training, continuing education and professional development.

Program Improvement

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 12 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF RSA

Program Improvement funds allocated under Section 12 are used to support activities that increase program effectiveness, improve accountability, and enhance the agency's ability to address issues of national significance in achieving the purposes of the act. Program funds are awarded through grants and contracts and may be used to procure expertise to provide short-term training and technical instruction; conduct special projects and demonstrations; collect, prepare, publish and disseminate special educational or information materials; and carry out monitoring and evaluation activities.

**FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$894,150**

Under this section of the act, the RSA commissioner is authorized to provide technical assistance and consultative services to public and nonprofit private agencies and organizations, including assistance to enable such agencies and organizations to facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities.

Since FY 1997, technical assistance funds have supported the National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (NVRTAC) that arranges for the provision of technical assistance to state VR agencies and other grantees providing services under the act. Funds are used to support technical assistance projects through task ordering agreements consistent with priorities established by the commissioner. These projects have strengthened RSA's efforts to assist states to improve consumer services and outcomes consistent with national priorities and program performance standards and goals. Examples of projects and activities carried out through the NVRTAC in FY 2003 are provided below:

- *Training on "Ticket-to-Work" Program*: support for the second in a series of three national training sessions to provide staff from states where the Ticket-To-Work Program has yet to be implemented with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of states that are already participating in the Ticket program.
- *National Leadership Summit*: support for the National Leadership Summit on Improving Results to build the capacity to improve postsecondary outcomes for youths with disabilities.
- *New England Customer Quality Assurance Survey*: development of a uniform quality assurance data collection survey for a consortium of New England state VR agencies. The survey is designed to provide timely, consistent information to VR state agencies and state policymakers for purposes of program evaluation and improvement.
- *Building Careers in Design*: technical assistance, professional guidance and education in the area of career development in the design professions. Through this project, VR counselors will gain the skills and resources needed to advise and support people with disabilities to engage in rewarding careers in design.
- *Freedom for the Blind*: supporting the printing and distribution of the monograph by the same name, which was produced through a prior technical assistance engagement. Written for blind persons or rehabilitation professionals who work with blind individuals or do research on issues related to blindness in the workplace, this piece provides a nontraditional perspective on the methods and issues that a truly successful employment program for the blind should embrace.

Capacity-building for Traditionally Underserved Populations

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 21 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF RSA

Section 21 of the act requires RSA and NIDRR to conduct outreach activities to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. In order to implement this mandate, RSA and NIDRR must reserve 1 percent of funds appropriated each for programs under Titles II, III, VI, and VII to make awards to provide outreach and technical assistance to minority entities and American Indian tribes and to make awards to minority entities and Indian tribes to carry out activities under the act. In FY 2003, \$2,445,262 was reserved from programs administered by RSA under Titles III, VI, and VII.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$2,445,262

The 1998 amendments define a "minority entity" as "a historically Black college or university, a Hispanic-serving institution of higher education, an American Indian

tribal college or university, and/or another institution of higher learning whose minority student enrollment is at least 50 percent.”

Capacity-building projects are designed to expand the service-providing capabilities of these entities and increase their participation in activities funded under the act. Training and technical assistance activities funded under the act may include training on the mission of RSA, RSA-funded programs, disability legislation, and other pertinent subjects, thus helping to increase awareness of RSA and its programs.

In FY 2003, RSA awarded 11 continuation grants under the RSA rehabilitation capacity-building program. One grant was awarded to a Hispanic-serving institution of higher education under the Capacity-building Community Rehabilitation Program area: two were awarded to historically Black universities to establish new rehabilitation training programs; and eight were awarded in the in the area of Capacity-Building and Outreach to Minority Entities of which three were minority institutions of higher education and one a minority-owned organization.

Also, one supplement was awarded to a capacity-building project in FY 2003 to sponsor training workshops and traineeships at the annual conference of the National Association on Multicultural and Rehabilitation Concerns Conference. Forty persons were sponsored to attend and participate in workshops focusing on vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs. Finally, RSA transferred \$110,000 to NIDRR to continue to carry out The Leadership Initiative, a joint initiative with the Howard University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center and the Rocky Mountain Technical ADA & IT Center.

Capacity-building Projects Fiscal Year 2003 Outcomes

- Continued increase in the number of grant awards to minority-serving institutions of higher education and American Indian tribes.
- Established new rehabilitation training programs at undergraduate and master’s levels designed to increase the number of minority rehabilitation professionals.
- Received a significant number of applications from minority institutions of higher education under the Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program and increased the number of awards to minority institutions of higher education by 30 percent from the previous fiscal year,
- First-time applicants under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program were awarded grants as capacity-building projects.
- Continued to increase knowledge among hundreds of minority-serving higher education staff about RSA, VR programs and legislation related to disability.
- Forged collaborative relationships between VR agencies and minority-serving institutions of higher education at the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns conference.

Rehabilitation Training Program
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 302 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF RSA

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Training program, also known as the RSA training program, is to ensure that skilled personnel are available to serve the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities assisted through VR, supported employment and independent living programs. To that end, the program supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel trained in providing rehabilitation services.

2003 Federal Funding
\$39,371,411

Grants and contracts under this program authority are awarded to states and public and nonprofit agencies and organizations, including institutions of higher education, to pay all or part of the cost of conducting training programs. Awards can be made in any of 31 long-term training fields, in addition to the areas of continuing education, short-term training, experimental and innovative training and training interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons who are deaf-blind. These training programs vary in terms of content, methodology and audience.

The long-term training program supports academic training grants that must direct at least 75 percent of the funds to trainee scholarships. The statute requires trainees who receive assistance either to work two years for every year of assistance in public or private nonprofit rehabilitation agencies or related agencies, including professional corporations or professional practice groups that have service arrangements with a state agency, or to pay back the assistance they received. Grant recipients under the long-term training program are required to build closer relationships between training institutions and state VR agencies; promote careers in VR; identify potential employers who would meet the trainees' payback requirements; and assure that data on the employment of students are accurate.

Training of statewide workforce systems personnel is authorized under this program, and may be jointly funded with the Department of Labor. Statewide workforce systems personnel may be trained in evaluative skills to determine whether an individual with a disability may be served by the VR program, or another component of the statewide workforce system.

Of the funds appropriated for the Rehabilitation Training Program, at least 15 percent must be used to support in-service training. In-service training is intended to assist state VR agencies in the training of their staff consistent with the state's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD).

Under Title I of the act, each state is required to establish procedures to ensure there is an adequate supply of qualified staff for the state agency, assess personnel needs and make projections for future needs and address current and projected personnel training needs. States are further required to develop and maintain policies and procedures for

job-specific personnel standards that are consistent with national or state-approved certification, licensure, registration requirements, or, in the absence of these requirements, other state personnel requirements for comparable positions. If a state's current personnel do not meet the highest requirements for personnel standards within the state, the CSPD must identify the steps the state will take to upgrade the qualifications of their staff, through retraining or hiring. Funds under the VR program also may be used to comply with these requirements.

In FY 2003 RSA awarded over \$5 million in CSPD continuation grants to help retrain VR counselors to comply with the state degree standard. During FY 2003 the Rehabilitation Training Program made 79 in-service training awards to state VR agencies totaling \$5.9 million to assist efforts to train VR staff nationwide. The Rehabilitation Training Program continued to play a critical role in helping state VR agencies develop and implement their CSPD standards for hiring and training qualified rehabilitation professionals in their respective states.

The RSA training program is very active in leading universities and state VR agencies in an effort to increase the pool of qualified VR counselors available to state agencies. As large numbers of existing counselors are reaching retirement age, the RSA training program is targeting more of its resources toward preservice counselor training to expand the pool of potential candidates. The Rehabilitation Training Program provided both leadership and assistance to the national initiative effort to develop Rehabilitation Professional Recruitment Plans in RSA regions to recruit students into rehabilitation counselor training programs, and to recruit graduates of these training programs into state VR agencies.

In FY 2003, the program sponsored the annual conference of educators and state agencies to discuss human resource issues and solutions. Program managers also meet regularly with educators, accrediting bodies and state agencies to develop and implement effective strategies for increasing the recruitment pool for state VR agencies.

The allocation of rehabilitation training grant funds for FY 2003 is shown in table 10 on the following page. While there is no data on those participating and those completing training broken down by specific area, the long-term training program had a total of 802 scholars who graduated in FY 2003. The percentage of FY 2003 graduates fulfilling their payback requirement through acceptable employment is 82 percent. When compared to last year's annual report (USED/RSA 2006), the table reflects a shift in funding of programs designed to meet the critical need of training current and new counselors to meet the needs of state agencies as retirement rates increase.

Table 10 Rehabilitation Training Projects: Numbers and Funding Amounts, by Type of Project, Fiscal Year 2003

	Number of New and Continuing Grant Awards	Grant Amount (\$)
Long-Term Training		
Medical Rehabilitation	1	62,642
Rehabilitation Counseling	70	7,756,804
Rehabilitation Administration	4	399,933
Rehabilitation Engineer	4	399,923
Vocational Evaluation & Adjustment	8	789,698
Rehabilitation of Mentally Ill	7	699,922
Rehabilitation Psychology	2	199,970
Undergraduate Education	20	1,402,725
Rehabilitation-of-the Blind	13	1,297,981
Rehabilitation-of-the Deaf	13	1,229,288
Job Development/Placement	9	891,925
CSPD Priority	14	2,864,137
<i>Long-Term Training Totals</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>\$17,994,948</i>
Other Training		
Short-Term Training	2	464,992
Continuing Education	3	299,959
In-Service Training	79	5,872,502
Interpreter Training	12	2,104,785
Experimental & Innovative	3	299,959
Clearinghouse	1	300,000
RRCEP: General & CRP	21	9,662,902
TOTALS	286	\$37,000,047

Source: USED/RSA 2003h.

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues

Finally, the RSA training program supports the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI), an annual activity that funds the University of Arkansas and George Washington University to coordinate two separate study groups composed of experts from all facets of the VR program, who come together to discuss and debate contemporary VR service delivery challenges, and then to develop and disseminate publications that are used in training VR professionals, and as a technical assistance resource for other stakeholders in the VR program. For 56 years, the IRI has served to solidify the unique partnership between the federal and state governments, the university training programs and persons served by the VR agencies. One publication was published during FY 2003:

Distance Education: Opportunities and Issues for the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program (IRI 2003) from the 28th IRI in FY 2001. During FY 2003, RSA began providing individuals with the opportunity for receiving continuing education credits through the completion of a questionnaire based on the content of an IRI publication. These credits may then be used in partial fulfillment of the certified rehabilitation counselor continuing education requirements.

IRI Topics Studied During FY 2003

- A New Paradigm for Vocational Evaluation:
Empowering the VR Consumer through
Vocational Information
 - Innovative Methods for Providing VR Services to
Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities
-

EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

To improve the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, the act requires the distribution of practical and scientific information regarding state-of-the-art practices, scientific breakthroughs and new knowledge regarding disabilities. To address those requirements, RSA funds and promotes a variety of research and demonstration programs, training programs and a range of information dissemination projects designed to generate and make available critical data and information to appropriate audiences.

Program Evaluation

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 14 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF RSA AND THE
PLANNING, POLICY AND EVALUATION SERVICE OF RSA

Section 14 mandates that RSA evaluate all programs authorized by the act using appropriate methodology and evaluative research design. The purpose of this mandate is to evaluate program effectiveness in

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$993,500

relation to cost, impact on related programs and structure and mechanisms for delivery of services. The act further requires that standards be established and used for evaluations and that evaluations be conducted by individuals who are not immediately involved in the administration of the program or project to be evaluated. RSA relies significantly on evaluation studies to obtain information on the operations and effects of the programs it administers and to help make judgments about the programs' levels of success and decisions on how to improve them.

RSA continued to fund four existing studies:

- ***Evaluation of Literacy Demonstration Projects: A Design Study*** (DAI 2003b):
The study's purpose is to design an evaluation of projects that will test the use of literacy interventions to enhance the literacy levels, postsecondary education participation and earnings of VR consumers who have low levels of literacy and who can profit from the interventions. The study contractor will also provide technical assistance to grantees to prepare them for a subsequent external evaluation after grants are awarded. The evaluation design was completed and a five-year contract was awarded in FY 2004 to evaluate these projects.
- ***Variables Related to State VR Agency Performance*** (RTI forthcoming, a):
The purpose of this study is to identify variables related to state VR agency performance on Evaluation Standard 1, Employment Outcomes. This two-year study was initiated in FY 2002. The main purpose of the study is to determine which

factors influence state VR agency performance on that standard so the state VR agencies can be assisted to improve their performance.

- ***An Evaluation of the Florida Privatization Initiative*** (RTI forthcoming, b):
The state is testing in several local workforce regions a privatized model of service delivery. The study will describe the early implementation of the Florida privatized service delivery model, and it will also document the lessons to be learned about the successes and difficulties in transitioning to a privatized service delivery model. The study was initiated in FY 2001 but later interrupted while the state reorganized its privatization effort.
- ***Providing Technical Support for Reauthorization Issues and Standards and Indicators*** (RTI, forthcoming, c):
This project is designed to respond to requests for data information and to provide policy analyses related to the reauthorization of the act, and also to support current and new evaluation standards and indicators authorized by the act. This activity was initiated in FY 2002 and it is a two-year contract with an option to extend a year that RSA has exercised.

Three new studies were initiated in FY 2003:

- ***Support for Analyzing Data, Completing Reports and Providing Technical Assistance on Longitudinal Study Database*** (RTI, forthcoming, d):
This is a two-year contract with an option to extend for a year (which was exercised). One purpose of the contract is to complete final reports from the already terminated longitudinal study of the VR program and final reports from other studies in order to meet new departmental review requirements. Another purpose is to conduct in-depth data analyses of the longitudinal study database and produce reports as needed to answer policy questions.
- ***Assisting RSA Discretionary Grantees to Implement the Common Measures for Employment and Training Programs*** (RTI, forthcoming, e):
The Department is partnering with six other federal agencies on a new Job Training Common Measures (CM) initiative. Under this initiative, four common measures have been identified that clarify core goals of the federal job training programs. RSA is responsible for four employment and job-training-related programs under this initiative including the VR program (including the Supported Employment Service Program) and three smaller programs. The three smaller programs are the AIVRS program, the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program and the PWI Program.

The purpose of this activity is to assess existing grantee capacity to obtain the data required to implement the CM and to suggest to RSA options each program might pursue to enhance its capacity for complete and accurate reporting. For a number of reasons, we expect that grantees under these programs may have difficulty in implementing the CM. For example, many of these small organizations may not have access to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data system, experience using it, or

the capacity to collect and report the data. The contractor is responsible for assessing the capacity of existing grantees to obtain the required data and will suggest to RSA options each program might pursue to enhance its capacity to implement the CM.

- ***Design of a Second Longitudinal Study of the VR Services Program*** (RTI, forthcoming, f):

The purpose of this activity is to design a new longitudinal study. It has been five years since the main data collection terminated for the earlier longitudinal study. It is anticipated that a new longitudinal study would focus on the experiences of individuals who have completed VR services — particularly their contributions to society, need for services, and ability to maintain and advance in employment. The design study will review the literature, obtain input from a panel of experts and stakeholders, perform site visits, and develop draft data collection instruments and methods. The final report was completed in March 2005 and is being used to develop the new longitudinal study.

In FY 2003, RSA received four evaluation reports: *Evaluation of the Centers for Independent Living Program*, *Evaluation of the Projects with Industry Program*, and two final reports from the Longitudinal Study of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program: *How Consumer Characteristics Affect Access to, Receipt of, and Outcomes of VR Services*, and *VR Services and Outcomes*. Below are brief descriptions of the studies.

Evaluation of the Centers for Independent Living Program (CIL) (CESSI 2003):

This study was initiated in FY 1999. The CILs are federally funded consumer-directed nonprofit agencies providing services and advocacy to individuals with significant disabilities. Mail surveys of executive directors of federally funded centers and telephone surveys of over 500 randomly selected CIL consumers throughout the country were conducted. Some study findings are:

- According to directors and consumers, CILs are providing independent living services and systems advocacy mandated by law and doing so in accordance with the independent living philosophy.
- CILs are serving a population of poor, ethnically diverse consumers.
- Consumers said they were largely satisfied with CIL services and that many participated in the center's advocacy activities.
- Consumers attributed new knowledge and significant life changes to CIL services.
- There were few differences in the services consumers received or their satisfaction with those services by race, gender, or rural or urban location of the center.

The report concludes with recommendations to RSA and CILs to strengthen CIL programs.

Evaluation of the Projects With Industries Program (RTI 2003a):

The broad purpose of the evaluation was to examine the role and performance of the PWI program as one component of the broader set of employment-related services available to individuals with disabilities, with a particular focus on the extent to which PWI projects fulfilled their intended goal to create and expand job opportunities for individuals with disabilities at the project level. Collection of the data needed to address these study objectives was done through (1) a survey of all PWI projects funded as of October 2000, and (2) on-site data collection at 30 randomly selected PWI projects.

Some of the study's key findings are:

- Individuals with mental illness represented 22 percent of all former participants, followed by individuals with learning disabilities (15 percent), nonorthopedic physical impairments (13 percent), orthopedic impairments (12 percent), a previous history of alcohol or substance abuse (11 percent), and hearing impairments (10 percent).
- Eighty-three percent of all former participants for whom documentation was available had a significant disability.
- Nearly half (49 percent) of former participants were active VR service consumers at entry to PWI, another 21 percent had a prior experience with the VR agency, and 30 percent had no experience with the VR program.
- Overall, 62 percent of former PWI participants either obtained employment (60 percent) or retained employment (2 percent).
- On average, PWI participants who obtained employment worked for 31 hours per week and earned \$8.94 per hour (median of \$8.00); most jobs were in either the service sector (38 percent), or retail sales (28 percent).
- And finally, PWI and state VR agency staff agreed that PWI services do not duplicate VR agency services; individuals served by both programs tend to receive placement assistance only through the PWI program, with any training usually provided or at least funded by the VR agency.

A Longitudinal Study of the VR Services Program:

The *Longitudinal Study of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program* has followed over 8,000 VR consumers at 37 locations for at least three years for the purpose of identifying the types of individuals served, types of services provided, environments in which the services were provided and short-term and long-term economic and non-economic outcomes of the VR program. Two final reports were released in FY 2003:

(1) First Final Report: *How Consumer Characteristics Affect Access to, Receipt of, and Outcomes of VR Services* (RTI 2003b)

Some of the key findings are:

- During eligibility determination for services, there is not much difference in most of the characteristics (e.g., educational characteristics: level of education and receipt of special education services in high school; demographic characteristics: marital status and race) between individuals declared eligible and those not. However, individuals were more likely to be accepted for VR services if: their disability was significant or most significant; their disability was congenital rather than acquired; their disability was classified as either mental retardation or hearing impairment; they had high higher self-esteem; if working at application, they were working at a job in clerical or sales occupations; if not working at application, they were a student, unpaid family worker or volunteer. Individuals were less likely to be accepted for VR services if: their disability was a nonorthopedic physical impairment; they were working at application in supported or extended employment; or they were working at application at a job in a field other than clerical or sales occupations.
- Individuals with higher gross motor function and higher personal care function were more likely to receive services, obtain employment and obtain competitive employment. People were also more likely to obtain VR services and employment if they desired assistive technology services.
- Individuals with knowledge of specific jobs and good information-gathering skills were frequently more likely to become eligible and obtain: a) services, b) employment and c) competitive employment.
- Individuals were less likely to seek services, employment and competitive employment if they received SSI or SSDI.

(2) Second Final Report: *VR Services and Outcomes* (RTI 2003b)

Some of the study's findings are:

- VR services contributed quite significantly to consumers' competitive employment outcomes. Some services were found to be important for any employment outcome (competitive or noncompetitive) including quality of the consumer/counselor relationship, IPE modification, job development, job placement and on-the-job training. In addition, postsecondary education services — business or vocational training and four-year college or university — were important for competitive employment.
- At the third annual follow-up, 78 percent of persons exiting into competitive employment were still working, compared with 70 percent of those exiting into noncompetitive employment, 37 percent of those who received services but exited

VR without an employment outcome, and 40 percent of those who were eligible but dropped out before receiving VR services.

- Individuals obtaining competitive employment earned an average of \$7.63 per hour when they exited from the VR program; three years later they averaged \$10.06 per hour.
- Of individuals obtaining competitive employment, 32 percent earned more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level at exit from the VR program; three years later, 46 percent were at 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Among individuals who obtained any type of employment outcome with earnings, 32 percent received health benefits from their employers at exit from VR; three years later that percentage rose to 50 percent (the figure for all individuals in the country including the nondisabled is approximately 52 percent); among those with competitive employment outcomes the percentage rose from 36 percent to 58 percent over three years.
- Among individuals who received a competitive employment outcome, 39 percent reported they received some form of transfer payments at entry into VR; three years after their case files were closed, 26 percent reported they still received some form of transfer payment.

American Rehabilitation Magazine

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 12(A)(4) OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, RSA

Through the *American Rehabilitation Magazine*, RSA disseminates information on new and successful approaches to providing rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities that can and should be replicated. The magazine addresses topics related to VR, such as best practices in the performance of professional duties, innovative programs, agency administrative practices and research findings. The magazine also features book and film reviews, resources on disability and rehabilitation, information regarding what individual states* are doing and other items of interest to rehabilitation professionals.

In recent years, the magazine has devoted a number of issues to cover one specific disability or a specific approach to rehabilitation. Articles appearing in FY 2003 issues focused on Mentoring and Transitioning. The publication was circulated to 2,699 entities that include various types of libraries; universities and colleges; state departments of vocational rehabilitation, education and labor; Client Assistance Program and Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights offices; various national associations for different

* See definition of *state* in footnote 3 on page 11.

disabilities; various research centers and institutes; presidential committees and commissions on various disabilities; American Indian VR agencies; other federal agencies; and various individuals who work in disability areas. The magazine is distributed to all 56 states as well as to various foreign countries.

Information Clearinghouse
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) staff responds to inquires and provide the public with information about what is going on in the rehabilitation community. Inquiries usually come from individuals with disabilities, their families, national organizations, other federal and state agencies, information providers, the news media and the general public. Most inquiries are related to federal funding, legislation affecting individuals with disabilities and federal programs and policies. Clearinghouse staff members refer callers to other appropriate sources of disability-related information and assistance.

Periodically, the clearinghouse staff will analyze inquiries to assess current information needs. Based on that analysis, fact sheets and other relevant publications are prepared and made available to the public. During FY 2003 the NCRTM shipped approximately 2,305 orders of training materials. The total mailings of printed newsletters totaled approximately 15,865. E-newsletter subscriptions totaled 1,389.

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 200-204 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Created in 1978, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) conducts comprehensive and coordinated programs of research, demonstration projects, training and related activities that promote: full inclusion and integration into society; employment; independent living; maintenance of health and function; and the transfer of rehabilitation technology to individuals with disabilities. NIDRR activities are designed to improve the economic and social self-sufficiency of these individuals, with particular emphasis on improving the effectiveness of services authorized under the act.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$109,285,000

The primary role of NIDRR is to provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of research and related activities to advance knowledge (i.e., short-term outcomes¹¹), and inform and improve policy, practice and system capacity (i.e., intermediate outcomes¹²) designed to maximize the inclusion and social integration, health and function, employment and independent living of individuals of all ages with disabilities. Another role of NIDRR is to ensure the widespread distribution of practical scientific and technological information related to rehabilitation and disability, in usable formats to appropriate user populations, and to increase opportunities for researchers who are individuals with disabilities.

To address these purposes, NIDRR supports rehabilitation research and development centers, demonstration projects and related activities, including the training of persons who provide rehabilitation services, or who conduct rehabilitation research. In addition, NIDRR supports projects to disseminate and promote the use of information concerning developments in rehabilitation procedures, methods and devices. Information is provided to rehabilitation professionals, persons with disabilities and their representatives.

NIDRR also supports data analyses on the demographics of those with disabilities and provides that information to policymakers, administrators and other relevant groups. Awards are competitive, with applications reviewed by panels of experts, including rehabilitation professionals, rehabilitation researchers and persons with disabilities.

NIDRRs Research Program Mechanisms

NIDRR invests in the following types of centers and projects:

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs) conduct coordinated, integrated and advanced programs of research targeted toward the production of new knowledge to improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems, to alleviate or stabilize disabling conditions and to promote maximum social and economic independence of individuals with disabilities. RRTCs develop methods, procedures and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals

¹¹ Short-term outcomes, as defined in the NIDRR final long-range plan for fiscal years 2005-09 (USED/NIDRR 2006), refer to advancements in understanding, knowledge, skills, and learning systems that result from the successful implementation of program activities and the use of program outputs. Within the context of disability and rehabilitation research, the NIDRR long-range plan and Logic Model identify three short-term outcome arenas, corresponding to the agency's strategic goals and investments in the functional program areas of (1) Capacity-building; (2) Research and Development; and (3) Knowledge translation.

¹² Intermediate outcomes refer to changes in policy, practice, behavior and system capacity that occur in part as a result of the external use of adoption of NIDRR-funded outputs and advances in knowledge. Unlike short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes are under the indirect influence of program activities and outputs, and because of this NIDRR can only partially influence these outcomes, and thus cannot be held accountable to the same degree as for short-term outcomes (USED/NIDRR 2006).

with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities. RRTC's also provide training, including graduate, preservice and in-service training, and teaching to transfer new knowledge to assist rehabilitation personnel to more effectively provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Awards are for five years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years.

A specific example of a short-term outcome was the development and implementation of a successful new initiative to increase understanding among consumers, service providers, and national organizations about psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and recovery issues pertaining to Hispanic populations. To date, this program has contributed to increased awareness by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the International Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services of the importance of cultural competence, language and diversity in producing positive outcomes.¹³

Another short-term outcome was the development and contribution to increased interest in and adoption of recovery-oriented rehabilitation services and practices for persons with mental illness in selected state departments of mental health including New York, Ohio, Alabama, North Carolina, and California.¹⁴

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) focus on issues dealing with rehabilitation technology, including advanced research in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology devices and services to develop and test new engineering solutions to problems of disability. Types of activities supported by RERCs include: the development and dissemination of innovative methods of applying advanced technology, scientific achievements, and psychological and social knowledge to solve rehabilitation problems and remove environmental barriers; demonstrations and dissemination of scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independent living needs of individuals with significant disabilities; service-delivery-systems-change projects; and the stimulation of the production and distribution of equipment in the private sector, as well as clinical evaluations of equipment. Each RERC must provide training opportunities to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to become researchers and practitioners of rehabilitation technology. Awards are for five years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years.

An intermediate outcome was the contribution to the development and implementation of accessible information kiosks for the new World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

¹³ Rehabilitation Research Training Center on Persons with Long-Term Mental Illness, Boston University, MA (Sally Rogers, Sc.D., principal investigator).

¹⁴ Rehabilitation Research Training Center on Persons with Long-Term Mental Illness, Boston University, MA (Sally Rogers, Sc.D., principal investigator).

and the U.S. Postal Service, thereby reducing barriers to participation and resulting in increased access to public information for individuals with all types of abilities.¹⁵

Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Related Projects

Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Related Projects (DRRPs) are aimed at fulfilling NIDRR's overarching goals of inclusion, integration, employment and self-sufficiency. There are four types of DRRPs: (1) Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (KDU) projects described below; (2) Model Systems in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Burn Injury, described below under "Model Systems;" (3) Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) projects, described below; and (4) research projects. The first three types of DRRPs are managed as separate programs and discussed in the sections immediately following. The fourth—research DRRPs—differ from RRTC and RERC projects in that they have no training requirement and may support short-term research relating to the development of methods, procedures and devices to assist in the provision of rehabilitation services, particularly to persons with significant disabilities. Awards are for five years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years.

A significant outcome from a research DRRP was the increased international capacity-building in rehabilitation and disability research for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and their affiliated faculty and graduate students through 12 travel awards to support research and collaboration between MSI researchers and international colleagues. This exchange resulted in the participation of faculty from MSIs in three conferences; new research planning activities related to Australia, Belize, China, Guatemala and South Africa; and the identification of the needs of ethnic and racial minority groups. Presentations based on these research topics were collected to form a book on rehabilitation and disability research for MSIs that was distributed at the University of Hawaii-Manoa conference on Women in Community-Based Disability and Rehabilitation Research-Participatory Action Research and Indigenous Ways of Knowing.¹⁶

(1) Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization

NIDRR's KDU projects support information utilization and dissemination, including state-of-the-art assessments and diffusion centers, to ensure that knowledge generated from research is available and can be fully used to improve services, opportunities and conditions for persons with disabilities. Through this program, NIDRR reaches its many constituencies of research scientists, people with disabilities and their families, service providers, policymakers, educators, human resource developers, advocates, entities covered by the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*,

¹⁵ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Information Technology Access at the Trace Center, University of Wisconsin (Gregg Vanderheiden, Ph.D., principal investigator).

¹⁶ Center for International Rehabilitation Research, SUNY, Buffalo, NY (John Stone, principal investigator).

and others. In carrying out this part of NIDRR's mission, the agency's challenge is to reach diverse and changing populations, to present research results in many different and accessible formats, and to use technology appropriately. Not only does NIDRR require grantees to engage in dissemination of results of research, demonstration, training and other activities, but also it supports a range of diffusion centers to specifically address this part of its mission. Other projects provide information on specific disabilities or information to specific target audiences. KDU project personnel work cooperatively and collaboratively with each other and other NIDRR centers through publication of materials, Web-based communication, and participation in meetings of project directors.

(2) Model Systems

The model systems program conducts research activities across all of NIDRR's research domains. NIDRR's research focus for the health and function area addresses challenges to systems for individuals' care, rehabilitation services and supports for people with spinal cord injury (SCI), TBI and burn injury. Research topics include: medical, psychological, vocational and other rehabilitation; health and wellness programs; service delivery; short- and long-term interventions; systems research, and new and emerging disabilities. Other projects associated with these three systems target social interventions and test their effectiveness in terms of enhancing options for workplace and community reintegration for individuals with these disabilities. Research efforts in this area include four centers working on model burn injury projects, 16 on model SCI systems and 16 on model TBI projects.

A short-term outcome was the development of the Center on Outcome Measurement in Brain Injury, in collaboration with 13 of the NIDRR-funded TBI model systems, to provide an online, comprehensive resource on outcome measures for brain injuries, which early reports indicate is advancing knowledge regarding the availability, properties, and appropriate use of outcome measurement scales for TBI.¹⁷

(3) Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers

The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) are also responsible for providing technical assistance, disseminating information and providing training on the requirements of the *ADA* and developments in *ADA* case law, policy and implementation to individuals or entities with responsibilities and rights under the act. The DBTACs are responsible for increasing the capacity of organizations at the state and local levels to provide technical assistance, disseminate information, provide training and promote awareness of the *ADA*. The DBTACs also promote awareness of the *ADA* and the availability of services provided by the DBTACs, other NIDRR grantees working on *ADA* issues and other federal information sources on the *ADA*.

¹⁷ Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Northern California TBI Model Systems, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, CA (Jeffrey Englander, M.D.; Karyl M. Hall, Ed.D., principal investigators).

A short-term outcome was the development of an introductory course about the *ADA* and accessible information technology with the Georgia Institute of Technology's Department of Regional and City Planning that is being taught to Georgia Tech graduate students and student project supervisors to ensure attention is given to accessibility and universal design in city planning.¹⁸

Another short-term outcome was the development of the *Partners Project*, a two-day intensive training on the *ADA*, to equip disability advocates and professionals who work with *ADA* issues with the knowledge and skills needed to answer basic questions, disseminate materials, and provide training in their community or workplace, which has been successfully completed to date by over 150 partners across a four-state region.¹⁹

Field-Initiated Projects

Field-Initiated Projects (FIPs) support research and development activities that address topics and issues identified by the researchers. Most FIP awards are made for three years.

A short-term outcome was the successful development of a new “way-finding” product for blind and visually impaired users that exploits the Global Positioning System and other current emerging navigation technologies. It has the potential to improve the users' ability to assess orientation, as well as indoor and outdoor way-finding, and travel through traffic intersections.²⁰

Small Business Innovation Research

Small Business Innovation Research projects, mandated under the *Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2000*, support the development of ideas and projects that are useful to persons with disabilities by inviting the participation of small business firms with strong research capabilities in science, engineering or educational technology. The program funds small businesses in three phases, covering the process required to take an idea from development to market readiness.

A short-term outcome was the further development and field-testing of *StoryTiles*, a device with programmable manipulatives that fosters language, sequencing, and imaginative play skills among children with autism. Initial field-testing activities indicate that *StoryTiles* can be used in a preschool classroom to effectively teach sequencing skills, story comprehension, creative play skills, and receptive/expressive skills. Data from this study resulted in the development of

¹⁸ Southeast DBTAC at CATEA, Georgia Institute of Technology (Shelley Kaplan, principal investigator).

¹⁹ Northwest ADA/IT Center at Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, OR (Charles Drum, JD, Ph.D., principal investigator).

²⁰ Sendero Group, LLC, Davis, CA (Michael May, principal investigator).

inclusive-environment objectives for using *StoryTiles* with a special needs population within a mainstream classroom.²¹

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project

The Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Project supports grants to institutions providing advanced training in research to physicians, nurses, engineers, physical therapists and other professionals.

During FY 2003, NIDRR funded 14 ARRTs with 53 fellows receiving training. A short-term outcome from this program included: 43 percent of trained fellows received doctoral degrees, 6 percent were persons with disabilities, and 11 percent were minorities. This group of graduate trainees produced 142 presentations and contributions to 41 peer-reviewed journals, with one citation in the *Cochrane Review*.

Mary E. Switzer Fellowships

This fellowship program supports one-year fellowships to highly qualified individuals to carry out discrete research activities that are related to NIDRR's research priorities or to pursue studies of importance to the rehabilitation community. Awards are made both to individuals of doctoral or comparable academic status who have had seven or more years of relevant experience and to individuals who are at earlier stages in their careers.

Interagency Committee on Disability Research

NIDRR funding also supports the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR), authorized under Section 203(a)(1) of the act. The primary purpose of the ICDR is to promote cooperation across various federal agencies in the development and execution of disability and rehabilitation research activities. The ICDR is responsible for coordinating federal research related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; facilitating the compilation of information about the status of rehabilitation research sponsored by federal agencies; promoting the exchange of information; making recommendations with respect to coordination of policy and development of objectives and priorities; and preparing reports to the president and Congress. ICDR funds support development and maintenance of a Web-based infrastructure which links relevant databases of ongoing research activities undertaken by various agencies and thereby prevents unnecessary duplication and overlap. ICDR also supports collaboration with relevant public and private entities and consumers and multi-agency coordination and cooperation to develop and evaluate assistive technologies.

A significant outcome was the development and launching of a new ICDR public Web site in July 2003 (www.icdr.us). It contains a form to receive public comments on

²¹ SBIR, Intelligent Automation, Inc., Programmable Manipulatives to Improve Language, Sequencing, and Imaginative Play Skills in Children with Autism, Rockville, MD (Shannon Mayhew, principal investigator).

disability and rehabilitation research needs, information about the ICDR, an archive of important disability and rehabilitation research reports, links to federally funded research project home pages and databases of ICDR member agencies, and other relevant links.

Another significant outcome was conducting the Summit on Wheeled Mobility and Accessible Transportation, held on July 22, 2003, in Washington, D.C. It provided a forum for U.S. university researchers, experts in rehabilitation science and technology, physical medicine, engineering, and architecture to discuss the state of the science and future research needs of wheeled mobility users. The discussion addressed the lack of standards and regulations for wheeled mobility and seating systems; the need for compatible and appropriate wheeled mobility for para-transit and ADA-compliant securement systems; limited access to, or problems associated with, private and public transportation; and the need for a universal transit system that will service all people.

Outreach to Minority Colleges and Universities

Section 21 of the act instructs NIDRR and RSA to conduct outreach activities to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. In order to implement this mandate, NIDRR and RSA must reserve one percent of the funds appropriated for programs under Titles II, III, VI, and VII to make awards to provide outreach and technical assistance to minority entities and American Indian tribes and to make awards to minority entities and Indian tribes to carry out activities under the act. In FY 2003, \$1,092,850 was reserved from NIDRR programs under Title II.

NIDRR Management—Planning for and Demonstrating Results

NIDRR's management of its research investments involves long-term strategic planning, performance management and a multilevel evaluation process that includes independent expert review of awards at the portfolio or programmatic level, corresponding to the primary domains of NIDRR's long-range plan (USED/NIDRR 2006).

In FY 2003, NIDRR continued the development of its long-range plan for the years 2005 to 2009. The new plan was to build on the previous 1999-2003 plan, while responding to new developments in the disability and rehabilitation research field and in government, including the New Freedom Initiative and the president's Management Agenda with the focus on accountability for results. In the new plan, NIDRR will continue to emphasize the same or similar research areas as those delineated in the 1999-2003 plan — employment, health and function, technology for access and function, community living and participation, and disability demographics. For each area, NIDRR will identify goals and objectives and will work at incorporating these in its priorities and grant announcements to encourage innovative research. (The *Final Long-Range Plan for 2005-09* was published in the *Federal Register* on Feb. 15, 2006 (USED/NIDRR 2006a).

NIDRR's program goals for FY 2003 focused on producing high-quality research designed to help individuals with disabilities participate fully and productively in society. Program

review has become a key element in NIDRR's quality assurance and performance monitoring and evaluation systems. NIDRR conducted two types of reviews (formative or summative) for three major programs: RERCs, RRTCs, and model systems programs for SCI, TBI, and burn injury. Formative reviews occur early in a five-year funding cycle (between 12 and 15 months) and summative reviews occur toward the end of the fourth year. The Center of Excellence (CoE) model (USED/NIDRR 2006b) was the central framework driving all aspects of both types of reviews. NIDRR is committed to achieving the standards of excellence contained in the CoE model through an active partnership between itself and each center. Results of program review are used to guide program improvement activities, meet information needs, and contribute to future planning and priority development.

In addition, during FY 2003, NIDRR continued a revision of its Web-based reporting system for annual monitoring and *GPRA*. The same system will be used to collect information for program review. The integrated system will allow NIDRR to more easily track activities, outputs and outcomes.

The allocation of NIDRR grant funds for fiscal years 2002 and 2003 is shown on table 11 below. There are no figures in the FY 2002 column for the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization program because the data on the budget breakdown for that program was not collected prior to FY 2003. However, beginning with FY 2003, the data will be broken down and shown in future reports.

Table 11 NIDRR-Funded Centers and Projects: Funding and Awards, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Centers and Projects	Number of Awards FY 2002	Grant Amounts (in thousands)	Number of Awards FY 2003	Grant Amounts (in thousands)
RRTCs				
Continuations	30	\$22,012	19	\$8,336
New Awards	0	0	14	\$10,749
RERCs				
Continuations	16	\$16,068	14	\$11,793
New Awards	5	\$4,406	8	\$7,649
DRRPs				
Continuations	12	\$1,402	16	\$6,145
New Awards	4	\$4,256	7	\$2,096

Table 11 (Continued)

Centers and Projects	Number of Awards FY 2002	Grant Amounts (in thousands)	Number of Awards FY 2003	Grant Amounts (in thousands)
Model Systems:				
Spinal Cord Injury				
Continuations	21	\$6,922	21	\$7,807
New Awards	0	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury				
Continuations	16	\$348	17	\$6,193
New Awards	1	\$5,838	1	\$600
Burn Injury				
Continuations	0	0	5	\$1,450
New Awards	5	\$1,449	0	0
DBTACs				
Continuations	11	\$11,804	11	\$11,854
New Awards	0	0	0	0
Small Business Innovation Research	22	\$5,027	32	\$5,003
KDU Projects	NA	NA	6	\$3,800
Field-Initiated Projects				
Continuations	57	\$8,091	62	\$9,133
New Awards	35	\$5,186	27	\$4,048
Mary Switzer Fellowships				
New Awards Only	10	\$530	11	\$545
Research Training Grants				
Continuations	10	\$1,868	12	\$1,640
New Awards	6	\$834	2	\$300
Outreach				
Continuations	8	\$1,100	0	0
New	0	0	3	\$1,123
Totals	269	\$97,141	288	\$100,264

RRTCs — Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
RERCs — Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers
DRRPs — Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Related Projects
DBTACs — Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers
KDU Projects — Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Projects

Source: USED/NIDRR 2003.

ADVOCACY AND ENFORCEMENT

Requirements under the act call for continuous reviews of policies and practices related to the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment of individuals with disabilities and their access to facilities and information. To carry out the responsibilities stemming from those requirements, the act authorizes a number of advocacy and advisory programs operating at national and state levels. Such programs conduct periodic reviews of existing employment policies and practices. In addition, these programs develop and recommend policies and procedures that facilitate the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment of individuals with disabilities to ensure compliance with standards prescribed by congressional legislation.

Some of the advocacy programs funded under the act provide advice and assistance to individuals with disabilities, as well as make recommendations to the president, the Congress, and the secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Other advocacy programs authorized under the act assist individuals with disabilities to obtain the services they need under the act or protect their legal and human rights, or both.

Several federal agencies have been given the authority to use enforcement and compliance techniques to ensure that government agencies and private firms doing business with the government subscribe to and implement legislative provisions related to the employment of individuals with disabilities. These enforcement agencies review complaints, conduct investigations, conduct public hearings and issue orders. These agencies participate, when necessary, as *amicus curiae* in any U. S. court in civil actions. They design appropriate and equitable affirmative action remedies. Orders of compliance may include the withholding of or suspension of federal funds.

Client Assistance Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 112 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RSA

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides grants to the 56 states to assist eligible individuals and applicants to the VR program and other programs, projects and services funded under the act. Services

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$12,068,000

are provided to help eligible individuals and applicants understand the services and benefits available under the act and to advise them of their rights and responsibilities in connection with those benefits. Assistance also may be provided to help eligible individuals and applicants in their relationships with those entities providing services under the act, including assistance and advocacy in pursuing legal and administrative remedies to ensure the protection of their rights. All programs funded under the act must inform consumers and applicants about the services available from the CAP and how to contact the CAP. Each state must operate a CAP in order to receive other

allotments under the act, including VR program grant funds. There are currently 56 CAPs in operation.

Each governor designates a public or private agency to operate a CAP. This designated agency must be independent of any agency that provides services under the act, except in those cases where the act “grandfathered” CAPs already housed within state agencies providing services. In the event that one of these state agencies providing services under the act restructures, the act requires the governor to redesignate a CAP in an agency that does not provide services under the act. Currently, very few “internal” CAPs (e.g., those housed within a state VR agency or other agency providing services under the act) remain.

CAPs also conduct systemic advocacy to benefit large numbers of individuals facing a similar issue. Systemic advocacy can take a variety of forms, but most often CAPs engage in discussions with state VR agencies and other programs funded under the act to improve policies and procedures that affect the quality of the service delivery system. In FY 2003, 27 out of the 56 CAPs (48 percent) reported changes in policies and practices benefiting individuals with disabilities as a result of their efforts.

Overall, in FY 2003, CAPs nationwide responded to 53,295 requests for information and provided extensive services to 8,586 individuals. Slightly more than 94 percent of those cases in which extensive services were provided involved applicants for or recipients of services from the VR program. In 77 percent of those cases, issues related to the delivery of VR services. This data also demonstrates that in 28 percent of the cases closed, CAPs enabled the individuals to advocate for themselves through the explanation of policies; that 12 percent of these cases resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties; and 11 percent resulted in the development or implementation of an IPE.

In FY 2003, specific examples of CAP activities included:

- The Arizona CAP advocated for an individual with spina bifida who desired to attend the private school Ottawa University for disability-related reasons. The Arizona VR agency was insisting that the individual attend Arizona State University. However, due to her disability, the individual was not able to maneuver her manual wheelchair across the sprawling campus. In addition, the exposure to the extreme temperatures would have endangered the individual’s health. The individual was seeking to attend Ottawa instead because the school is encompassed within one building. The Arizona VR agency then denied payment of full tuition at Ottawa University claiming that policies limited such assistance to the tuition rate at the public university. CAP was able to intervene on the individual’s behalf, reversing the Arizona VR agency’s decision. The Arizona VR agency is now providing full tuition while the individual is attending Ottawa University.
- The North Carolina CAP advocated for an individual who had been a global trade consultant. The individual had developed information and tracking software to

market to small businesses that want to expand into international trade (import/export ventures). With the assistance of his VR counselor, the individual wrote and submitted a small business proposal to the North Carolina agency's chief of operation for approval. The proposal was ultimately denied because the reviewer questioned the quality and marketing feasibility of the product. CAP assisted the individual with necessary revisions to the proposal and the creation of a professional Power Point presentation that was later used to explain and demonstrate the product in an administrative review. The VR representative conducting the administrative review was impressed with the individual's presentation and ruled in favor of supporting the business plan.

Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights Program

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 509 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RSA

The purpose of the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) Program is to support a system in each state and the American Indian consortium to protect the legal and human rights of eligible individuals with disabilities. These 57 PAIR programs provide legal, administrative, and other appropriate services to ensure the protection of, and advocacy for, the rights of eligible individuals with disabilities within the state; and information on and referrals to programs and services addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. The PAIR program serves individuals with disabilities who are ineligible for protection and advocacy services provided under Part C of the *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act)*, the *Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act*, or who need protection and advocacy services that are beyond the scope of the CAP.

FY 2003 Federal Funding
\$16,890,000

States use PAIR funds to plan and carry out protection and advocacy programs for eligible individuals with disabilities and to develop outreach strategies to make individuals with disabilities aware of their rights. Funds must be set aside under this program for two activities before awarding grants to eligible states with the remaining appropriation. Under the first activity, during any fiscal year in which the appropriation is equal to or exceeds \$5.5 million, the secretary of education must first set aside not less than 1.8 percent and not more than 2.2 percent of the amount appropriated for training and technical assistance to eligible systems established under this program.

For the second activity, if the total appropriation exceeds \$10.5 million, the secretary must award no less than \$50,000 to the eligible system established under the *DD Act* to serve the American Indian consortium. The secretary then distributes the remainder of the appropriation to the eligible systems within the states on a formula basis after satisfying minimum allocations.

The act also requires the secretary to increase the minimum allotments for states by a percentage not greater than the percentage increase in the total amount appropriated for this program from the previous fiscal year when the level of the appropriation increases. The act establishes a minimum allotment of \$100,000 for 52 of the states or one-third of 1 percent of funds remaining after the technical assistance set-aside and grant for the American Indian consortium, whichever is greater. Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands receive a minimum allotment of \$50,000.

During FY 2003, PAIR programs reported representing 17,053 individuals and responding to 70,731 requests for information or referral. Of the cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, the greatest number of specified issues involved education (21 percent), employment (15 percent) and government benefits/services (12 percent). In addition to providing representation to individuals, PAIR programs address systemic issues faced by persons with disabilities through a variety of methods, including negotiations with public and private entities and class action litigation. In FY 2003, 43 of the 57 PAIR programs (75 percent) reported that these activities resulted in changes in policies and practices benefiting individuals with disabilities.

Each year, each PAIR program must seek public comment when developing its statement of objectives and priorities, including a rationale for the selection of the objectives and priorities and a plan for achieving them. These objectives and priorities will define the issues that the PAIR program will work on during the year, thus defining the types of cases that the PAIR program will accept. These priorities and objectives cover a wide variety of issues that affect individuals with disabilities in their daily lives.

In FY 2003, specific examples of PAIR program activities included:

- With the use of PAIR funds, the Native American Protection and Advocacy Program brought a lawsuit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which resulted in a court decision that fundamentally altered and clarified the BIA's role in providing special education services to Native American students with disabilities. The BIA had adopted the policy that it was not responsible for the services that these students received. The court soundly rejected the BIA's position and held that it is ultimately responsible for insuring that Native American students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education.
- In Pennsylvania, various advisory committees and councils focused on the identification and diversion of individuals entering nursing homes and personal care homes. Through its participation on these advisory councils, the Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy, Inc. advocated for a pilot project in southwest Pennsylvania, which has successfully implemented a "home and community-based services presumptive eligibility" process. This project has resulted in some significant systemic changes that have provided quick and easy access to home and community-based services and supports for individuals residing in nursing homes. Under this pilot, 14 individuals were moved out of nursing homes or diverted from ever having to enter a nursing home within a three-week time

period. On the very first day of the pilot, one individual in a nursing home returned to the community. The pilot is expected to be implemented statewide once sufficient funding can be obtained from the state.

Employment of People with Disabilities

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 501 OF THE ACT

MANAGED BY THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

The act authorizes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment provisions of laws and regulations concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities. As part of its oversight responsibilities, EEOC conducts on-site reviews of federal agency affirmative action employment programs. Based on these reviews, the EEOC submits findings and recommendations for federal agency implementation. The EEOC then monitors the implementation of these findings and recommendations by performing follow-up on-site reviews.

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board

(ACCESS BOARD)

AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 502 AND SECTION 508 OF THE ACT

Section 502 of the act created the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, also known as the Access Board. Section 502 lays out the duties of the board under the *Architectural Barriers Act (ABA)*, which include: ensuring compliance with standards issued under the *ABA*, developing and maintaining guidelines for complying with the *ABA*, and promoting access throughout all segments of society. The Access Board also has the primary responsibility for developing and maintaining accessibility guidelines and providing technical assistance under the *ADA* with respect to overcoming architectural, transportation, and communication barriers. The Access Board is also responsible for developing and periodically updating guidelines under the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* that ensure access to various telecommunication products.

Composed of 25 members, the Access Board is structured to function as a representative of the general public and as a coordinating body among federal agencies. Twelve of its members are senior managers from federal departments; the other 13 are private citizens appointed by the president, a majority of whom must be individuals with disabilities. Key responsibilities of the Access Board include: developing and maintaining accessibility requirements for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and electronic and information technology; providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines and standards; and enforcing accessibility standards for federally funded facilities.

The 1998 amendments to the act expanded the Access Board's role and gave it responsibility for developing access standards for electronic and information technology under Section 508 of the act. The description of the Access Board in Section 508 provides information regarding its role and those standards. The Access Board provides training and technical assistance on all its guidelines and standards.

With its publications, hotline and training sessions, the Access Board also provides a range of services to private as well as public organizations. In addition, the board enforces accessibility provisions of the *ABA*, the *ADA*, and the *Telecommunications Act* through the investigation of complaints. The Access Board conducts its investigations through the responsible federal agencies and strives for amicable resolution of complaints.

Electronic and Information Technology
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 508 OF THE ACT
ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Section 508 of the act requires that when federal agencies develop, procure, maintain or use electronic and information technology, they shall ensure that the electronic and information technology allows federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. Section 508 also requires that individuals with disabilities who are members of the public seeking information or services from a federal agency, have access to and use of information and data that are comparable to the access to and use of information and data by members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. The intention is to eliminate barriers in accessing information technology, make new opportunities available for individuals with disabilities, and encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The 1998 amendments to the act significantly expanded and strengthened the technology access requirements in Section 508.

The Department's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) plays a lead role in the implementation of Section 508 through such activities as product conformance testing and the provision of technical assistance to government agencies and vendors on the implementation of the Section 508 standards. The OCIO Assistive Technology Team delivers assistive technology workshops, presentations and demonstrations to other federal agencies, to state and local education institutions, and at assistive technology and information technology industry seminars and conferences, and conducts numerous conformance tests of high visibility e-government-sponsored Web sites.

The OCIO, in conjunction with the Access Board and the General Services Administration (GSA), participates in the Federal Information Technology Accessibility

Initiative, an interagency effort, coordinated by GSA, to offer technical assistance and to provide an informal means of cooperation and sharing of information on implementation of Section 508 throughout the federal government.

Also in FY 2003, the Department continued for a third year to support the five-year, \$7.5 million grant to the Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Rehabilitation Technology. This grant is providing training and technical assistance on universal design to technology manufacturers, product designers and purchasers of information technology, thereby helping to improve the implementation of Section 508.

Employment Under Federal Contracts
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 503 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) is responsible for ensuring that employers with federal contracts or subcontracts in excess of \$10,000 take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities. OFCCP investigators conduct several thousand compliance reviews and investigate hundreds of complaints each year. OFCCP also issues policy guidance to private companies and develops innovative ways to gain compliance with the law.

Nondiscrimination Under Federal Grants and Programs
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE ACT
MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION AND
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federally assisted programs and activities. This provision of the act is designed to protect the rights of any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself and performing manual tasks.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (CRD) has overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation and enforcement of Section 504 of the act. As part of its regulatory and review efforts, the CRD responds to education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, state VR agencies, libraries and museums. CRD may respond in regard to programs, projects or activities that include, but are not limited to: admissions, recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student treatment and

services, counseling and guidance, discipline, classroom assignment, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, athletics, housing, and employment.

Examples of the types of discrimination prohibited by Section 504 and its implementing regulations include denial of equal access to educational programs and facilities; and denial of a free appropriate public education for elementary and secondary students with disabilities and academic adjustments for individuals with disabilities in higher education. Section 504 and its implementing regulations also prohibit employment discrimination and retaliation for filing a complaint with the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or for advocating for a right protected by this provision of the law.

For more information on OCR, visit its Web site at: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ .

National Council on Disability
AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 400 OF THE ACT
AN INDEPENDENT FEDERAL AGENCY

As an independent agency, the National Council on Disability (NCD) promotes policies, programs, practices and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, and that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society. More specifically, the NCD reviews and evaluates laws, policies, programs, practices and procedures conducted or assisted by federal departments or agencies to see if they meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The council makes recommendations to the president, the Congress, the secretary of education, the commissioner of RSA, the director of NIDRR, and officials of federal agencies based on those evaluations.

In FY 2003, the council conducted a number of activities designed to increase consumer input and awareness regarding policy issues affecting individuals with disabilities. Those activities included dissemination of information through the conduct of hearings, forums and conferences throughout the country and through response to thousands of telephone, e-mail and written inquiries on *ADA* and other disability civil rights issues.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Table A-1 Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies — General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2003

*Must Pass at Least Four of Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators.^c
Performance Level Criteria Are Shown In Parentheses for Each Indicator.*

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes ^e (> 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment ^f (> 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability ^g (> 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Earnings ratio ^h (> .52)	Indicator 1.6: Self support (> 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Alabama	6	70.70	96.83	89.05	0.508	81.10	5	2
Alaska	7	59.30	97.51	81.76	0.700	55.88	6	3
American Samoa	19	97.50	69.23	96.30	N/A	92.59	5	2
Arizona	-179	37.43	99.16	83.81	0.561	63.51	4	3
Arkansas	225	51.97	99.91	91.87	0.685	76.73	5	3
California	663	54.60	79.71	99.13	0.514	70.88	4	2
Colorado	-543	58.08	88.92	69.38	0.534	58.62	5	3

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b General agencies serve persons with various disabilities other than blindness and/or visual impairments. Combined agencies service all individuals with disabilities including persons who are blind and visually impaired.

^c Minimum performance level criteria for each standard and indicator were established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and published in the *Federal Register* on June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d To pass this indicator, the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the current performance period must be at least the same as the number of individuals exiting the VR program employed during the previous performance period.

^e Percentage who have received employment outcomes after provision of VR services.

^f Percentage of employed individuals who exit the VR program and are placed in an integrated setting, self-employment, or BEP (Business Enterprise Program, also known as the Vending Facility Program) with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

^g Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

^h No state wage data exists for Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. Therefore, Indicator 1.5 cannot be computed for these VR agencies.

Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

Table A-1 (Continued)

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes ^e (> 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment ^f (> 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability ^g (> 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Earnings ratio ^h (> .52)	Indicator 1.6: Self support (> 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Connecticut	73	56.09	99.30	100.00	0.564	46.61	5	3
Delaware	15	65.61	98.93	75.12	0.451	73.44	5	2
District of Columbia	20	62.52	99.31	85.64	0.357	83.15	5	2
Florida	421	53.38	98.77	76.56	0.594	52.56	4	3
Georgia	249	50.57	85.46	89.93	0.467	63.53	4	2
Guam	14	60.00	91.67	95.45	N/A	68.18	6	3
Hawaii	88	57.73	95.85	72.25	0.594	61.62	6	3
Idaho	88	59.33	99.50	96.26	0.624	70.61	6	3
Illinois	-214	68.77	94.46	100.00	0.428	49.73	3	2
Indiana	838	55.85	93.13	93.89	0.656	37.24	5	3
Iowa	-575	45.27	94.34	85.47	0.655	56.76	4	3
Kansas	-116	53.01	93.31	93.49	0.535	60.72	4	3
Kentucky	216	68.31	95.85	99.58	0.631	70.19	6	3
Louisiana	85	53.89	99.64	99.64	0.730	64.29	5	3
Maine	-113	50.95	97.78	98.45	0.617	48.45	3	3
Maryland	-75	76.93	95.75	99.78	0.484	64.89	4	2
Massachusetts	-643	52.12	96.61	99.50	0.511	47.59	2	2
Michigan	-439	53.78	97.18	91.80	0.518	68.07	3	2
Minnesota	-225	54.55	95.01	100.00	0.523	54.20	4	3
Mississippi	0	69.36	97.64	95.81	0.708	67.90	6	3
Missouri	438	78.66	95.58	81.12	0.531	57.10	6	3
Montana	-17	62.88	95.68	78.98	0.672	54.69	5	3
Nebraska	-54	57.49	96.52	100.00	0.583	59.24	5	3
Nevada	-49	51.61	96.82	92.03	0.567	60.02	4	3
New Hampshire	-77	77.44	92.70	97.15	0.547	45.46	4	3

Table A-1 (Continued)

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes ^e (> 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment ^f (> 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability ^g (> 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Earnings ratio ^h (> .52)	Indicator 1.6: Self support (> 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
New Jersey	-100	60.67	99.46	90.02	0.467	66.67	4	2
New Mexico	49	59.87	97.84	89.39	0.642	57.68	6	3
New York	436	57.66	92.43	96.66	0.417	63.72	5	2
North Carolina	-232	54.12	99.00	66.44	0.526	63.52	4	3
North Dakota	-39	67.40	93.37	82.07	0.694	55.29	5	3
Northern Mariana Islands	15	60.38	68.75	86.36	N/A	4.55	4	2
Ohio	208	59.39	96.42	100.00	0.612	52.77	5	3
Oklahoma	-656	43.77	96.22	85.70	0.644	61.65	4	3
Oregon	-26	59.77	99.48	95.71	0.590	77.65	5	3
Pennsylvania	17	62.42	94.69	99.81	0.545	58.00	6	3
Puerto Rico	93	72.45	91.40	67.01	0.725	89.15	6	3
Rhode Island	34	59.31	94.88	99.48	0.565	59.23	6	3
South Carolina	1,055	67.64	99.64	90.59	0.628	60.32	6	3
South Dakota	-89	62.64	98.40	89.45	0.601	58.19	5	3
Tennessee	-1,252	57.17	88.05	85.63	0.577	74.68	5	3
Texas	-3,523	53.86	99.30	78.24	0.519	55.71	3	2
Utah	-199	60.18	97.54	87.90	0.684	69.16	5	3
Vermont	94	60.17	98.63	99.00	0.591	41.06	5	3
Virgin Islands	-18	60.00	82.05	59.38	0.515	59.38	3	1
Virginia	-161	50.84	89.72	89.14	0.481	54.10	3	2
Washington	1,040	48.60	98.05	99.24	0.527	58.31	5	3
West Virginia	-330	70.56	95.19	88.29	0.624	64.57	5	3
Wisconsin	141	47.21	99.24	94.34	0.599	55.37	5	3
Wyoming	0	70.04	97.11	68.56	0.597	71.39	6	3

Table A-2 Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2003

*Must Pass at Least Four of Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators.^b
Performance Level Criteria Are Shown in Parentheses for Each Indicator.*

Agency ^c	Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes ^e (> 68.9%)	Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment ^f (> 35.4%)	Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability ^g (> 89.0%)	Indicator 1.5: Earnings ratio (> .59)	Indicator 1.6: Self support (> 30.4)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Arkansas	11	84.51	68.33	95.34	0.671	33.04	6	3
Connecticut	3	84.15	46.62	100.00	0.661	36.27	6	3
Delaware	4	55.42	100.00	100.00	0.512	36.96	4	2
Florida	-61	62.27	95.49	89.23	0.666	42.96	4	3
Idaho	0	72.40	54.68	92.11	0.658	36.84	6	3
Iowa	-39	82.39	75.00	99.52	0.834	30.43	5	3
Kentucky	7	79.05	75.90	100.00	0.690	34.72	6	3
Maine	10	77.59	25.19	99.02	0.768	30.39	4	2
Massachusetts	-32	78.13	52.53	100.00	0.834	29.95	4	3
Michigan	-41	62.71	52.35	99.28	0.630	34.05	4	3
Minnesota	13	46.34	96.77	98.00	0.676	30.67	5	3

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b Minimum performance level criteria for each standard and indicator were established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and published in the *Federal Register* on June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^c Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired persons.

^d To pass this indicator, the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the current performance period must be at least the same as the number of individuals exiting the VR program employed during the previous performance period and hence, comparison of the two elements must yield a number greater than or equal to zero.

^e Percentage who have received employment outcomes after provision of VR services.

^f Percentage of employed individuals who exit the VR program and are placed in an integrated setting, self-employment, or BEP (Business Enterprise Program, also known as the Vending Facility Program) with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

^g Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

Table A-2 (Continued)

Agency ^c	Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes ^e (> 68.9%)	Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment ^f (> 35.4%)	Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability ^g (> 89.0%)	Indicator 1.5: Earnings ratio (> .59)	Indicator 1.6: Self support (> 30.4)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Missouri	-66	61.71	73.12	100.00	0.720	26.26	3	3
Nebraska	-16	63.64	62.41	100.00	0.746	34.94	4	3
New Jersey	-30	74.27	83.91	89.24	0.562	42.47	4	2
New Mexico	4	44.38	94.94	100.00	0.847	61.33	5	3
New York	-355	79.29	26.02	93.88	0.602	24.25	3	2
North Carolina	0	69.27	92.55	91.13	0.570	34.91	5	2
Oregon	-43	65.75	58.85	100.00	0.769	38.94	4	3
South Carolina	128	68.15	63.49	85.00	0.653	35.28	4	2
South Dakota	-25	78.53	93.53	93.85	0.813	38.46	5	3
Texas	-192	72.29	64.71	99.82	0.649	29.23	4	3
Vermont	15	72.61	56.89	90.53	0.824	18.95	5	3
Virginia	10	70.92	78.95	99.17	0.596	39.72	6	3
Washington	-11	59.47	94.29	98.27	0.755	40.69	4	3

Table A-3 Equal Access to Service (Evaluation Standard 2) of State VR^a Agencies—General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2003

Agency	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio ^c (≥ .80)	Minorities Exiting the VR Program ^d
Alabama	1.009	5,549
Alaska	0.974	493
American Samoa	^e	75*
Arizona	0.877	2,268
Arkansas	0.834	2,094
California	0.992	19,042
Colorado	0.874	2,226
Connecticut	0.823	1,442
Delaware	0.935	982
District of Columbia	1.135	2,369
Florida	0.784	11,497
Georgia	0.952	6,687
Guam	1.000	90*
Hawaii	1.084	1,080
Idaho	1.013	628
Illinois	0.907	7,285
Indiana	0.830	2,169
Iowa	0.818	965
Kansas	0.858	1,096
Kentucky	0.912	2,164
Louisiana	0.889	2,907
Maine	0.815	78*
Maryland	0.903	4,445
Massachusetts	0.824	2,565
Michigan	0.843	5,701
Minnesota	0.818	2,369

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b General agencies serve persons with various disabilities other than blindness and/or other visual impairments. Combined agencies serve all individuals with disabilities including persons who are blind and visually impaired.

^c Minority service rate ratio is the ratio of the percentage of minorities exiting the VR program who received services to the percentage of nonminorities exiting the program who received services. Minimum performance level criterion for this standard and indicator (as shown in parentheses) was established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and published in the *Federal Register* on June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d Total number of individuals from minority populations exiting the VR program during the performance period.

^e Ratio not computed when service rate (minority or nonminority) equals 0.

* Fewer than 100 individuals from minority populations exiting the program.

Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

Table A-3 (Continued)

Agency	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio ^c (≥ .80)	Minorities Exiting the VR Program ^d
Mississippi	0.933	4,587
Missouri	0.773	3,789
Montana	0.822	411
Nebraska	0.805	602
Nevada	0.910	943
New Hampshire	0.883	96*
New Jersey	0.879	4,909
New Mexico	0.818	2,993
New York	0.892	20,355
North Carolina	0.988	11,891
North Dakota	0.621	252
Northern Mariana Islands	0.912	94*
Ohio	0.846	5,645
Oklahoma	0.937	2,472
Oregon	0.890	1,424
Pennsylvania	0.918	5,309
Puerto Rico	3.653	6,143
Rhode Island	0.859	328
South Carolina	0.959	9,636
South Dakota	0.813	461
Tennessee	0.960	3,661
Texas	0.993	32,747
Utah	0.970	1,328
Vermont	0.878	125
Virgin Islands	2.065	93*
Virginia	1.029	4,563
Washington	0.986	2,640
West Virginia	0.842	342
Wisconsin	0.874	2,855
Wyoming	1.010	221

Table A-4 Equal Access to Service (Evaluation Standard 2) of State VR^a Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2003

Agency ^b	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio ^c (≥ .80)	Minorities Exiting the VR Program ^d
Arkansas	1.099	143
Connecticut	0.714	49**
Delaware	1.190	19*
Florida	1.052	668
Idaho	1.311	13*
Iowa	0.529	16*
Kentucky	0.824	58*
Maine	0.447	3*
Massachusetts	0.922	55*
Michigan	0.827	226
Minnesota	0.860	102
Missouri	0.833	177
Nebraska	0.589	33*
New Jersey	0.892	290
New Mexico	1.026	68*
New York	0.738	774
North Carolina	0.890	541
Oregon	0.989	28*
South Carolina	0.963	271
South Dakota	0.518	17*
Texas	0.767	2232
Vermont	1.087	5*
Virginia	0.871	154
Washington	0.956	59*

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired persons.

^c Minority service rate ratio is the ratio of the percentage of minorities exiting the VR program who received services to the percentage of nonminorities exiting the program who received services. Minimum performance level criterion for this standard and indicator (as shown in parentheses) was established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and published in the *Federal Register* on June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d Total number of individuals from minority populations exiting the VR program during the performance period.

* Fewer than 100 individuals from minority populations exiting the program.

Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Table B Employment Outcomes of State VR^a Agencies: Number and Percentage Change for Individuals With Significant Disabilities^b, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive ^c
U.S. Total	2003	196,597	183,926	93.55
	2002	195,918	180,791	92.28
	Percentage change	0.35	1.73	
Total — General/Combined Agencies ^d	2003	188,689	178,821	94.77
	2002	187,836	175,821	93.60
	Percentage change	0.45	1.71	
Total — Agencies for the Blind ^e	2003	7,908	5,105	64.55
	2002	8,082	4,970	61.49
	Percentage change	-2.15	2.72	
General / Combined Agencies				
Alabama	2003	6,876	6,644	96.63
	2002	6,821	6,411	93.99
	Percentage change	0.81	3.63	
Alaska	2003	429	417	97.20
	2002	412	393	95.39
	Percentage change	4.13	6.11	
American Samoa	2003	38	26	68.42
	2002	16	11	68.75
	Percentage change	137.50	136.36	
Arizona	2003	1,296	1,284	99.07
	2002	1,293	1,202	92.96
	Percentage change	0.23	6.82	

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

^c Percentage = $\frac{\text{Competitive employment outcomes of individuals with significant disabilities}}{\text{Total employment outcomes}}$

^d General agencies serve people with various disabilities other than blindness and/or other visual impairments. Combined agencies serve all individuals with disabilities including persons who are blind and visually impaired.

^e Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired persons.

Source: USED/RSA 2003a.

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Arkansas	2003	2,047	2,045	99.90
	2002	1,806	1,730	95.79
	Percentage change	13.34	18.21	
California	2003	13,549	10,780	79.56
	2002	12,767	10,457	81.91
	Percentage change	6.13	3.09	
Colorado	2003	1,212	1,058	87.29
	2002	1,533	1,273	83.04
	Percentage change	-20.94	-16.89	
Connecticut	2003	1,722	1,710	99.30
	2002	1,649	1,639	99.39
	Percentage change	4.43	4.33	
Delaware	2003	635	628	98.90
	2002	638	585	91.69
	Percentage change	-0.47	7.35	
District of Columbia	2003	624	620	99.36
	2002	396	363	91.67
	Percentage change	57.58	70.80	
Florida	2003	7,662	7,562	98.69
	2002	7,356	7,276	98.91
	Percentage change	4.16	3.93	
Georgia	2003	3,695	3,198	86.55
	2002	3,303	2,801	84.80
	Percentage change	11.87	14.17	
Guam	2003	23	21	91.30
	2002	9	7	77.78
	Percentage change	155.56	200.00	
Hawaii	2003	423	401	94.80
	2002	321	306	95.33
	Percentage change	31.78	31.05	
Idaho	2003	1,732	1,723	99.48
	2002	1,598	1,583	99.06
	Percentage change	8.39	8.84	
Illinois	2003	9,057	8,555	94.46
	2002	9,269	8,356	90.15
	Percentage change	-2.29	2.38	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Indiana	2003	4,540	4,213	92.80
	2002	3,819	3,453	90.42
	Percentage change	18.88	22.01	
Iowa	2003	1,795	1,682	93.70
	2002	2,261	2,102	92.97
	Percentage change	-20.61	-19.98	
Kansas	2003	1,680	1,566	93.21
	2002	1,674	1,450	86.62
	Percentage change	0.36	8.00	
Kentucky	2003	4,754	4,556	95.84
	2002	4,540	4,318	95.11
	Percentage change	4.71	5.51	
Louisiana	2003	1,918	1,911	99.64
	2002	1,826	1,826	100.00
	Percentage change	5.04	4.65	
Maine	2003	844	825	97.75
	2002	942	906	96.18
	Percentage change	-10.40	-8.94	
Maryland	2003	2,891	2,768	95.75
	2002	2,959	2,865	96.82
	Percentage change	-2.30	-3.39	
Massachusetts	2003	2,696	2,605	96.62
	2002	3,170	3,055	96.37
	Percentage change	-14.95	-14.73	
Michigan	2003	5,698	5,532	97.09
	2002	5,906	5,736	97.12
	Percentage change	-3.52	-3.56	
Minnesota	2003	3,346	3,179	95.01
	2002	3,571	3,370	94.37
	Percentage change	-6.30	-5.67	
Mississippi	2003	4,263	4,161	97.61
	2002	3,705	3,536	95.44
	Percentage change	15.06	17.68	
Missouri	2003	4,536	4,313	95.08
	2002	3,902	3,727	95.52
	Percentage change	16.25	15.72	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Montana	2003	737	699	94.84
	2002	749	678	90.52
	Percentage change	-1.60	3.10	
Nebraska	2003	1,436	1,386	96.52
	2002	1,490	1,427	95.77
	Percentage change	-3.62	-2.87	
Nevada	2003	813	785	96.56
	2002	812	788	97.04
	Percentage change	0.12	-0.38	
New Hampshire	2003	1,399	1,295	92.57
	2002	1,434	1,311	91.42
	Percentage change	-2.44	-1.22	
New Jersey	2003	3,318	3,303	99.55
	2002	3,428	3,413	99.56
	Percentage change	-3.21	-3.22	
New Mexico	2003	1,369	1,339	97.81
	2002	1,291	1,257	97.37
	Percentage change	6.04	6.52	
New York	2003	14,520	13,409	92.35
	2002	13,858	12,615	91.03
	Percentage change	4.78	6.29	
North Carolina	2003	5,663	5,593	98.76
	2002	6,470	6,044	93.42
	Percentage change	-12.47	-7.46	
North Dakota	2003	714	659	92.30
	2002	760	707	93.03
	Percentage change	-6.05	-6.79	
Northern Mariana Islands	2003	29	19	65.52
	2002	17	11	64.71
	Percentage change	70.59	72.73	
Ohio	2003	7,034	6,782	96.42
	2002	6,826	6,500	95.22
	Percentage change	3.05	4.34	
Oklahoma	2003	2,022	1,942	96.04
	2002	2,619	2,459	93.89
	Percentage change	-22.79	-21.02	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Oregon	2003	2,600	2,587	99.50
	2002	2,634	2,535	96.24
	Percentage change	-1.29	2.05	
Pennsylvania	2003	11,032	10,445	94.68
	2002	11,002	10,319	93.79
	Percentage change	0.27	1.22	
Puerto Rico	2003	1,672	1,495	89.41
	2002	1,550	1,250	80.65
	Percentage change	7.87	19.60	
Rhode Island	2003	602	571	94.85
	2002	562	503	89.50
	Percentage change	7.12	13.52	
South Carolina	2003	8,268	8,237	99.63
	2002	7,000	6,961	99.44
	Percentage change	18.11	18.33	
South Dakota	2003	672	661	98.36
	2002	725	709	97.79
	Percentage change	-7.31	-6.77	
Tennessee	2003	3,082	2,682	87.02
	2002	3,937	3,545	90.04
	Percentage change	-21.72	-24.34	
Texas	2003	16,090	15,968	99.24
	2002	18,579	18,382	98.94
	Percentage change	-13.40	-13.13	
Utah	2003	2,585	2,514	97.25
	2002	2,628	2,455	93.42
	Percentage change	-1.64	2.40	
Vermont	2003	1,303	1,285	98.62
	2002	1,206	1,181	97.93
	Percentage change	8.04	8.81	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Virginia	2003	3,534	3,160	89.42
	2002	3,602	3,204	88.95
	Percentage change	-1.89	-1.37	
Virgin Islands	2003	25	19	76.00
	2002	30	22	73.33
	Percentage change	-16.67	-13.64	
Washington	2003	2,387	2,340	98.03
	2002	1,327	1,285	96.83
	Percentage change	79.88	82.10	
West Virginia	2003	1,803	1,712	94.95
	2002	2,070	1,936	93.53
	Percentage change	-12.90	-11.57	
Wisconsin	2003	3,495	3,467	99.20
	2002	3,229	3,071	95.11
	Percentage change	8.24	12.89	
Wyoming	2003	504	484	96.03
	2002	539	516	95.73
	Percentage change	-6.49	-6.20	
Agencies for the Blind				
Arkansas	2003	326	242	74.23
	2002	306	188	61.44
	Percentage change	6.54	28.72	
Connecticut	2003	210	95	45.24
	2002	204	98	48.04
	Percentage change	2.94	-3.06	
Delaware	2003	24	24	100.00
	2002	22	22	100.00
	Percentage change	9.09	9.09	
Florida	2003	624	611	97.92
	2002	705	656	93.05
	Percentage change	-11.49	-6.86	
Idaho	2003	68	46	67.65
	2002	65	24	36.92
	Percentage change	4.62	91.67	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Iowa	2003	135	114	84.44
	2002	140	92	65.71
	Percentage change	-3.57	23.91	
Kentucky	2003	355	274	77.18
	2002	309	230	74.43
	Percentage change	14.89	19.13	
Maine	2003	202	53	26.24
	2002	200	48	24.00
	Percentage change	1.00	10.42	
Massachusetts	2003	189	112	59.26
	2002	185	85	45.95
	Percentage change	2.16	31.76	
Michigan	2003	281	157	55.87
	2002	250	120	48.00
	Percentage change	12.40	30.83	
Minnesota	2003	126	121	96.03
	2002	178	173	97.19
	Percentage change	-29.21	-30.06	
Missouri	2003	342	236	69.01
	2002	335	259	77.31
	Percentage change	2.09	-8.88	
Nebraska	2003	66	36	54.55
	2002	67	47	70.15
	Percentage change	-1.49	-23.40	
New Jersey	2003	253	215	84.98
	2002	287	241	83.97
	Percentage change	-11.85	-10.79	
New Mexico	2003	49	46	93.88
	2002	30	29	96.67
	Percentage change	63.33	58.62	
New York	2003	1,459	381	26.11
	2002	1,612	401	24.88
	Percentage change	-9.49	-4.99	
North Carolina	2003	613	575	93.80
	2002	604	545	90.23
	Percentage change	1.49	5.50	

Table B (Continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes Of Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities and Percentage Change	Percentage of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Significant Disabilities That were Competitive
Oregon	2003	85	54	63.53
	2002	106	59	55.66
	Percentage change	-19.81	-8.47	
South Carolina	2003	282	178	63.12
	2002	209	128	61.24
	Percentage change	34.93	39.06	
South Dakota	2003	62	58	93.55
	2002	69	64	92.75
	Percentage change	-10.14	-9.38	
Texas	2003	1,717	1,126	65.58
	2002	1,790	1,142	63.80
	Percentage change	-4.08	-1.40	
Vermont	2003	86	49	56.98
	2002	69	37	53.62
	Percentage change	24.64	32.43	
Virginia	2003	230	183	79.57
	2002	223	174	78.03
	Percentage change	3.14	5.17	
Washington	2003	124	119	95.97
	2002	117	108	92.31
	Percentage change	5.98	10.19	

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

DEFINITION OF *INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY* AS LISTED IN SECTION 7(20) OF THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

(A) In general

Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (B), the term “individual with a disability” means any individual who—

- (i) has a physical or mental impairment which for such individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
- (ii) can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services provided pursuant to Title I, III, or VI.

(B) Certain programs; limitations on major life activities

Subject to subparagraphs (C), (D), (E), and (F), the term “individual with a disability” means, for purposes of Sections 2, 14 and 15, and Titles II, IV, V, and VII of this act, any person who—

- (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;
- (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or
- (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.

(C) Rights and advocacy provisions

- (i) In general; exclusion of individuals engaging in drug use

For purposes of Title V, the term “individual with a disability” does not include an individual who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs, when a covered entity acts on the basis of such use.

- (ii) Exception for individuals no longer engaging in drug use

Nothing in clause (i) shall be construed to exclude as an individual with a disability an individual who—

- (I) has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in such use;
- (II) is participating in a supervised rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in such use; or
- (III) is erroneously regarded as engaging in such use, but is not engaging in such use; except that it shall not be a violation of this act for a covered entity to adopt or administer reasonable policies or procedures, including but not limited to drug testing, designed to ensure that an individual

described in subclause (I) or (II) is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs.

(iii) Exclusion for certain services

Notwithstanding clause (i), for purposes of programs and activities providing health services and services provided under Titles I, II and III, an individual shall not be excluded from the benefits of such programs or activities on the basis of his or her current illegal use of drugs if he or she is otherwise entitled to such services.

(iv) Disciplinary action

For purposes of programs and activities providing educational services, local educational agencies may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use of possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student who is an individual with a disability and who currently is engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that such disciplinary action is taken against students who are not individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the due process procedures at Section 104.36 of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) shall not apply to such disciplinary actions.

(v) Employment; exclusion of alcoholics

For purposes of Sections 503 and 504 as such sections relate to employment, the term "individual with a disability" does not include any individual who is an alcoholic whose current use of alcohol prevents such individual from performing the duties of the job in question or whose employment, by reason of such current alcohol abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others.

(D) Employment; exclusion of individuals with certain diseases or infections

For the purposes of Section 503 and 504, as such sections relate to employment, such terms does not include an individual who has a currently contagious disease or infection and who, by reason of such disease or infection, would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or who, by reason of the currently contagious disease or infection, is unable to perform the duties of the job.

(E) Rights provision; exclusion of individual on basis of homosexuality or bisexuality

For purposes of Sections 501, 503, and 504—

- (i)** for purposes of the application of subparagraph (B) to such sections, the term "impairment" does not include homosexuality or bisexuality; and
- (ii)** therefore the term "individual with a disability" does not include an individual on the basis of homosexuality or bisexuality.

(F) Rights provisions; exclusion of individuals on basis of certain disorders

For the purposes of Sections 501, 503, and 504, the term “individual with a disability” does not include an individual on the basis of—

- (i)** transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, or other sexual behavior disorders;
- (ii)** compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania; or
- (iii)** psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from current illegal use of drugs.

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