

Archived Information

AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Goal: To improve employment outcomes of American Indians with disabilities who live on or near reservations by providing effective tribal vocational rehabilitation services.

Relationship of Program to Volume 1, Department-wide Objectives: These objectives support Strategic Plan Goal 3.4 (lifelong learning) ensuring access to services that provide adults with disabilities the opportunity to strengthen their skills and improve their earning power over their lifetime.

FY 2000—\$23,390,000

FY 2001—\$23,998,000 (Requested budget)

OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT ELIGIBLE AMERICAN INDIANS WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES AND ACHIEVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PARTICULAR STRENGTHS, RESOURCES, ABILITIES, CAPABILITIES, AND INTERESTS.

Indicator 1.1 Number of eligible individuals who receive services under the program: The number of American Indians with disabilities who receive services under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services program will increase.

Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>The number of individuals who received vocational rehabilitation services under an individualized plan for employment</i>		<p>Status: Target for number of individuals receiving services was not met in FY 1999.</p> <p>Explanation: The Department has made a significant effort to provide technical assistance to current and potential grantees in order to increase the number and quality of American Indian vocational rehabilitation projects. The number of projects in full operation increased in FYs 1997, 1998, and 1999 (34, 37, and 47 respectively).</p> <p>Although data show that the number of individuals receiving services has increased compared to the 1997 baselines, actual performance on this indicator was below the previously established 1999 target. The 1999 targets were set with data from only 2 years of past performance. One very large project appears to have had an exceptionally high performing year in 1998. Projections did not adequately take into account the length of time it takes first-year projects to become fully operational. Targets for FYs 2000 and 2001 have been modified to address these factors.</p>	<p>Source: Annual performance reports and project follow-up. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> December 31, 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data supplied by project grantees. No formal verification procedure applied.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Data are self-reported and not standardized. Prior to the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the Department did not have clear authority to collect routine performance data and very limited information was available on the operation and performance of these projects. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is working toward standardizing data collection and reporting for this program. The first comprehensive evaluation of the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services program was initiated in 1999 under section 14 of the Rehabilitation Act. Information obtained from this study should also be useful in assessing performance and in developing future performance measures.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	2,617 (34)*			
1998:	3,243 (37)*			
1999:	3,186 (47)*			3,750 (47)*
2000:				3,730 (53)*
2001:		4,350 (67)*		
<p><i>*The number of projects that were in operation during the performance year.</i></p>				

Indicator 1.2 Number of eligible individuals who achieve employment outcomes: The total number of American Indians with disabilities who exit the program after receiving vocational rehabilitation services under an individualized plan for employment and achieve an employment outcome will increase.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>The number of individuals who achieved an employed outcome</i>			<p>Status: Target not met but positive movement toward the target.</p> <p>Explanation: RSA has increased its monitoring and technical assistance efforts. Over time, existing projects are developing more expertise in operating effective projects and there has been an increase in communication between the tribal projects. The number of individuals achieving employment outcomes increased in FYs 1997, 1998, and 1999.</p> <p>Although data show that the number of individuals achieving employment outcomes has increased compared to the 1997 baseline, actual performance on this indicator was below the previously established 1999 target. This is primarily due to the fact that the 1999 targets were set with very limited information on past performance and did not adequately take into account the length of time it takes first-year projects to become fully operational. Targets for FYs 2000 and 2001 have been modified to address this fact.</p>	<p>Source: Annual performance reports and project followup. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> December 31, 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data supplied by project grantees. No formal verification procedure applied.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same limitations as reported under Indicator 1.1. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the interpretation of data element definitions and variations in case management practices across projects. As stated under Indicator 1.1, RSA is working toward standardizing data collection and reporting for this program.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	530 (34)*			
1998:	598 (39)*			
1999:	678 (47)*	715 (47)*		
2000:		765 (53)*		
2001:		930 (67)*		
*The number of projects that were in operation during the performance year.				

Indicator 1.3 Percentage of individuals who leave the program with employment outcomes: By the end of FY 2001, at least 61 percent of all eligible individuals who exit the program after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment will achieve an employment outcome.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage obtaining employment</i>			<p>Status: No target set for 1999, however the data show an increase from FY 1998 to 1999.</p> <p>Explanation: A performance target was not set for FY 1999 because baseline data on the number of persons exiting the program were not available when FY 1999 targets were established. Actual performance has improved because the number of individuals achieving employment outcomes increased in FYs 1998 and 1999 at a higher rate than the total number exiting the program.</p>	<p>Source: Annual performance reports and project follow-up. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> December 31, 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data supplied by project grantees. No formal verification procedure applied.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same limitations as reported under Indicator 1.1. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the interpretation of data element definitions and variations in case management practices across projects. As stated under Indicator 1.1, RSA is working toward standardizing data collection and reporting for this program.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	No data available			
1998:	57%			
1999:	61%	No target set		
2000:		61%		
2001:		61%		

KEY STRATEGIES

Strategies Continued from 1999

- ❖ To increase the number of eligible individuals who receive services under the American Indian vocational rehabilitation (VR) services program by increasing the number of quality applications for American Indian VR services projects through linkage with capacity-building activities conducted by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, or NIDRR) and capacity-building grantees funded under Section 21 of the Act.
- ❖ To increase the number and percentage of eligible individuals who achieve employment outcomes under the American Indian VR services program, RSA is conducting the first program evaluation study of multiple projects. The study will identify best practice information and recommend strategies for improved program management and service delivery.

New or Strengthened Strategies

To increase the number and percentage of eligible individuals who achieve employment outcomes under the American Indian vocational rehabilitation services program, the Rehabilitation Services Administration will:

- ❖ Monitor and provide technical assistance to projects in order to increase program effectiveness and project management.
- ❖ Work collaboratively with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on American Indian VR to provide training and technical assistance on effective program management to American Indian vocational rehabilitation project staff.
- ❖ Conduct annual training conferences for all rehabilitation professionals participating and interested in American Indian VR services.
- ❖ Continue to work closely with the Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation to promote high-quality American Indian VR services programs.
- ❖ Disseminate promising practices from relevant projects funded under the Demonstration and Training Program to the American Indian VR services grantees.
- ❖ Work toward building a network of higher education institutions that can deliver training to American Indian VR project staff through distance education strategies for undergraduate and graduate credit towards degrees in vocational rehabilitation. The network would include existing institutions that provide rehabilitation counselor training programs and existing Indian colleges.

HOW THIS PROGRAM COORDINATES WITH OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Coordinate with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on American Indian VR (funded by NIDRR) in providing technical assistance and training to American Indian VR services project staff.
- ❖ Promote coordination and collaboration between American Indian VR services projects and the relevant state VR agency.
- ❖ Coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on state action plans.
- ❖ Program/grant information is shared with the Administration for Native Americans within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING PROGRAM GOAL

- ❖ Project proposals and on-site visits to grantees identify the following significant challenges to increasing the employment outcomes of American Indians with disabilities who live on or near reservations and providing effective tribal vocational rehabilitation services include lack of transportation, experienced project staff, and specialized rehabilitation providers; geographic isolation and cultural differences; and the limited availability of employment opportunities on or near the reservation.

INDICATOR CHANGES

From FY 1999 Annual Plan (two years old)

Adjusted—None.

Dropped—None.

From FY 2000 Annual Plan (last year's)

Adjusted—None.

- ❖ Targets 1.1 and 1.2 were modified to account for the length of time it takes new projects to become operational under this program.

Dropped—None.

New—None.