



A 21st Century Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

In order to better meet the needs of all individuals with disabilities, the U.S. Department of Education is improving RSA by moving the work of its regional offices into RSA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. RSA administers and supports a comprehensive array of grant programs and projects that serve and assist individuals with disabilities. Using 21st century technology, RSA will continue to provide the same important programs and services for individuals with disabilities across the nation. The new structure of RSA will strengthen programs without compromising services for individuals with disabilities by ensuring:

➤ Better Services for Individuals with Disabilities

- Modernizing RSA will mean individuals with disabilities will continue to receive the same services from the states, but now more effectively.
- Thanks to a new management approach supported by technology, RSA is now able to monitor and administer services from one central location instead of many throughout the country. This means that any problems that might arise will be identified and fixed in a more timely fashion so that much-needed services are not hindered.
- Administration from one location will help eliminate any disparities in program implementation for individuals with disabilities that may have occurred in the past. This will result in more integrated program planning.
- The new structure will free up administrative and overhead resources so that they can be used to provide more programs and services.

➤ Better Communication with State Agencies Serving Individuals with Disabilities

- The network of State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies will continue to be there for consumers. But now state agencies will directly communicate with headquarters rather than using regional offices as a middleman. This means that State Agencies will get what they need faster so that they can serve individuals with disabilities faster.
- Services to states and tribal organizations will continue to be the primary focus of RSA operations. The new organization will include a unit that promotes meaningful communication between RSA and consumer organizations. This new unit will work with State Rehabilitation Councils, State Independent Living Councils, and disability advocacy organizations to assist persons with disabilities to become informed consumers of VR services.
- All services provided to the states will be more consistent. The range of expert guidance that RSA provides to state agencies will be increased because a team of at least five program staff will be assigned to work closely with each state. Each team will consist of program staff with expertise in one of the following five areas: VR program services, fiscal management, data collection and analysis, independent living, and technical assistance.

➤ Better Accountability for Taxpayer Funds

- Part of good government is ensuring that taxpayers' money is used as effectively as possible. It is imperative that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.
- The new structure will better utilize employees' skills for the smooth operation of the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants programs. Moving the work of regional RSA offices into headquarters will mean that operations are not being duplicated. Eliminating the duplication of tasks will strengthen and streamline monitoring, technical assistance, fiscal management, and program implementation.
- The consolidation of the regional and headquarters functions will result in savings without compromising the services provided to the states, which serve individuals with disabilities.