

Archived Information

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Goal: Provide Leadership in promoting the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities and in assisting states and providers of services under the Rehabilitation Act. Legislation: Section 12(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by P.L. 105-220 (29 U.S.C. 711).	Funding History (\$ in millions)			
	Fiscal Year	Appropriation	Fiscal Year	Appropriation
	1985	\$0	2000	\$2
	1990	\$0	2001	\$2
	1995	\$0	2002 (Requested)	\$1

Program Description

Program improvement supports the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act by funding activities to increase program effectiveness, improve accountability, and enhance the Department's ability to address critical areas of national significance. Program funds are awarded through grants and contracts to procure expertise in identified problem areas of national significance and technical support in order to improve the operation of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and the provision of services to individuals with disabilities under the Act. This activity is current-funded.

The Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is authorized under Section 12(a) of the Rehabilitation Act to provide technical assistance and consultative services to public and non-profit private agencies and organizations, including assistance to enable agencies and organizations to facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. In addition, section 12 funds may be used to provide short-term and technical instruction, conduct special demonstrations, develop and disseminate educational or information materials and carry out monitoring and conduct evaluations.

About half of the program improvement funds are used to support the National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center. The Center, operated under a contract with DTI Associates, Inc., arranges for the provision of technical assistance to State vocational rehabilitation agencies and other grantees providing services under the VR Act. The Center arranges technical assistance in response to state-specific requests and areas of national need as identified by the Commissioner of RSA. In response to state requests, the Center has arranged for technical assistance on conducting operations assessments, implementing management information and other automated systems, and developing strategies to improve program effectiveness.

Examples of other projects funded in fiscal year 2000 include:

- National conference on the employment of persons with disabilities designed to identify and share effective employment strategies used by state VR agencies and their network of community rehabilitation programs and other partners in the workforce investment system.
- National Transition Summit, an interagency effort of the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities, to explore policy options for improving the transition results for youth with disabilities.
- Collaborative project with the Department of Health and Human Services designed to develop and implement a five-year training and technical assistance program aimed at building a cadre of disability leaders from the independent living movement that would assist States in developing post-Olmstead plans for delivering consumer-directed home and community-based long-term services for people with significant disabilities of all ages.

Program Performance

OBJECTIVE 1: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES UNDER THE REHABILITATION ACT TO BETTER ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN OBTAINING MEANINGFUL AND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
Average survey rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where a rating of "5" is completely satisfied and a rating of "1" is not at all satisfied.			<p>Status: Baseline data has been established and a target set for fiscal years 2001 and 2002.</p> <p>Explanation: Information obtained from the Technical Assistance Center's followup survey of TA beneficiaries will be used to assess performance. The survey will measure on a scale of 1 to 5 (where a rating of 5 is "completely" and a rating of 1 is "not at all") the extent to which the outcome of the TA was successful in the solving the problem identified in the beneficiary's proposal, and the extent to which the TA fulfilled the beneficiary's expectations.</p> <p>Due to the small numbers of projects completed annually, a rolling 2-year average will be used to assess achievement of the target. The sample used in calculating baseline performance level included projects that were completed in fiscal years 1999 and 2000. In the next reporting cycle, the sample will include projects that were completed in fiscal years 2000 and 2001.</p>	<p>Source: Performance appraisal reports as completed by the beneficiaries of the technical assistance delivery process.</p> <p><i>Frequency:</i> Average project rating will be calculated annually.</p> <p><i>Next collection update:</i> September 2001.</p> <p><i>Date to be reported:</i> November 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: The Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA's) technical assistance contractor, DTI, Inc., as well as staff from RSA's central and regional offices will perform followup verification to investigate the cause of weak ratings and to assure satisfactory project outcomes.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Limitations include small number of projects; objectivity of rater/self-reporting mechanism; and variation in complexity, scope, cost, and duration of TA project. Revised reporting mechanism will designate a certain score as the minimal level for acceptable performance.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
FY 1999-2000:	4.1 (14)*			
FY 2000-2001:		4.0		
FY 2001-2002:		4.0		
* The number in parentheses indicates the actual number of TA projects completed in the rolling 2-year performance period.				