

Archived Information

Department of Education

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request

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REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

For carrying out, to the extent not otherwise provided, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, and the Helen Keller National Center Act, [\$3,283,929,000] \$3,218,264,000, of which [\$1,000,000] \$2,874,043,000 shall be [awarded to the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists for activities that further the purposes of the grant received by the Academy for the period beginning October 1, 2003, including activities to meet the demand for orthotic and prosthetic provider services and improve patient care:¹ *Provided*, That \$3,155,000 of the funds for section 303 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall be available for the projects and in the amounts specified in the explanatory statement described in section 4 (in the matter preceding division A of this consolidated Act)] ² for grants for vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act. ³ (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2008*)

Note.—Each language provision that is followed by a footnote reference is explained in the Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes document which follows the appropriation language.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
¹ ...[awarded to the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists for activities that further the purposes of the grant received by the Academy for the period beginning October 1, 2003, including activities to meet the demand for orthotic and prosthetic provider services and improve patient care:...]	This language, which earmarks funds for the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, is deleted because no funding is proposed for these activities in fiscal year 2009.
² [<i>Provided</i> , That \$3,155,000 of the funds for section 303 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall be available for the projects and in the amounts specified in the explanatory statement described in section 4 (in the matter preceding division A of this consolidated Act)]	This language, which earmarks funds for specified projects under Demonstration and Training programs, is deleted because no funding is proposed for these projects in fiscal year 2009.
³ ... <u>for grants for vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.</u>	The requested language earmarks funds for Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants, including funds set aside for grants to American Indian tribes.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

**Amounts Available for Obligation
(\$000s)**

	2007	2008	2009
Discretionary appropriation:			
Appropriation	\$405,352	\$409,886	\$344,221
Across-the-board reduction	0	-7,161	0
Discretionary modification of a mandatory appropriation	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-100,592</u>
Subtotal, discretionary appropriation	405,352	402,725	243,629
Mandatory appropriation	<u>2,837,160</u>	<u>2,874,043</u>	<u>2,974,635</u>
Subtotal, discretionary and mandatory appropriation	3,242,512	3,276,768	3,218,264
Recovery of prior year obligations	25	0	0
Unobligated balance, expiring	<u>-33</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total, obligations	3,242,504	3,276,768	3,218,264

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Obligations by Object Classification (\$000s)

	2007	2008	2009
Contractual services and supplies:			
Advisory and assistance services	\$8,205	\$9,703	\$9,592
Peer review	1,508	863	945
Purchases of goods and services	<u>297</u>	<u>292</u>	<u>292</u>
Subtotal	10,010	10,858	10,829
Grants, subsidies, and contributions	<u>3,232,494</u>	<u>3,265,910</u>	<u>3,207,435</u>
Total, direct obligations.....	3,242,504	3,276,768	3,218,264

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Summary of Changes
(\$000s)

2008	\$3,276,768
2009	<u>3,218,264</u>
Net change.....	-58,504

	<u>2008 base</u>	<u>Change from base</u>
Increases:		
<u>Program:</u>		
Increase in funding for Program Improvement to address the technical assistance needs of State VR agencies.	622	+178
Increase in the Evaluation program to support a study of the Helen Keller National Center.	1,447	<u>+500</u>
Subtotal, increases		+678
Decreases:		
<u>Program:</u>		
Decrease in funding for Demonstration and Training programs reflects the elimination of funding for earmarked projects.	10,151	-1,325
Eliminates funding for the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program consistent with the Administration's reform of the Federal Government's overlapping training and employment programs.	2,239	-2,239
Eliminates funding for Recreational programs, which are more appropriately financed by State and local agencies and the private sector.	2,474	-2,474
Eliminates funding for Projects With Industry consistent with the Administration's reform of the Federal Government's overlapping training and employment programs.	19,197	-19,197
Eliminates funding for Supported Employment State Grants consistent with the Administration's reform of the Federal Government's overlapping training and employment programs.	29,181	-29,181

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Summary of Changes (\$000s)

	<u>2008 base</u>	<u>Change from base</u>
Decreases:		
<u>Program:</u>		
Reduces funding for the Helen Keller National Center to add funds for a comprehensive study of the Center under the Evaluation program.	\$8,362	-\$500
Eliminates funding for Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology because these services can be and are provided by other existing P&A programs.	4,265	<u>-4,265</u>
Subtotal, decreases		-59,181
Net change		-58,504 ¹

¹ Detail does not add due to rounding in FY 2008 amounts.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Authorizing Legislation (\$000s)

Activity	2008 Authorized	2008 Estimate	2009 Authorized	2009 Request
Vocational rehabilitation State grants:				
Grants to States <i>(RA-I A, B-110 and 111)</i>	0 ^{1,2}	\$2,839,151	To be determined ^{1,3}	\$2,839,151
Grants for Indians <i>(RA-I-C)</i>	--- ^{2,4}	34,892	--- ^{3,4}	34,892
Client assistance State grants <i>(RA-I-112)</i>	0 ¹	11,576	To be determined ¹	11,576
Training <i>(RA-III-302)</i>	0 ¹	37,766	To be determined ¹	37,766
Demonstration and training programs <i>(RA-III-303(b)-(d))</i>	0 ¹	10,151	To be determined ¹	8,826
Migrant and seasonal farmworkers <i>(RA-III-304)</i>	0 ⁵	2,239	0 ⁵	0
Recreational programs <i>(RA-III-305)</i>	0 ⁵	2,474	0 ⁵	0
Protection and advocacy of individual rights <i>(RA-V-509)</i>	0 ¹	16,201	To be determined ¹	16,201
Projects with industry <i>(RA-VI-A)</i>	0 ⁵	19,197	0 ⁵	0
Supported employment State grants <i>(RA-VI-B)</i>	0 ⁵	29,181	0 ⁵	0
Independent living:				
State grants <i>(RA-VII-1-B)</i>	0 ¹	22,193	To be determined ¹	22,193
Centers <i>(RA-VII-1-C)</i>	0 ¹	73,334	To be determined ¹	73,334
Services for older blind individuals <i>(RA-VII-2)</i>	0 ¹	32,320	To be determined ¹	32,320
Program improvement <i>(RA-12(a))</i>	0 ¹	622	To be determined ¹	800
Evaluation <i>(RA-14)</i>	0 ¹	1,447	To be determined ¹	1,947
Helen Keller National Center for				
Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults <i>(HKNCA)</i>	0 ¹	8,362	To be determined ¹	7,862
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation				
Research <i>(RA-II)</i>	0 ¹	105,741	To be determined ¹	105,741
Assistive technology: <i>(ATA)</i>				
Assistive technology programs <i>(ATA-4,5, and 6)</i>	Indefinite ⁶	29,920	Indefinite ⁶	25,655 ⁷

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Authorizing Legislation—continued
(\$000s)

Activity	2008 Authorized	2008 Estimate	2009 Authorized	2009 Request
<u>Unfunded authorizations:</u>				
Demonstration projects to increase client choice (<i>RA-III-303(a)</i>)	0 ⁸	0	0 ⁸	0
Total definite authorization				
Total appropriation		\$3,276,768		\$3,218,264
Portion of request subject to reauthorization				3,192,609

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

² The authorizing legislation mandates funding for VR State grants at least at the level of \$2,874,043 thousand, which is the 2007 appropriation adjusted by the 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPIU) published in October 2006.

³ The authorizing legislation mandates funding for the VR State grants at least at the level of \$2,974,635 thousand, which is the 2008 appropriation adjusted by the 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPIU) published in October 2007.

⁴ The Rehabilitation Act requires that 1.0 percent to 1.5 percent of the appropriation for Vocational Rehabilitation State grants be set aside for Grants for Indians.

⁵ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004. The program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. The Administration is not proposing appropriations language for FY 2009, nor seeking reauthorizing legislation.

⁶ Such sums as are necessary are authorized, however not more than \$1, 235 thousand may be used for section 6 National Activities, unless the amount available for section 4 AT State grants exceeds \$20,953,534, in which case not more than \$1,900 thousand may be used for section 6.

⁷ No funds are requested in FY 2009 for section 5, the Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology program.

⁸ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004. The Administration is not seeking reauthorizing legislation.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

**Appropriations History
(\$000s)**

	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2000	\$2,717,114	\$2,687,150	\$2,692,872	\$2,707,522
Rescission	0	0	0	-533
2001	2,798,651	2,776,803	2,799,519	2,805,339
2002	2,930,117	2,942,117	2,932,617	2,945,813
2003	3,001,840	2,956,676	2,959,838	2,953,633
Transfer	0	0	0	-587
Technical correction	0	0	0	+487
2004	3,002,913	2,999,165	3,004,360	3,011,270
2005	3,047,197	3,054,587	3,077,328	3,074,574
2006	3,059,298	3,128,638	3,133,638	3,125,544
2007	3,180,414	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	3,242,512
2008	3,184,263	3,279,743	3,286,942	3,276,768
2009	3,218,264			

¹ This account operated under a full-year continuing resolution (P.L. 110-5). House and Senate Allowance amounts are shown as N/A (Not Available) because neither body passed a separate appropriations bill.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Significant Items in FY 2008 Appropriations Reports

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

Conference Report: The amended bill specifies \$8,300,000 within the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to carry out the traumatic brain injury model systems of care program and to fund two additional centers that submitted applications for the last grant competition

Response: The Department intends to fund two additional applications submitted for the fiscal year 2007 traumatic brain injury model systems of care program grant competition, using at least \$8,300,000 of the fiscal year 2008 National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research appropriation.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2009 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(in thousands of dollars)		2007 Annual	2008	2009	Change from 2008 Appropriation	
Office, Account, Program and Activity	Category Code	CR Operating Plan	Appropriation	President's Request	Amount	Percent
Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research						
1. Vocational rehabilitation State grants:						
(a) Grants to States (RA I Part A, sections 110 and 111)	M	2,802,716	2,839,151	2,839,151	0	0.0%
(b) Grants to Indians (RA I-C)	M	34,444	34,892	34,892	0	0.0%
Subtotal		2,837,160	2,874,043	2,874,043	0	0.0%
Discretionary	D	0	0	(100,592)	(100,592)	---
Mandatory baseline	M	2,837,160	2,874,043	2,974,635	100,592	3.5%
2. Client assistance State grants (RA section 112)	D	11,782	11,576	11,576	0	0.0%
3. Training (RA section 302)	D	38,438	37,766	37,766	0	0.0%
4. Demonstration and training programs (RA section 303)	D	8,756	10,151	8,826	(1,325)	-13.0%
5. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers (RA section 304)	D	2,279	2,239	0	(2,239)	-100.0%
6. Recreational programs (RA section 305)	D	2,518	2,474	0	(2,474)	-100.0%
7. Protection and advocacy of individual rights (RA section 509)	D	16,489	16,201	16,201	0	0.0%
8. Projects with industry (RA VI-A)	D	17,293	19,197	0	(19,197)	-100.0%
9. Supported employment State grants (RA VI-B)	D	29,700	29,181	0	(29,181)	-100.0%
10. Independent living (RA VII):						
(a) State grants (Chapter 1, Part B)	D	22,588	22,193	22,193	0	0.0%
(b) Centers (Chapter 1, Part C)	D	74,638	73,334	73,334	0	0.0%
(c) Services for older blind individuals (Chapter 2)	D	32,895	32,320	32,320	0	0.0%
11. Program improvement (RA section 12(a))	D	835	622	800	178	28.6%
12. Evaluation (RA section 14)	D	1,473	1,447	1,947	500	34.5%
13. Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNCA)	D	8,511	8,362	7,862	(500)	-6.0%
14. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (RA II)	D	106,705	105,741	105,741	0	0.0%
15. Assistive technology programs (ATA, sections 4, 5, and 6)	D	30,452	29,920	25,655	(4,265)	-14.3%
Subtotal		405,352	402,725	344,221	(58,504)	-14.5%
Total		3,242,512	3,276,768	3,218,264	(58,504)	-1.8%
Discretionary	D	405,352	402,725	243,629	(159,096)	-39.5%
Mandatory baseline	M	2,837,160	2,874,043	2,974,635	100,592	3.5%
Outlays, Total						
Discretionary	D	410,612	687,695	312,238	(375,457)	-54.6%
Mandatory baseline	M	2,766,419	2,915,899	2,945,360	29,461	1.0%

NOTES: Category Codes are as follows: D = discretionary program; M = mandatory program.
FY 2008 detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Summary of Request

The Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research account supports formula grants to States for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and a variety of smaller research, demonstration, and service programs, including the programs authorized under the Helen Keller National Center Act and the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (the AT Act). The purpose of the programs in this account is to develop and implement, through research, training, and direct services, comprehensive and coordinated programs of vocational rehabilitation and independent living services for individuals with disabilities.

The Administration's \$3.218 billion fiscal year 2009 request for the Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research account, a decrease of \$58.504 million from the 2008 level, supports the Department's objective to prepare individuals with disabilities for higher education, employment, and productive independent lives.

The request includes \$2.874 billion for the VR State Grants program, the same as the 2008 appropriation. These funds will assist States to strengthen the employment skills of VR consumers and increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the general workforce. A total of \$34.892 million would be set aside for grants for Indian tribes.

Beginning with its 2003 request, the Administration launched a wide-ranging multi-year reform of the Federal Government's overlapping training and employment programs. Consistent with this crosscutting reform, the Administration is not requesting funding for three vocational rehabilitation programs in this account (Supported Employment State Grants, Projects with Industry, and the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program). These programs provide services to individuals with disabilities that can be provided by the larger VR State Grants program.

The budget request does not include funds for Recreational programs. While the Administration strongly supports helping individuals with disabilities become full and active members in society, this program has limited national impact. The Administration believes continued funding would be more appropriately financed by State and local agencies and the private sector.

The request includes \$1.947 million for the Evaluation program, an increase of \$500,000 over the 2008 level. The increase would be used to conduct a comprehensive study of Helen Keller National Center to evaluate the effectiveness of the Center's operations and how well it is addressing its statutory purpose and the needs of its service population. The request for the Helen Keller National Center has been reduced, as compared to the 2008 level, to offset the cost of the study.

The Administration requests \$800,000 for Program Improvement activities, an increase of \$178,000 from the 2008 appropriation. Funds would be used to address technical assistance needs identified as a result of monitoring and program improvement activities initiated in fiscal years 2006 and 2007 and implementation of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's VR Strategic Performance Plan.

The Administration requests \$8.826 million for the Demonstration and Training programs, \$1,325,000 less than the 2008 appropriation. The request reflects the elimination of \$3.1 million in fiscal year 2008 congressional earmarks offset by a proposed increase of \$1.8 million to help support a new initiative that would assist State VR agencies to improve the employment

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Summary of Request

outcomes of Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients. In fiscal year 2009, the Department would fund 7 demonstration projects and a technical assistance center under this initiative at a total cost of approximately \$4 million.

The request includes \$25.655 million for the Assistive Technology (AT) State grant program and the National Activities technical assistance, authorized under the AT Act. These programs enable individuals to acquire technology they might not otherwise be able to obtain—technology that improves their quality of life, and in many cases, enables them to work or participate in other productive activities. No funds are requested for the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) for Assistive Technology program, which provides services that are authorized and can be provided by other P&A programs.

The Administration proposes to fund the remaining programs in the Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research account at the 2008 level. We believe that this level will provide sufficient funds for the activities in these programs.

The Rehabilitation Act requires that 1 percent of the aggregate funds appropriated for programs authorized in Titles II, III, VI, and VII be used for minority outreach activities. In fiscal year 2009, this amount would total \$2.802 million, and we expect that the requirement would be implemented by reserving 1 percent of the funds provided for each of the specified programs.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Parts A, B (Sections 110 and 111), and C))

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ^{1,2}

Budget Authority (\$000s):

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
State grants	\$2,839,151	\$2,839,151	0
Indian set-aside	<u>34,892</u>	<u>34,892</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	2,874,043	2,874,043	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

² The authorizing language specifies that the amount to be appropriated for a fiscal year be at least the level of the prior fiscal year adjusted by the 12-month change from October to October in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers published in November of the current fiscal year. In FY 2009 this amount is \$2,974,635 thousand. The authorizing language also requires that not less than 1.0 percent and not more than 1.5 percent of the appropriation for each fiscal year for Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants be set aside for Grants for American Indians.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program supports VR services through formula grants to State VR agencies. These agencies provide a wide range of services designed to help persons with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment to the extent of their capabilities. Individuals with a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome and require VR services are eligible for assistance. The VR State Grants program is a required partner in the one-stop service delivery systems under section 121 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Program services are tailored to the specific needs of the individual through an individualized plan for employment (IPE). An eligible individual, or as appropriate, the individual's representative, may develop all or part of the IPE with or without assistance from a qualified rehabilitation counselor, or with technical assistance from other outside resources. The IPE must be agreed to by the individual and approved and signed by a qualified rehabilitation counselor employed by the State VR agency. The program may provide a variety of services, such as vocational evaluation, counseling, mental and physical restoration, education, vocational training, job placement, rehabilitation technology, and supported employment services. Priority is given to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities.

This is a current-funded formula grant program that provides financial assistance to States to cover the cost of direct services and program administration. The authorizing legislation requires an increase in funding equal to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPIU) over the past year. States may carry over unobligated Federal funds for an additional year, if a State has met all matching requirements for the fiscal year in which funds were appropriated.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

An allotment formula that takes into account population and per capita income is used to distribute funds among the States. The fiscal year 2007 allotments were based on the July 1, 2005 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2005. The fiscal year 2008 State allotments are based on the July 1, 2006 estimates published in December 2006. The fiscal year 2009 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2007 estimates released on December 27, 2007. Per capita income averages for fiscal year 2007 were based on Bureau of Economic Analysis revised estimates for calendar years 2001, 2002, and 2003 as reported by the Department of Commerce on September 28, 2004. Per capita income averages for fiscal year 2008 and 2009 are based on Bureau of Economic Analysis revised estimates for calendar years 2003, 2004, and 2005 as reported by the Department of Commerce on September 26, 2006. Fiscal year 2009 distributions are subject to minor revision if new population estimates become available for American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Grant funds are administered by VR agencies designated by each State. There are currently a total of 80 State VR agencies. Thirty-two (32) States operate a “combined” agency serving all disability categories. Twenty-four (24) States operate a separate agency for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and a general” agency for all other disability categories. The State matching requirement is 21.3 percent, except the State share is 50 percent for the cost of construction of a facility for community rehabilitation program purposes. States are required to maintain the level of State expenditures made under the State plan from non-Federal sources at least at the level spent during the fiscal year 2 years earlier. Each State is also required to reserve and use a portion of the Federal funds received under the VR State grant program for innovation and expansion activities authorized in section 101(a)(18).

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act requires the establishment of evaluation standards and performance indicators for the VR program that include outcome and related measures of program performance. Each State VR agency must report program performance data 60 days after the end of each fiscal year to determine if it is in compliance with the evaluation standards and performance indicators. A State agency failing to meet the standards must develop a program improvement plan outlining specific actions to be taken to improve program performance. The Department provides technical assistance to those State agencies that perform below the established evaluation standards to assist them to improve their performance.

In addition, the Department has partnered with six other Federal agencies on the new Job Training Common Measures initiative. Under this initiative, several common performance measures have been identified that clarify core goals of Federal job training programs. Programs serving postsecondary students and adults, such as the VR State Grants program, will be measured by the percentage of participants entering employment, the percentage of those employed who retain employment, the percentage change in earnings, and the efficiency of program operations.

The Rehabilitation Act requires that not less than 1.0 percent or more than 1.5 percent of the funds appropriated for the VR State grants program be set aside for grants under the American Indian VR Services program (section 121 of the Act). Service grants for up to 60 months are awarded to Indian tribes on a competitive basis to help tribes develop the capacity to provide VR services to American Indians with disabilities living on or near reservations.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

(\$000s)

2004	\$2,584,162
2005	2,635,845
2006	2,720,192
2007	2,837,160
2008	2,874,043

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$2.874 billion, the same as the 2008 appropriation, to assist States and tribal governments to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. This amount does not include the CPIU adjustment specified in the authorizing law, which would increase the total by \$100.592 million over the 2008 level.

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program is the primary Federal vehicle for assisting individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment. Although many people with disabilities are obtaining jobs and remaining employed, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is still unacceptably high. According to a report by Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute (October, 2005), of those aged 21-64, people with sensory, physical, mental, and/or self-care disabilities are much less likely to be employed (either full-time or part-time) than people without such disabilities (38.3 percent versus 77.2 percent respectively).

Nationally, there are about 1 million individuals with disabilities in various phases of the vocational rehabilitation process within the VR system. State VR agencies are facing numerous challenges. If a State VR agency cannot serve all eligible persons, it must serve first those individuals with the most significant disabilities under an "order of selection." In fiscal year 2007, about half of the 56 general and combined State VR agencies were on an order of selection. In addition, about 21 percent of the 24 State VR agencies serving blind individuals were on an order of selection. There were 29,184 individuals on State agency waiting lists at the end of fiscal year 2007. However, the number of individuals on a waiting list varies considerably among State agencies operating under an order of selection. For example, in FY 2007, 11 agencies had 8 or fewer individuals on a waiting list, while 10 agencies had over 1,000 individuals.

The percentage of individuals with significant disabilities served by VR State agencies has increased annually since the 1992 reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act when about 70 percent of the individuals served were individuals with significant disabilities. In fiscal year 2006, the most recent year for which final data are available, 92 percent of the persons served by the program were individuals with significant disabilities. The percentage of individuals with significant disabilities as a proportion of all individuals with disabilities achieving an employment outcome has increased considerably (from 73.5 percent in fiscal year 1994 to 92 percent in fiscal year 2006). In addition, the percentage of individuals with disabilities obtaining competitive employment who are individuals with significant disabilities has increased annually from 78 percent in fiscal year 1997 to 92 percent in fiscal year 2006.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

State VR agencies also play a major role under the Ticket to Work program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Under this program, most Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries between the ages of 18 and 64 are offered a “ticket,” which they may use to obtain employment services, VR services, and other support services from an employment network of their choice to enable them to enter the workforce. State VR agencies have the option of participating in the Ticket to Work program as an employment network or remaining in the current reimbursement system, including the option to elect either payment method on a case-by-case basis. Under the current system, the VR program is reimbursed for the costs of services provided to SSDI and SSI beneficiaries with a single payment after the beneficiary performs substantial gainful activity (for 2007, earnings in excess of \$900 per month for non-blind disabled beneficiaries and \$1,500 per month for blind beneficiaries) for at least 9 consecutive months. As of November 7, 2007, about 93.5 percent of the 184,286 tickets that have been assigned, have been assigned to State VR agencies, and only about 6.5 percent have been assigned to other employment networks.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Administration requests \$34.9 million for grants under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program, the same as the 2008 level. The fiscal year 2009 requested set-aside is 1.2 percent of the amount requested for VR State grants. The request will assist tribal governments to provide a program of VR services, in a culturally relevant manner, to American Indians with disabilities residing on or near reservations. Fiscal year 2009 funds would be used to support 72 projects, including 12 new projects and 60 continuations.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Individuals receiving services ¹	975,000	975,000	975,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of all individuals receiving services	93%	93%	93%
Total number of cases closed	483,680	483,700	483,720
Individuals whose cases were closed and received VR services	341,220	341,240	341,260
Individuals achieving an employment outcome ²	202,970	203,000	203,050
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of all individuals achieving an employment outcome	92%	92%	92%

Note: Data for fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009 are projections based on actual data for fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007 preliminary data from the RSA Quarterly Cumulative Caseload Report (RSA-113).

¹ Includes all eligible individuals who received VR services during the fiscal year.

² Number of individuals who exited the program after receiving services and achieved an employment outcome.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

American Indian vocational rehabilitation services

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Project funding:			
New project funding	\$3,107	\$11,021	\$4,395
Continuation funding	30,918	23,695	30,452
Forward funding	385	117	0
Peer review of new award applications	34	59	45
Number of projects:			
New projects	8	22	12
Continuation	<u>66</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>60</u>
Total projects	<u>74</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>72</u>

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Fiscal year 2007 data for the VR State Grants and the American Indian VR Services programs will be available in February of 2008.

VR State Grants

Goal: Individuals with disabilities served by the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program will achieve high quality employment.

Objective: *Ensure that individuals with disabilities who are served by the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program achieve employment consistent with their particular strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, and interests.*

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies that assist at least 55.8 percent of individuals receiving services to achieve employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2004	83	66
2005	75	71
2006	70	82
2007	71	
2008	76	
2009	78	

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind that assist at least 68.9 percent of individuals receiving services to achieve employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	83	63
2005	75	54
2006	70	63
2007	65	
2008	66	
2009	66	

Assessment of progress: This measure assesses the performance of State VR agencies in meeting program performance indicator 1.2 established in program regulations pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act. Indicator 1.2 measures the percentage of individuals who the State VR agency determines to have achieved an employment outcome out of all the individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services. In order to pass indicator 1.2, a general or combined agency must achieve an employment outcome rate of 55.8 percent, while an agency for the blind must achieve a rate of 68.9 percent.

In fiscal year 2001, the baseline year for this measure, 75 percent of general and combined agencies and 75 percent of agencies for the blind met the performance criterion for indicator 1.2. The performance target established for this measure for 2004 was based on fiscal year 2001 performance data and assumed that the proportion of State agencies meeting the performance criterion would increase. However, performance did not improve as predicted. In fact, employment outcome rates for many State agencies declined each year from 2000 to 2004 and the proportion of both general and combined State agencies and agencies for the blind that met the measure's performance criterion significantly declined. This decline was primarily the result of annual declines in the number of employment outcomes due, in part, to labor market conditions and to the elimination of extended employment (e.g. sheltered employment) as an acceptable employment outcome. The targets for 2005 and future years were reduced to reflect these changes.

In 2005, the employment outcome rates of general and combined agencies increased and agency performance on this measure improved as compared to the past 2 previous years. However, the 2005 performance of the agencies for the blind decreased after an increase in performance in 2004. Employment outcome rates for both the general and combined agencies and agencies for the blind increased in 2006, as did the percentage of agencies meeting the performance criterion for this measure. In 2006, 46 of the 56 general and combined agencies (82 percent) and 15 of the 24 agencies for the blind (63 percent) met their respective performance criteria. The general and combined agencies showed a net gain of six agencies that met the performance criterion as compared to 2005. Eight of the 56 general and combined agencies raised their performance to meet the criterion and the performance of two of the agencies that met the criterion in 2005 fell below the criterion in 2006. Performance targets for 2008 and later years assume that with improving economic conditions States will improve their performance on this measure. In addition, the Department revised its performance targets to reflect a more realistic goal.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies that assist at least 85 percent of individuals with employment outcomes to achieve competitive employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	67	95
2005	89	95
2006	96	96
2007	96	
2008	96	
2009	97	

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind that assist at least 65 percent of individuals with employment outcomes to achieve competitive employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	48	71
2005	54	75
2006	71	79
2007	75	
2008	79	
2009	79	

Assessment of progress: This measure is derived from Section 106 performance indicator 1.3, which measures the percentage of individuals who achieve competitive employment of all individuals who achieve employment. Competitive employment is defined under the State VR program as work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting, and 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. In order to pass indicator 1.3, a general or combined agency must achieve a rate of 72.6 percent, while an agency for the blind must achieve a rate of 35.4 percent. In fiscal year 2006, all of the general and combined agencies (with the exception of two of the territories) and 96 percent of the agencies for the blind passed this indicator.

The GPRA measure is more ambitious and has a higher performance criterion as compared to the State VR agency performance indicator 1.3. Under this measure, general and combined agencies must assist at least 85 percent of individuals with employment outcomes to achieve competitive employment and agencies for the blind must assist at least 65 percent of individuals with employment outcomes to achieve competitive employment. Although State VR agencies achieved fewer employment outcomes in the aggregate, States have achieved an increase in the percentage of competitive employment outcomes and exceeded performance targets in fiscal years 2004 through 2006. In 2006, 96 percent of general and combined agencies met the performance criterion. The percent of agencies for the blind that met the performance criterion increased significantly from 54 in 2003 to 71 in 2005. The target for 2006 was raised from 56 to 71 percent to reflect this increase. In 2006, 79 percent of agencies for the blind met the

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

performance criterion, exceeding the target. Excluding the territories, the percentage of individuals with employment outcomes who achieved competitive employment reported by general and combined agencies in 2006 ranged from 88 percent to 100 percent.

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies for which at least 80 percent of the individuals achieving competitive employment have significant disabilities.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		86
2005	86	88
2006	88	86
2007	89	
2008	90	
2009	90	

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind for which at least 90 percent of the individuals achieving competitive employment have significant disabilities.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		100
2005	92	100
2006	96	100
2007	100	
2008	100	
2009	100	

Assessment of progress: This measure is derived from the Section 106 performance indicator 1.4, which measures the percentage of individuals achieving competitive employment who have significant disabilities. In order for a general or combined agency to pass this indicator, at least 62.2 percent of individuals achieving competitive employment must have a significant disability. In fiscal year 2003, all general and combined agencies, with the exception of one agency in a territory, passed indicator 1.4. For an agency for the blind to pass indicator 1.4, at least 89 percent of individuals achieving competitive employment must have a significant disability. In fiscal year 2003, 96 percent of agencies for the blind passed this indicator. Based on 2003 and similar 2004 performance on indicator 1.4, the Department decided to increase the criterion for meeting the GPRA measure beginning with the fiscal year 2006 performance plan. Under the revised GPRA measure, the criterion for general and combined agencies was raised significantly, from at least 62.2 percent to at least 80 percent. For agencies for the blind, the criterion was increased only slightly, from 89 percent to 90. In fiscal year 2006, 86 percent of general and combined agencies met the 80 percent criterion, slightly below the target of 88 percent, and 100 percent of agencies for the blind met the 90 percent criterion, exceeding the target.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Efficiency Measures

Objective: *Ensure that State VR agencies demonstrate effective fiscal management.*

The Department has established three efficiency measures to ensure that State VR agencies demonstrate effective fiscal management. These include cost per employment outcome, cost per participant, and a consumer expenditure rate.

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies that demonstrate an average cost per employment outcome between \$6,000 and \$16,500.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005		71
2006	Set baseline	66
2007	73	
2008	70	
2009	71	

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind that demonstrate an average cost per employment outcome of no more than \$38,000.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005		67
2006	Set baseline	71
2007	71	
2008	71	
2009	75	

At the national aggregate level, the cost per employment outcome can be calculated by dividing the total appropriation (minus the set-aside for Grants to Indians) by the total number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome. Using this methodology, the average annual cost per employment outcome for the VR program in fiscal year 2006 was \$13,058. However, there is significant difference in the cost per employment outcome between general and combined State VR agencies and agencies serving the blind. The average cost per employment outcome for general and combined State VR agencies was \$12,459 compared with \$30,389 for agencies for the blind. In FY 2006, 37 of the 56 (66 percent) general and combined State VR agencies had an average cost per employment outcome between \$6,000 and \$16,500 – 3 fewer agencies than in FY 2005. Seventeen agencies had an average cost per employment outcome above \$16,500 and two agencies had an average cost per employment outcome of less than \$6,000. Seventeen of the twenty-four (71 percent) agencies for the blind had an average cost per employment outcome of no more than \$38,000 -- one more agency than in FY 2005. There is wide variation in the cost per employment outcome across these agencies. The cost per employment outcome for general and combined State VR agencies (excluding the outlying areas) ranged from about \$5,215 to \$34,414. The cost per employment outcome for agencies for the blind ranged from \$11,133 to \$103,883.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

The *Study of Variables Related to State VR Agency Performance* (October 2004) indicates that whatever measure of cost efficiency is used, large differences are evident by agency type (blind, combined, general). For example, agencies for the blind are much smaller and still must maintain the same core administrative infrastructure. They also do not benefit from economies of scale available to larger agencies. In addition, on average, blind consumers spend more time in the program and the average cost of purchased services tends to be higher.

The Department is using the cost per employment outcome measure in monitoring State VR agency performance. In general, agencies with very high costs can be compared with agencies of similar size to evaluate the impact of agency operating decisions. If two agencies receive grant awards of similar size, and one assists more individuals at a lower cost than the other, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) can examine the organizational structure, resource allocation, and service delivery decisions that make this agency more efficient. For example, RSA examines the percentage of the grant award spent on direct services compared to the percentage spent on administrative costs. Using FY 2005 data to further examine State agency performance of the agencies whose performance on the efficiency measures fell outside the specified range, RSA identified nine general and combined agencies and eight agencies for the blind that were most in need of technical assistance and monitoring.

This measure can also be used in monitoring the provision of services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and the requirement to provide all needed services based on the VR needs and informed choice of the individual. Individuals with the most significant disabilities generally need more services and more expensive services. RSA examines agencies with unusually low costs per outcome to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities are given priority for services and to determine if the agency is implementing any inappropriate policies regarding service provision.

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies that demonstrate an average cost per participant between \$1,200 and \$3,300.

Year	Target	Actual
2005		73
2006	Set baseline	64
2007	73	
2008	74	
2009	74	

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind that demonstrate an average cost per participant of no more than \$8,000.

Year	Target	Actual
2005		67
2006	Set baseline	67
2007	69	
2008	70	
2009	70	

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

The VR State grants program is a part of the Administration's Job Training Common Measures Initiative. The common efficiency measure for job training programs is the cost per participant.

For FY 2006, the average annual cost per participant for general and combined State vocational rehabilitation agencies was \$2,603 with a range (excluding the outlying areas) of \$1,410 to \$5,146. For agencies for the blind, the average annual cost per participant ranged from \$2,942 to \$18,757, with an average of \$6,652.

The Department believes that this output-based measure of the cost per participant will have less utility in guiding policy decisions or improving performance as compared to the outcome-based efficiency measure of the cost per employment outcome. In general, the variation in the cost per participant among programs reflects the range and cost of the particular services provided, as well as average grant size, economic factors, and definition of "participant." In particular, differences in the definition of the term participant limit the measure's usefulness in comparing performance across programs. For example, under some programs, individuals who are determined eligible and receive any service funded by the program are considered participants. In some cases, participants may have only received information and referral services through a website.

A measure of cost per participant may also create an incentive to fund low-cost services or to engage in "creaming," unless it is accompanied by, and is considered secondary to, a strong measure of program outcomes. Federal officials, going back two or three decades, have tried to steer State and local administrators away from investing in low-cost training programs that are unlikely to achieve lasting results and also from directing services to eligible participants who are the cheapest to serve (and thus the most likely to achieve favorable employment outcomes without the services provided by a program), rather than individuals who have the greatest need and require more expensive services. The Department intends to keep that history in mind as it implements efficiency measures for its job training programs and to use the common measure in concert with other performance information.

Measure: Percentage of general and combined State VR agencies that demonstrate an average annual consumer expenditure rate of at least 83 percent.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005		75
2006	Set Baseline	70
2007	72	
2008	73	
2009	75	

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies for the Blind that demonstrate an average annual consumer expenditure rate of at least 70 percent.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005		67
2006	Set Baseline	63
2007	65	
2008	67	
2009	67	

The third efficiency measure examines the percentage of State VR agencies whose consumer service expenditure rate is at or above a specified level. Under this measure, the consumer service expenditure rate is calculated by dividing the agency's consumer service expenditures by the agency's total VR program expenditures. The sources of data for this measure are State agency data from the RSA-2 report and RSA final State agency allocation tables. For FY 2006, the average annual consumer service expenditure rate for general and combined State vocational rehabilitation agencies was 87 percent with a range (excluding the outlying areas) of 52 to almost 100 percent. For agencies for the blind, the average annual consumer service expenditure rate ranged from 29 percent to 88, with an average of 73 percent. In fiscal year 2006, 39 of the 56 general and combined VR agencies (70 percent) had an average annual consumer expenditure rate of at least 83 percent. In 2006, 15 of the 24 agencies for the blind (63 percent) had an average annual consumer expenditure rate of at least 70 percent.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Performance Measures

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

Objective: *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.*

Measure: The percentage of individuals who leave the program with employment outcomes, after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	64.5	62.0
2005	65	66.2
2006	65	67.4
2007	65	
2008	66	
2009	66	

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Assessment of progress: The number of American Indians with disabilities served and the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome continue to increase annually along with the number of projects funded under the program. The number of projects funded has increased from 22 in fiscal year 1993 to 74 in fiscal year 2007.

In fiscal year 2006, the projects served 5,829 American Indians with disabilities and assisted 1,576 American Indians with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome. The percentage of individuals achieving an employment outcome of all individuals who exited the program after receiving services increased from 57.1 percent in 1998 to 66.2 percent in 2005. Data for fiscal year 2006, based on the 72 projects operating in that fiscal year (projects funded with fiscal year 2005 appropriations), show that 67.4 percent of such individuals achieved an employment outcome, exceeding the program's long-term goal. However, as discussed below in the Follow-up on PART Findings, these outcomes may be inflated, since some grantees are reluctant to close the service records of individuals who have not obtained an employment outcome. In addition, there is wide variation in the percentage of individuals who achieved an employment outcome reported by these projects. In 2006, the percentage of individuals achieving an employment outcome reported by the 72 projects ranged from 0 to 100 percent.

With the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the project period increased from 3 years to 5 years, providing more program stability. As a result, the program and its grantees have matured, and the projects have been able to significantly improve their effectiveness. In addition, cross-training and resource coordination through annual conference and cluster training sessions have added to program effectiveness. Monitoring and technical assistance have enhanced the projects' abilities and expertise in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians.

Efficiency Measures

Objective: *Ensure that AIVRS projects demonstrate effective fiscal management.*

The Department has established two efficiency measures to ensure that AIVRS projects demonstrate effective fiscal management. These include cost per employment outcome and cost per participant.

Measure: The percentage of AIVRS projects that demonstrate an average annual cost per employment outcome of no more than \$35,000.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005		70
2006	Set baseline	64
2007	66	
2008	66	
2009	68	

This AIVRS program efficiency measure examines the percentage of AIVRS projects having a cost per employment outcome within a specified range. Fiscal year 2005 and 2006 data were used to establish performance criteria and set performance targets for fiscal years 2007 through 2011. The source of data for this measure is the AIVRS Annual Reporting Form.

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At the national level, the average cost per employment outcome for this program is calculated by dividing the amount of the set-aside, excluding peer review costs, by the total number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome. Using this method for the AIVRS program in fiscal year 2006, the overall average cost per employment outcome was \$20,370. However, the cost per employment outcome varied significantly across projects, ranging from \$4,852 to \$270,947. Based on an analysis of FY 2006 data, 12 of the 26 AIVRS projects whose cost per employment exceeded \$35,000 were targeted for monitoring and technical assistance.

Measure: The percentage of AIVRS projects that demonstrate an average annual cost per participant of no more than \$10,000.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006		72
2007	Set baseline	
2008	Maintain baseline	

The Grants to Indians program also participates in the Administration's Job Training Common Measure Initiative. The common efficiency measure for job training programs is the cost per participant. At the national level, the average annual cost per participant for this program is calculated by dividing the amount of the set-aside, excluding peer review costs, by the total number of individuals who received services under an Individualized Plan for Employment. For fiscal year 2006, the overall average annual cost per participant was \$5,523 with a median of \$7,120. Excluding one project that reported serving only one individual in the first year of the project, the average cost per participant ranged from \$1,567 to \$41,076. The baseline and targets will be established for this measure based on fiscal year 2006 and 2007 data.

Follow-Up on PART Findings and Recommendations

VR State Grants

The VR program was assessed using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) in 2002 and received an overall rating of "Adequate." The program was one of the first programs in the Department to be assessed using the PART. The PART assessment noted that the findings of the Longitudinal Study of the VR program indicate the program has been successful in achieving results. Data from the Longitudinal Study show benefits to program participants, particularly in terms of improvements in employment and earning status. The study also found that VR consumers had very good job retention over time. The assessment also pinpointed a number of areas needing improvement, including the development of long-term goals, use and timeliness of performance data, and effective coordination with related programs that share similar goals and objectives.

At the time the PART assessment was conducted, the Department had not begun the process of developing long-term goals for its programs. The PART review noted that the VR program had performance goals that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program, but they are not ambitious long-term performance goals. Since that time the Department has revised the program's annual goals and adopted a long-term performance goal. In addition, the Department revised its VR program measures to address the wide variation in individual State agency performance. The measures now focus on the percentage of agencies that meet an

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established criterion rather than overall program averages. In addition, the Department is working to assist States to collect the necessary data to implement the Job Training Common Measures.

The PART assessment acknowledged that the agency regularly collects credible performance information. Evaluation standards and performance indicators are used by the Department to increase State accountability and in monitoring and providing technical assistance to States. However, the PART review identified the following concerns about 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. Program recommendations resulting from the PART assessment and the Department's progress in implementing those recommendations are described below.

- *Take significant steps to improve program management using existing outcome data and make these data available to the public in a more timely manner.* Effective management of the VR program had long been hindered by the Department's inability to produce timely and transparent data on program performance. Over the past 4 years, the Department has made significant progress in improving the timeliness of its VR data and in promoting the use of the data for program improvement. Fiscal year 2004, 2005, and 2006 databases have been completed within 5 months of the close of the fiscal year. 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. State performance data in a variety of formats can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/performance.html#rsamis>
- *Continue efforts initiated in FY 2007 to improve program management by using performance data to monitor State agency performance and to provide the State agencies with technical assistance.* RSA has implemented a comprehensive approach to monitoring with more consistency and improved management controls. The new monitoring process assists the Department in improving VR agency performance by providing feedback, technical assistance, and timely monitoring reports to our grantees. State teams conduct the monitoring activities with a single point of contact to interact with individual State agencies. Functional units work collaboratively to develop the monitoring protocols and State information that will be used as the basis for the monitoring activities. The Monitoring division is using data to monitor State performance and provide technical assistance. Increased access to management information allows staff to use State data for program management and monitoring. State profiles are developed containing program and fiscal data for use in evaluating State agency performance. By September 30, 2008, RSA will have used performance data in conducting State annual review reports for three fiscal years (2006, 2007, and 2008) and in conducting comprehensive onsite monitoring of 42 State agencies in 31 States over a 2-year period (fiscal year 2007 and 2008). In fiscal year 2007, performance data were also used in conducting onsite monitoring of 23 State agencies in 14 States. In fiscal year 2008, performance data will be used to conduct onsite monitoring of 19 State agencies in 14 States. Reports for the 17 States monitored in fiscal year 2007 can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/index.html>. Promising practices that RSA has identified through its monitoring of State agencies can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/promising-practices/index.html>. The most recent Annual Review reports can be accessed at http://rsamis.ed.gov/de.cfm?form_id=107&mode=list&fy=2006.

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- *Establish specific performance targets in the out-years.* Also, consider whether any additional measures are appropriate for this program. Specific long-term performance targets have been established. Additional performance measures will be developed in conjunction with the VR Strategic Performance Plan. The Department has obtained input from State VR agencies and other interested parties on the plan's proposed goal and objectives. Measures will be developed that assess achievement of the plan's objectives with respect to achieving economic self-sufficiency, increasing earnings, and providing transition services.
- *Collect data to allow comparison with other job training programs, including necessary data to support new common measures.* A field test of a data collection to support the common measures was conducted in fiscal year 2004. There were numerous difficulties in collecting the necessary Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Records data, including confidentiality issues and access to the UI database. Following the field test, RSA worked with States experiencing difficulties to facilitate access and reporting of data. RSA has followed up with State agencies to determine whether these issues have been resolved. The Department plans to develop a draft instrument for collecting UI data by late spring of 2008 and disseminate the data collection instrument to State agencies by the end of fiscal year 2008. However, issues with respect to implementation of the earnings measure still need to be resolved.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The AIVRS program was assessed in 2004 using the PART and received an overall rating of "Adequate." The PART assessment found that the design of the program, a hybrid of a State-administered program and a discretionary program, has challenged program managers at both the Federal and project level. The grantees are tribal governments that administer a program similar to the State VR Services program. However, the projects are awarded as discretionary grants and grantees must re compete for a grant every 5 years. In general, annual data and a recent evaluation show that the AIVRS program successfully meets its goals. However, these outcomes might be inflated since some grantees are reluctant to close the service records of individuals who have not obtained an employment outcome. The assessment also found that program's use of data to assist in strategic planning has been limited.

Program recommendations resulting from the PART assessment and the Department's progress in implementing those recommendations are described below.

- *Examine reporting inconsistencies and develop guidance to grantees in time to collect 2006 data.* The Department is taking a number of steps to improve data collection and reporting in the AIVRS program. A uniform online data collection was implemented just prior to the PART assessment in 2004 to assist in program management and assessment. However, initially, many grantees had difficulty using the web-based system to report their data. The Department revised the annual grantee reporting form to make it easier to complete, to clarify instructions, and to eliminate duplicative items. The revised annual report form was available to grantees for submission of their 2005 annual performance report. Problems with the program's online data collection system have been corrected. In FY 2005, program staff worked with individual grantees to resolve data entry issues and most grantees were successful in reporting their data into the web-based reporting system. Grantees were successful in reporting 2006 and 2007 data in the web-based system. Program staff analyzed

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- 2005 and 2006 data to identify reporting problems and inconsistencies and have provided technical assistance to grantees through teleconferences. Staff will continue to analyze project data to ensure consistency in reporting and provide technical assistance as needed.
- *Develop a strategy for collecting data to support the Administration's job training common measures and establish performance targets.* There are a number of challenges in implementing the job training common measures in the AIVRS programs. These include grantees' overall capacity for data collection and reporting; grantees' ability to access and use UI records; the adequacy of those data for representing program outcomes; and the need for consistency in reporting requirements. To assist in the implementation of the common measures, the Department conducted a study to assess the capacity of grantees to collect and report the required data. The study, which was completed in 2005, recommended that the measures be implemented using supplemental data since most grantees do not have access to UI wage records and program consumers are frequently employed in jobs that are not covered by Unemployment Insurance. However, a feasible and valid method for collecting such data has not been identified.
 - *Implement an outcome efficiency measure.* The Department has established two efficiency measures, an outcome efficiency measure and an output measure, to ensure that AIVRS projects demonstrate effective fiscal management. The outcome measure examines the percentage of projects that demonstrate an average annual cost per employment outcome of no more than \$35,000. Under this measure, the cost per employment outcome is calculated by dividing total Federal grant funds by the number of individuals who attain an employment outcome. Baseline data have been collected and used to establish performance criteria and set performance targets. Based on an analysis of FY 2006 performance data, program staff identified grantees in need of technical assistance in fiscal management.
 - *Improve use and transparency of project data to manage and improve the program, including posting summary analyses and key data on the Web.* Aggregate program and grantee level performance data are now available to the public on the Department's website at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/vramerind/performance.html>. The Department awarded a contract under Program Improvement at the end of fiscal year 2005 to develop the capacity of RSA to effectively use performance data in managing and improving program performance at the national and grantee level. Improvements to RSA's Management Information System (MIS) allow project staff to query and review grantee reported data and generate reports to assist in program management. RSA staff used FY 2006 grantee efficiency and program data to identify low performing grantees needing technical assistance. In FY 2008, RSA also plans to use project data to improve program performance and management by: (1) conducting on-site monitoring of grantees that do not meet the efficiency measure and have excessive grant balances; (2) conducting training in three geographic locations central to the AIVRS projects that will focus on program and fiscal management; and (3) providing targeted technical assistance to AIVRS projects that demonstrate weak performance or specifically request assistance.
 - *Monitor key performance and fiscal indicators and provide technical assistance to ensure the timely expenditure of project funds and the achievement of project goals.* Program staff will monitor the expenditure of project funds and the grantee's progress in achieving projects goals and provide technical assistance to grantees who have excessive fund balances and/or who are not on track to achieve the project's established quantitative goals.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Client assistance State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Section 112)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$11,576	\$11,576	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides grants to States for services to assist eligible individuals and applicants of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State grants program and other programs, projects, and services funded under the Rehabilitation Act (the Act). Services are provided to help eligible individuals and applicants understand the rehabilitation services and benefits available under the Act, and to advise them of their rights and responsibilities in connection with those benefits. Assistance may also be provided to help eligible individuals and applicants in their relationships with those providing services under the Act, including assistance and advocacy in pursuing legal and administrative remedies to ensure the protection of their rights. State VR agencies must inform VR consumers about the services available from the CAP and how to contact the CAP. States must operate a CAP in order to receive VR State grant funds.

States and outlying areas have adopted different organizational structures for meeting the requirement to establish a CAP in each State. 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 cases where the Act “grandfathered” agencies providing services under the Act. In the event one of these “grandfathered” agencies is restructured, the Act requires the Governor to redesignate the CAP in an agency that does not provide services under the Act.

Current designations include the following:

- 28 of the Governors have designated their State Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system to provide CAP services;
- 12 of the Governors have designated the VR agency to provide services; and
- the remaining 16 Governors have designated other entities to provide CAP services.

Of the 16 CAPs located outside State VR agencies and not within the P&A system, 5 are located in the Governor’s Office; 6 are located in another State agency, office, or government-sponsored

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Client assistance State grants

commission or group; 4 are located in legal aid and nonprofit organizations; and 1 is located in a private law firm.

The CAP is a current-funded formula grant program. When appropriations exceed \$7.5 million, funds are distributed on the basis of population, with a minimum allotment of \$100,000 to each of the 50 States, D.C., and Puerto Rico and \$45,000 to each of the outlying areas. When the appropriation increases, the Act also requires the Secretary to increase the minimum allotments for States and outlying areas by a percentage not greater than the percentage increase in the appropriation. The fiscal year 2007 allotments were based on the July 1, 2005 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2004. The fiscal year 2008 allotments are based on the July 1, 2006 population estimates published in December 2006. The fiscal year 2009 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2007 population estimates released on December 27, 2007. Grantees may carry over unobligated Federal funds for an additional year.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$11,997
2005.....	11,901
2006.....	11,782
2007.....	11,782
2008.....	11,576

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$11.576 million for the Client Assistance program (CAP) in fiscal year 2009, the same as the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. This request will help ensure that individuals with disabilities who are applying for or receiving services funded under the Act will receive appropriate services and have access to administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies when needed to protect their rights.

Overall, in FY 2006, CAPs nationwide responded to 49,777 requests for information and provided extensive services to 7,023 individuals. Slightly more than 91 percent of those cases in which extensive services were provided involved applicants for services or recipients of services from the VR State Grants program. In 69 percent of those cases, issues related to the delivery of VR services. These data also demonstrate that in 35 percent of the cases closed, CAPs enabled the individuals to advocate for themselves through the explanation of policies; that 19 percent of these cases resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties; and 14 percent resulted in the development or implementation of an Individualized Plan for Employment. In addition, 64 percent of the cases requiring action by the CAP on behalf of the individual were resolved in the individual's favor.

A specific example of CAP activities during fiscal year 2006 involves a 79-year-old individual with severe back problems requesting assistance to become a medical transcriptionist. She had been a nurse for over 20 years but a recent back injury requiring significant surgery prevented her from continuing to work in the nursing field. She requested training to become a medical transcriptionist, but VR denied her request. VR implied that the consumer might have trouble

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Client assistance State grants

obtaining a position because of her age. CAP asserted that the consumer's age should not be a reason to deny services. CAP assisted the consumer in having her case transferred to another VR office that agreed to the consumer's requested vocational goal.

In another case, the Florida CAP advocated for a summer youth work experience program that would allow students with disabilities to obtain job shadowing and work experience with an employer. As a result, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, (DVR) organized a pilot summer job program for high school students with disabilities in the Tampa and Sarasota area. Approximately 20 students received work experiences in retail, photography, food service, and other fields. DVR hopes to expand this pilot to more counties next year.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	49,777	49,777	49,777
Individuals provided case services	7,023	7,023	7,023

Note: Data for fiscal years 2007 through 2009 are projected from actual data collected for fiscal year 2006. Data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in April of 2008.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To provide assistance and information to help individuals with disabilities secure the benefits available under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program and other programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Objective: *Accurately identify problem areas requiring systemic change and engage in systemic activity to improve services under the Rehabilitation Act.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Client assistance State grants

Measure: The percentage of CAPs that reported that their systemic advocacy resulted in changes in policy or practice.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	49	57
2005	50	53
2006	54	58
2007	60	
2008	60	
2009	60	

Assessment of progress: CAPs address numerous systemic issues related to the provision of VR and other services under the Act. CAPs utilize a variety of methods to achieve changes in policies and practices, including individual advocacy, participation in the policymaking process, and negotiation with State agencies. Permanent systemic change is very difficult to achieve, and some States undertake activities that may take years to accomplish. All 56 CAPs currently are engaged in work that should ultimately result in systemic change, but this indicator measures only those States that report their activity as complete. Data are compiled from narrative reports submitted by all CAPS. The baseline was established in fiscal year 1999, when 24 of the 56 CAPs reported changes in practice or policy due to their efforts. In fiscal year 2006, 33 of the 56 CAPs reported success with their efforts, exceeding the target for the fifth successive year. In light of these data the Department has raised the targets for fiscal years 2007 through 2010. The revised 2007 and 2008 target of 60 percent would require 34 CAPs to be successful. The data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in March 2008.

Objective: *Resolve cases at lowest possible level.*

Measure: The percentage of cases resolved through the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	84	82
2005	84	84
2006	84	85
2007	84	
2008	84	
2009	84	

Assessment of progress: The performance targets are based on fiscal year 2001 data, which showed 84 percent of cases resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The target was met in fiscal year 2005 and exceeded in fiscal year 2006, when 4,977 of the 5,855 closed cases were resolved through ADR techniques. Annually, Department program specialists review data reported by CAPs. On-site compliance reviews are conducted and a random sample of on-site files is cross-checked with reported data for verification.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Training

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 302)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
	\$37,766	\$37,766	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Training program is to ensure that skilled personnel are available to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities assisted through the vocational rehabilitation (VR), supported employment, and independent living programs. The program supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel providing rehabilitation services. Grants and contracts 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 may be made in any of 31 long-term training fields, in addition to awards for 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 type of trainee. For example, the Long-Term Training program supports academic training grants that must direct 75 percent of the funds to trainee scholarships. The statute requires trainees who receive assistance either to work for a period of time 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.

The Training program authority requires recipients of grants under the Long-Term Training program to build closer relationships between training institutions and VR State agencies, promote careers in the public vocational rehabilitation program, identify potential employers who would meet students' payback requirements, and assure that data on student employment are accurate. Training of statewide workforce systems personnel is authorized under the Training program, and such training may be jointly funded by 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 State grants program or another component of the statewide workforce system.

Of the funds appropriated for the Training program, 15 percent must be used to support the In-Service Training program. This program is intended to assist VR State agencies in the training of State agency staff consistent with the State's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). Under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, each State is required to establish

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Training

procedures to ensure there is an adequate supply of qualified staff for the State agency, to assess personnel needs and make projections for future needs, and to address the 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 certification, licensure, or 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 a State will take to upgrade the qualifications of their staff, through retraining or hiring. Title I VR State grant funds may also be used to comply with these requirements.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004	\$39,139
2005	38,826
2006	38,438
2007	38,438
2008	37,766

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$37.766 million for the Training program in fiscal year 2009, the same as the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. Funds are requested for this program in order to address the need for skilled personnel to provide rehabilitation services, particularly through programs supported under the Rehabilitation Act. For years, the demand for new State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency counselors has far exceeded the supply, and 43 percent of State VR counselors are expected to retire by 2007. According to a study conducted by the American Institutes for Research (*A Profile for the Demand for and Supply of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors*, January 2006) the number of students currently graduating from rehabilitation counseling programs who enter VR employment (approximately 31 percent of all new graduates) are expected to meet only about 30 percent of the need for new VR counselors. In addition, 27 percent of existing State VR agency staff do not meet their State's personnel standard under their comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) and require retraining. In addition, 88 percent of those who meet their State's personnel standard will require continuing education to maintain their credentials.

The majority of the funds requested in fiscal year 2009 (\$31.9 million or 84 percent) will be used to continue 239 awards that began in previous fiscal years. All new activities (\$5.139 million) will be carried out under the Long-Term Training program, of which \$3.118 million will support training projects that produce graduates with masters degrees in rehabilitation counseling (23 awards) and \$.882 million will support projects designed to increase the credentials of existing State agency staff (6 awards). The remaining \$1.2 million available for new awards will support 12 new projects in 4 long-term academic training fields—4 projects in Rehabilitation of the Blind, 2 projects for the Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill, 3 projects for Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment, and 3 projects in Job Development and Job Placement.

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Training

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>			
Program funding:						
New awards	\$2,595	\$14,335	\$5,139			
Continuation awards	35,352	22,679	31,900			
Minority outreach	384	377	377			
Peer review of new award applications	31	200	175			
Conferences	<u>76</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>175</u>			
Total	38,438	37,766	37,766			
Number of awards:						
New awards	14	65	41			
Continuation awards	<u>273</u>	<u>214</u>	<u>239</u>			
Total	287	279	280			
Program detail	Funding			Number of awards		
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
<u>Long-term training:</u>						
New awards	\$845	\$5,635	\$5,139	10	50	41
Continuation awards	<u>18,422</u>	<u>13,889</u>	<u>14,410</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>118</u>
Total	19,267	19,524	19,549	157	158	159
<u>Technical Assistance and Continuing Education</u>						
New awards	1,500	7,900	0	3	10	0
Continuation awards	<u>8,571</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>8,090</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	10,071	8,090	8,090	24	10	10
<u>Experimental and Innovative</u>						
New awards	0	500	0	0	4	0
Continuation awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	0	500	500	0	4	4
<u>Recruitment Center</u>						
New awards	0	300	0	0	1	0
Continuation awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	0	300	300	0	1	0
<u>In-Service:</u>						
Continuation awards	5,528	5,528	5,528	77	77	77
Supplements	<u>238</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	5,766	5,766	5,766	97	97	97

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Training

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

Program detail	Funding			Number of awards		
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
<u>Short-term:</u>						
New awards	\$250	0	0	1	0	0
Continuation awards	<u>500</u>	<u>\$750</u>	<u>\$750</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	750	750	750	3	3	3
<u>Interpreter training:</u>						
Continuation awards	2,093	2,084	2,084	6	6	6

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To provide the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) sector with well-trained staff and to maintain and upgrade the skills of current staff.

Objective: To provide graduates who work within the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system to help individuals with disabilities achieve their goals.

Measure: The percentage of RSA-supported graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through acceptable employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	74	81
2005	73	81
2006	83	86
2007	85	
2008	85	
2009	86	

Assessment of progress: Performance for this measure has increased from 72 percent in 2000 to 86 percent in 2006, and currently exceeds targets established for 2007 and 2008. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) also collects data on the percentage of Master's

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Training

level counseling graduates who fulfill their payback requirements through acceptable employment (86 percent in 2006) and the percentage of Master's level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback through work in State VR agencies (53 percent in 2006). Fiscal year 2007 data for these measures will be available in March 2008.

Objective: *Maintain and upgrade the knowledge and skills of personnel currently employed in the public VR system.*

Measure: The percentage of currently employed VR state agency counselors who meet their State's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	79	67
2005	70	73
2006	71	71
2007	72	
2008	73	
2009	74	

Assessment of progress: Beginning in 2005, RSA has compiled these data from State plans submitted under the VR State grants program. Data for fiscal years 2003 and 2004 were collected by the American Institutes for Research through surveys of State agencies. The target was exceeded in 2005 and met in 2006. Data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in March 2008.

Efficiency Measures

The efficiency measure established for the Long-Term Training (LTT) program during the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review is the cost per graduate. The measure is calculated by dividing the total funds spent on long-term training by the number of graduates supported under that program. RSA will calculate and analyze the data for this measure at the grantee level in order to be able to compare projects. Data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in March 2008.

Measure: The Federal cost per RSA supported rehabilitation counseling graduate at the Masters-level.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		\$9,475
2005		11,150
2006		10,962
2007	\$10,702	
2008	10,702	
2009	10,702	

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Other Performance Information

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) recently conducted an evaluation of the Training program. The evaluation was designed to assess the responsiveness of the Long-Term training program to the need for qualified rehabilitation personnel, with a particular focus on the largest profession in the field—rehabilitation counseling. AIR looked at: issues of demand and supply of qualified personnel; the types of agencies or organizations that employ RSA scholars upon graduation; the variables graduates consider when choosing to enter careers in State vocational rehabilitation agencies and other acceptable employment settings; the current status of each State's CSPD standards; and the number of counselors that meet those standards and the projected demand for qualified rehabilitation counselors in each State over the next 10 years. AIR used six surveys to gather information. AIR issued two reports from this study—*An Evaluation of the Rehabilitation Services Administration Training Program's Responsiveness to State VR Agency Needs for Qualified Personnel* (August 2005) and *A Profile of the Demand for and Supply of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors* (January 2006). RSA used the results in developing priorities for the use of funds and to improve the payback reporting system.

Follow-Up on PART Findings and Recommendations

In 2006, the Training program underwent a PART review and received a rating of “Adequate”. The assessment found that the program addresses a specific problem—rehabilitation personnel shortages—and is the only Federal program designed to do so through a payback requirement. This requirement mandates that scholars re-pay their Federal scholarship support by working in public or private nonprofit rehabilitation agencies or related agencies 2 years for every 1 year of assistance or re-pay the scholarship in full if they go to work in an unrelated field. The assessment further found that the program established ambitious targets for its long-term measures, developed an efficiency measure, and has taken steps to improve its data collection.

The PART improvement plan recommendations are presented below, followed by a description of the Department's actions to address them.

- *Determine whether the Training program should be restructured in order to address emerging needs.* In order to determine whether the Training program should be restructured RSA published a Federal Register notice seeking comment and input on March 6th 2007. RSA received 150 comments in response. After an analysis of the 150 comments received, RSA has decided to publish 3 absolute priorities in fiscal year 2008, which would be the basis for establishing 10 new regional technical assistance and continuing education centers, 4 new master's-level rehabilitation counseling programs, and 1 new national recruitment center.
- *Use existing outcome data to improve program management and direct priorities.* RSA is in the process of incorporating the Payback Reporting System into the RSA management information system. RSA intends to provide increased grantee training on entering information into the Payback System. RSA hopes to improve the accuracy of program information as measured by the percentage of grantees that enter complete and accurate data into the payback system by an established deadline. In addition, RSA will present these findings on payback at the annual project directors meetings.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Training

- *Take significant steps to improve the accuracy of information on payback and numbers of counselors who met their CSPD standard.* In order to better assess performance on payback, RSA has developed an internal system that will allow RSA to track the employment status of individual scholars and obtain data not otherwise available through web-based reporting by grantees. RSA has reviewed each State's CSPD plan for fiscal year 2006 to determine the number of counselors meeting CSPD requirements, and will do so every year to determine progress in increasing the numbers. The fiscal year 2007 data will be available in spring, 2008.
- *Make data on payback and numbers of counselors who met their CSPD standard available to the public.* RSA has not yet posted these data on the RSA Training Web page, but anticipates they will be available online in spring, 2008.
- *Calculate and analyze the efficiency measure data (cost per graduate) at the grantee level in order to establish targets and identify potential candidates for technical assistance.* RSA has calculated an average cost per graduate using data from the Payback Reporting System and has established a target for the program. A grantee-level analysis will be completed by summer, 2008.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 303(b)-(d))

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
	\$10,151	\$8,826	-\$1,325

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Demonstration and Training programs provide competitive grants to, or contracts with, eligible entities to expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation and other services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act (the Act) or to further the purposes and policies of the Act. These current-funded discretionary grant programs also support activities that increase the provision, extent, availability, scope, and quality of rehabilitation services under the Act, including related research and evaluation activities.

Section 303(b) of the Rehabilitation Act authorizes the support of activities to demonstrate methods of service delivery to individuals with disabilities, as well as activities such as technical assistance, systems change, special studies and evaluation, and dissemination and utilization of project findings. Eligible entities include State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, community rehabilitation programs, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations, and for-profit organizations. Competitions may be limited to one or more type of entity.

Sections 303(c) and (d) of the Act authorize a parent information and training program and a Braille training program.

The majority of projects currently supported under Demonstration and Training programs are designed to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by expanding and improving the availability and provision of rehabilitation and other services. These projects should help increase employment outcomes for individuals for whom vocational rehabilitation services were previously unavailable or who previously did not take advantage of such services.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$24,286
2005.....	25,607
2006.....	6,511
2007.....	8,756
2008.....	10,151

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$8.826 million for Demonstration and Training programs in fiscal year 2009, a decrease of \$1.325 million from the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. The request reflects the elimination of \$3.099 million in fiscal year 2008 for congressional earmarks offset by a proposed increase of \$1.775 million for a new Social Security Disability Insurance Beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income Recipients initiative that will cost a total of \$4.025 million in fiscal year 2009.

Specifically, the fiscal year 2009 request includes \$3.525 million to support 7 new demonstration projects on high quality employment outcomes for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients. In a review of State VR activities, it became clear to RSA that some States are better at helping SSDI/SSI recipients achieve economic self-sufficiency and maximize earnings than others. These funds would be used to identify State VR agencies that have had success with these consumers.

The request also includes \$500,000 to establish a technical assistance center to assist the new projects. This center would provide assistance on activities such as collecting and analyzing data from the projects. The center would share promising practices and help projects adopt and adapt practices to fit their unique needs. Project activities will be documented by the center and the center will use available data to try to determine what practices work under specific circumstances, with the goal of producing a body of evidence-based practices that can be used by other States.

The request includes \$200,000 for two Braille Training grants in fiscal year 2009. All other funds requested would support activities that began in previous fiscal years. A total of \$3.280 million of the request would be used to continue six State grants funded in fiscal year 2007 designed to demonstrate the use of promising practices in transition planning and service delivery in improving the postsecondary education and employment outcomes of students with disabilities. A total of \$850,000 would be used to continue 7 parent information and training centers and a technical assistance grant that began in fiscal year 2007. A total of \$258,000 would continue support for the technical assistance provider to the Assistive Technology Reutilization grantees that first received funding in fiscal year 2006.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Program funding:			
SSDI/SSI Demos and TA center	0	0	\$4,025
Transition initiative	\$5,269 ¹	\$1,365	3,280
AT Reutilization	258	1,727	258
Parent Training and Information Centers	850	850	850
Braille Training	0	200	200
Literacy Demonstration Projects	826	0	0
Mentoring Projects	<u>1,127</u>	<u>2,488</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal—Program funding	8,330	6,630	8,613

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Other program costs:			
TA for Telework grantees	100	100	100
NIDRR RTC	250	0	0
Business Leadership	35	0	0
Peer review of new award applications	32	0	25
Minority outreach	9	102	88
Earmarks	0	3,100	0
Orthotic and Prosethic Research earmark	<u>0</u>	<u>219</u> ²	<u>0</u>
Subtotal—Other program costs	426	3,521	213
Total—Program funding and other program costs	\$8,756	\$10,151	\$8,826
Number of projects:			
New	14	14	8
Continuation	<u>11</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>15</u>
Total—Number of projects	25	30	23

¹ This figure includes \$1,974 thousand used for FY 2008 continuation costs of projects funded under this program.

² The 2008 Appropriations Act requires that the Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research account support a total of \$982,530 for Orthotic and Prosethic Research. The Demonstration and Training program expects to contribute this amount.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To expand, improve or further the purposes of activities authorized under the Act.

Objective: *Expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation services that lead to employment outcomes.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

Measure: The percentage of individuals referred to or from VR agencies will be maintained or increased as a result of interactions with, presentations for, and information provided to VR agencies.

Year	Target		Actual	
	Referrals to VR from Projects	Referrals from VR to Projects	Referrals to VR from Projects	Referrals from VR to Projects
2004	10	62	9	31
2005	13	33	10	41
2006	13	33	13	34
2007	13	33		
2008	13	33		
2009	13	33		

Assessment of progress: Grantees report on the number of presentations conducted for targeted audiences about their projects and the percent of project participants who were active VR consumers, referred from VR to the project, or referred to VR from the project. The targets for fiscal year 2004 were based on data that have since been corrected. Therefore, targets for referrals for that year were not appropriate—they were not ambitious in the case of referrals to VR or realistic in the case of referrals from VR.

Actual data reflect information provided by projects funded through Demonstrations and Training programs that use the web-based reporting system and that provide direct services leading to employment outcomes. The fiscal year 2004 data were based on 26 projects that reported serving 2,830 individuals of whom 261 were referred to VR and 890 were referred from VR. The fiscal year 2005 data are based on 9 projects that reported serving 1,248 individuals of whom 118 were referred to VR and 508 were referred from VR. The data for fiscal year 2006 show that both targets were exceeded. These data cannot be used to directly assess the impact the projects had on VR service providers but do provide some insight into the relationship between these projects and VR providers. In addition, grantees report on their impact through narrative responses.

Measure: The percentage of individuals who were provided employment services through projects and who were placed into employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2004	Baseline	36
2005	24	31
2006	35	35
2007	35	
2008	35	
2009	35	

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

Assessment of progress: The fiscal year 2004 data reflect information provided by 15 grantees that use the web-based reporting system and that provide direct services leading to employment outcomes. The percentage of consumers placed in 2004 is based on 1,018 placements and 2,830 individuals served. The percentage of consumers placed in 2005 is based on 392 placements and 1,248 individuals served by 9 projects. The data for 2006 show that the target was met.

Efficiency Measures

The efficiency measure for this program is the percentage of projects that met their goals and objectives as established in their original applications, or as modified during the first year. RSA staff will review applications, grant files, and final reports to compile the information needed for this measure in time to use the data for the 2008 grant cycle. This efficiency measure is designed to determine whether the grantees are providing the services for which they were awarded funding through the competitive process.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The Demonstration and Training programs underwent a Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review during 2005 and received a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The PART improvement plan recommendations are presented below, followed by a description of the Department's actions to address them.

- *Develop a comprehensive plan (including a plan for program evaluation) that will establish procedures for identifying multi-year initiatives and annual priority areas.* RSA developed a comprehensive planning document entitled the Future Initiatives Plan (FIP) for Demonstrations and Training Programs. The FIP was derived from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) priorities, which in turn, relate to Department goals. Among the OSERS priorities are: expanding meaningful and competitive employment for people with disabilities and emphasizing the transition of youth with disabilities to postsecondary education and/or employment; and building partnerships to leverage resources with Federal and other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The FIP identifies specific priorities and a timetable for implementing the plan. The plan will be reviewed, evaluated, and updated annually by members of the planning group that developed the FIP.
- *Develop long term measures; examine current annual measures to determine whether they should be maintained or revised in line with the comprehensive plan.* RSA has not yet developed new long term measures for this program. In the meantime, RSA is working to compile the efficiency measure data for this program to measure success. The efficiency measure is the percentage of projects that meet or exceed their original project objectives.
- *Develop procedures for the review of grantee data, progress and final reports, to improve program performance.* RSA has developed a protocol for review of annual performance reports and data submissions. RSA will test the protocol, develop and test procedures for comparing performance data for the current and previous years, and analyze the results by March 2008.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Demonstration and training programs

- *Resolve outstanding issues with the Web-based data collection instrument so that it's operating correctly for both grantees and RSA.* RSA's Web-based reporting system, which is used to collect data for the program's current measures, is now operational but continues to only apply to a portion of the grantees. Therefore, RSA is examining alternative measures that might be used for the program, and eliminate the need for the current electronic reporting system.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 304)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): 0 ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$2,239	0	-\$2,239

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY2008 through appropriations language. No appropriations language or new authorizing legislation is sought.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) program makes comprehensive vocational rehabilitation (VR) services available to migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities, with the goal of increasing employment opportunities for them. Projects also develop innovative methods for reaching and serving this population. Emphasis is given in these projects to outreach, specialized bilingual rehabilitation counseling, and coordination of 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. Discretionary grants are limited to 90 percent of the costs of the projects providing these services. This is a current-funded program.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program is administered in coordination with other programs serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including programs under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, and the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$2,321
2005.....	2,302
2006.....	2,279
2007.....	2,279
2008.....	2,239

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

No funds are requested for the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program in fiscal year 2009. The Administration recognizes that specialized services, such as those provided through the MSFW program, can be beneficial in meeting the complex needs of migrant or seasonal

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers

farmworkers with disabilities. However, the services provided through this program can be, and in many States are, provided under the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State grants program.

Therefore, a need no longer exists for a separate program to provide specialized services to this population.

In all States, migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities are eligible for the full range of services that are available to all VR consumers. The specialized services provided under the MSFW program are activities all State VR agencies should be conducting to reach and appropriately serve underserved populations and should not depend on the availability of separate funding. The authorizing legislation for the VR State Grants program contains many provisions to ensure that State VR agencies reach and serve all individuals with disabilities within the State, including minority, unserved, and underserved populations--

- States must provide for the cooperation, collaboration, and coordination with other components of the Statewide workforce investment system. Specifically, States must describe their interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of, Federal, State and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Rural Development.
- States must provide an assurance that the State will not impose a residence requirement that excludes from services any individual who is present in the State.
- States must conduct comprehensive, statewide assessments describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the States, particularly the VR service needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR State Grants program. Using the statewide assessment, the States must identify the goals and priorities in carrying out their programs.
- States must provide a description of the strategies they will use to address the needs identified in the comprehensive, statewide assessment and to achieve the identified goals and priorities, including outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

The activities needed to successfully serve the migrant and seasonal farmworker population do not differ from those that benefit a much wider group of VR consumers. For example, outreach activities in churches and community centers may be effective for identifying farmworkers with disabilities, but they also assist in identifying other persons with disabilities who visit these places. The hiring of bilingual counselors will assist all consumers who are monolingual in a non-English language, whether those consumers are farmworkers or not. And, the provision of transportation services for rural areas will benefit all rural residents, whether farmworkers or not.

This program was established as a demonstration program in the mid-1970s and is no longer needed to demonstrate the benefits of these strategies to serve underserved populations such as migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Many of the same States have received continued funding over the past 30 years and should be able to effectively serve this population under the VR State Grants program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Program funding:			
New projects	\$347	\$806	0
Continuation projects	1,648	1,391	0
Minority outreach	275	22	0
Peer review of new award applications	<u>9</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	2,279	2,239	0
Number of projects:			
New projects	3	5	0
Continuation projects	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	11	11	0

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program is currently part of the Administration's Job Training Common Measures initiative. The common measures for job training and employment programs targeting adults are: entered employment (percentage employed in the first quarter after program exit); retention in employment (percentage of those employed in the first quarter after exit that were still employed in the second and third quarter after program exit); earnings increase (percentage change in earnings pre-registration to post-program and first quarter after exit to third quarter after exit); and efficiency (annual cost per participant).

Goal: To increase employment opportunities for migrant and seasonal farmworkers who have disabilities.

Objective: *Ensure that eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers with disabilities receive Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and achieve employment.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers

Measure: : The percentage of migrant or seasonal farmworkers with disabilities served by both vocational rehabilitation (VR) and the VR Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers projects who were placed in employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2004	62	59
2005	65	67
2006	65	63
2007	65	
2008	65	

Assessment of progress: States with Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) grants appear to be continuing to place in employment those migrant and seasonal farmworkers served at a higher rate than States without projects. During fiscal year 2006, the 13 States with MSFW projects served 276 individuals, placing 175 in employment (63.4 percent). Seven of the grantees met or exceeded the performance target (65 percent) set for fiscal year 2006. Three agencies had more than a 70 percent placement rate. Five grantees had a rate of 62 percent or more. States without a Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker that reported serving migratory workers in fiscal year 2006 placed in employment 53 percent of individuals served.

There are still problems with the quality of the data, with States without projects reporting individuals served by a project. These data are not reflected in the percentages discussed above. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) must work with States to ensure data are reported correctly. No target is shown for 2009, since this program is proposed for termination.

Efficiency Measures

The common efficiency measure for job training programs is the cost per participant. The Department believes that this output-based common measure will have limited utility in guiding policy decisions or improving performance in these programs relative to the outcome-based efficiency measure of the cost per employment outcome. The Department believes that an outcome-based measure is more useful in programs with well-defined measures of success, such as this program. In the case of this program, RSA will calculate a project-level efficiency measure by dividing the annual Federal grant amount by the number of successful employment outcomes reported by the project during the project period. Projects conduct their activities in the year following the Federal funding. For example, outcomes reported for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 were achieved with grant funds obligated during 2003 and 2004. Projects operating during fiscal year 2004 spent \$18,543 per employment outcome and projects operating in fiscal year 2005 spent \$10,413 per employment outcome. Once the 2006 data are available, RSA will use these data to establish targets for the percentage of projects whose costs per employment outcome is within a specified range.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program underwent a Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review in 2006 and received a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The PART

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers

improvement plan recommendations are presented below, followed by a description of the Department's actions to address them.

- *Publish a tailored annual reporting form for use by grantees in reporting uniform data.* On March 26, 2007 a notice was published in the *Federal Register* inviting comments on an annual reporting form for the MSFW program. However, RSA has since learned that a tailored form is not needed to collect the necessary data. RSA will use the standard ED 524B performance report form with specific data reporting elements. RSA will identify the specific data elements in the annual Dear Colleague Letter that accompanies the application kit.
- *Annually review and analyze MSFW grantee data and RSA 911 data on migrants to ensure accuracy and to eliminate incorrect reporting by VR agencies without MSFW projects.* Program staff will review and analyze performance data submitted by grantees and compare them to data submitted by States using the RSA-911. Emphasis will be placed on determining the total number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities who received vocational rehabilitation services from individual projects and State VR agencies and 1) the number who achieved an employment outcome, and 2) the number of individuals exiting the program with or without achieving an employment outcome. This will be completed in time for the 2008 grant cycle.
- *Calculate and analyze the efficiency measure data (cost per employment outcome) at the grantee level in order to establish targets.* Staff will calculate and analyze efficiency measure data annually. The specific data elements that have been added to the existing 524B form will allow staff to establish new targets based on data available in January 2008.
- *Improve oversight and monitoring through teleconference reviews and on-site monitoring visits.* Staff conduct quarterly monitoring calls with each grantee. The purpose of these calls is to discuss progress toward achievement of the goals and objectives identified in the applications and to address any performance issues and barriers to implementation. Technical assistance related to the performance measures and data-gathering techniques is provided. Based on a review of the annual performance reports and other criteria, staff will identify grantees that would benefit from an on-site review.
- *Use monitoring findings to improve program management and technical assistance.* RSA plans to conduct at least two on-site reviews in fiscal year 2008. The purpose of these on-site reviews is to identify program and fiscal issues. Staff will develop an on-site protocol/tool to assist them in objectively identifying issues that must be addressed to improve program management and performance. Data gathered as a direct result of the on-site review will be used to generate recommendations for grantees to follow, including a corrective action plan. This plan will become the basis for further monitoring conducted quarterly by phone.
- *Make data available to the public.* Grantees are required to submit an annual performance report that addresses specific data elements. Staff will prepare an annual summary of findings and post the analysis on RSA's Management Information System. The first report will be available to the public by spring, 2008.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Recreational programs

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 305)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): 0 ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$2,474	0	-\$2,474

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. No appropriations language or new authorizing legislation is sought.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program provides recreational and related activities to individuals with disabilities to aid in their employment, mobility, independence, socialization, and community integration. Programs are designed to promote the development of social skills that can help individuals with disabilities integrate into the community.

This current-funded program awards discretionary grants on a competitive basis to States, public agencies, and nonprofit private organizations, including institutions of higher education. The statute requires the Federal contribution for projects funded under this authority to decrease over the 3-year project period. Grantees are required to maintain services during the second and third years of the project at the level provided in the first year. The Federal share of the costs of the project is 100 percent for the first year, 75 percent for the second year, and 50 percent for the third. The applicant is required to include a description in the application of how the project will continue after Federal assistance ends.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$2,564
2005.....	2,543
2006.....	2,518
2007.....	2,518
2009.....	2,474

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

No funds are requested for Recreational programs in fiscal year 2009. While the Administration strongly supports helping individuals with disabilities become full and active members in society, this program has limited national impact. The Administration believes recreational programs would be more appropriately financed by State and local agencies and the private sector. For example, the National Council for Support of Disability Issues—a nonprofit organization

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Recreational programs

dedicated to providing a means for sharing information, resources, ideas, and support among individuals with disabilities—provides information for 19 national or international organizations that provide sports programs for individuals with disabilities. The National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD), which began in 1970 as a one-time ski lesson for children with amputations for the Children's Hospital of Denver, is now one of the largest outdoor therapeutic recreation agencies in the world. With specially trained staff and its own adaptive equipment lab, the NSCD teaches a variety of winter and summer sports and activities to individuals with disabilities. Over 17,000 lessons were provided in 2006 alone. The NSCD's primary source of revenue is contributions. Reported revenue for fiscal year 2006 of \$3,242,108 includes \$2,302,025 in contributions—an amount that is 93 percent of the entire appropriation for this Federal program.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
New awards:			
Number	8	8	0
Average new award	\$136	\$126	0
Funding	\$1,088	\$1,010	0
Continuation awards:			
Number	25	24	0
Funding	\$1,352	\$1,439	0
Other:			
Minority outreach	\$25	\$25	0
Peer review of new award applications	<u>\$53</u>	<u>0</u> ¹	<u>0</u>
Total	\$2,518	\$2,474	0

¹ No peer review costs will be incurred in fiscal year 2008 because RSA plans to fund applications approved for funding, but not funded, in the fiscal year 2007 competition.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The primary purpose of this program is to initiate recreational programs that will continue on their own after Federal funding ends. Grantees are required to provide an increased level of support from non-Federal sources over their 3-year project period. RSA measures the success of this program through the percentage of projects in operation 1, 2, and 3 years after Federal funding ceases. In fiscal year 2005, 78 percent of the 25 projects that received their last year of Federal support during fiscal years 2002 through 2004 were still in operation and providing recreational services to individuals with disabilities. In fiscal year 2006, 79 percent of the 33 projects that received their last year of funding during 2003 through 2005 were still in operation and providing recreational services to individuals with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration has not conducted any third party evaluations of this program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 509)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
	\$16,201	\$16,201	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program supports a statewide system to protect the legal and human rights of individuals with disabilities who are ineligible for protection and advocacy (P&A) services provided under Part C of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act), and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, or who need P&A services that are beyond the scope of the Client Assistance Program. The purpose of this program is to provide assistance and information to eligible individuals with disabilities and conduct advocacy to ensure the protection of their rights under Federal law. States may use these funds to plan and carry out P&A programs for eligible individuals with disabilities and to develop outreach strategies to inform individuals with disabilities of their rights.

Funds must be set aside under this program for two activities before awarding grants to eligible States and outlying areas with the remaining appropriation. If the appropriation is equal to or exceeds \$5.5 million, the Secretary must first set aside between 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent of the amount appropriated for training and technical assistance to eligible systems established under this program. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Act) requires that in any year in which the total appropriation exceeds \$10.5 million, the Secretary must award \$50,000 to the eligible system established under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act to serve the American Indian consortium. The Secretary then distributes the remainder of the appropriation to the eligible systems within the States and outlying areas on a population basis after satisfying minimum allocations. The fiscal year 2007 allotments were based on the July 1, 2005 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2005. The fiscal year 2008 allotments are based on the July 1, 2006 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2006. The fiscal year 2009 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2007 population estimates released on December 27, 2007.

The Act also requires the Secretary to increase the minimum allotments for States and outlying areas by a percentage not greater than the percentage increase in the total amount appropriated for this program for the previous fiscal year. The Act establishes a minimum allotment of \$100,000 for 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. The outlying areas receive a minimum allotment of \$50,000. The program is current-funded but States and outlying

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

areas may carry over unobligated Federal funds for an additional year.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$16,790
2005.....	16,656
2006.....	16,489
2007.....	16,489
2008.....	16,201

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$16.201 million for the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program in fiscal year 2009, the same as the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. Federal support for PAIR ensures that States can provide assistance and information to eligible individuals to ensure the protection of their rights under Federal law.

Each year, PAIR programs, with public input, must develop a 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 define the issues that PAIR will address during the year, whether through individual or systemic advocacy. During fiscal year 2006, PAIR programs reported representing 17,345 individuals and responding to 53,957 requests for information or referral. Of the cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, the greatest number of specified issues involved education (20 percent), employment (11 percent) and government benefits/services (14 percent). Because PAIR programs cannot address all issues facing individuals with disabilities solely through individual advocacy, they seek to change public and private policies and practices that present barriers to the rights of individuals with disabilities, utilizing negotiations and class action litigation. In fiscal year 2006, 51 out of the 57 PAIR programs (89 percent) reported that these activities resulted in changes in policies and practices benefiting individuals with disabilities.

An example of PAIR activities during fiscal year 2006 involved the District of Columbia's University Legal Services Protection and Advocacy (ULS-P&A), which has advocated for community-based services and equipment for people with disabilities who are discharged from local hospitals. At one hospital in particular, the only home health care available is provided by a Medicare agency, which does not provide ongoing routine attendant or nursing care to people living independently without live-in caregivers. In September 2006, ULS-P&A urged the hospital to expand the range of home care services available to patients in order to reduce the need for admissions to nursing homes.

In addition, ULS-P&A successfully represented a public housing tenant who relied on a motorized wheelchair and lived in an inaccessible apartment. The tenant had submitted numerous requests dating back to 2002 for transfer to a wheelchair-accessible unit for herself and her grandson, but the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) never acted on her request or took any steps to accommodate the family. During the litigation against DCHA, ULS-

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

P&A submitted a declaration from the consumer regarding her prior requests for accessible housing, and moved for immediate relief, arguing that DCHA's failure to act upon the consumer's requests was indefensible. DCHA offered the consumer and her family a fully wheelchair-accessible public housing unit and they moved within weeks.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	53,957	53,957	53,957
Individuals provided case services	17,345	17,345	17,345

Note: Data for fiscal years 2007 through 2009 are projected from actual data collected for fiscal year 2006. Data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in April of 2008.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To provide assistance and information to individuals with disabilities eligible for the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights program and conduct advocacy to ensure the protection of their rights under Federal law.

Objective: *Identify problem areas requiring systemic change and engage in systemic activities to address those problems.*

Measure: The percentage of PAIRs that reported that their systemic advocacy resulted in a change in policy or practice.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	77	86
2005	79	89
2006	80	84
2007	83	
2008	83	
2009	83	

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

Assessment of progress: Because PAIR programs cannot address all issues facing individuals with disabilities solely through individual advocacy, they seek to change public and private policies and practices that present barriers to the rights of individuals with disabilities, utilizing negotiations and class action litigation. Of the 57 PAIRs, 49 reported successful systemic change in fiscal year 2004, 51 in fiscal year 2005, and 48 reported success on this measure in fiscal year 2006. The Department increased the targets for fiscal year 2007 through 2009 from 81 percent to 83 percent because the program has exceeded established targets since 2003. Fiscal year 2007 data will be available in April of 2008.

Other Performance Information

In 1998, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) contracted for an independent evaluation of the PAIR program in order to learn more about the services each PAIR is providing to individuals with disabilities and how each PAIR grantee establishes its annual priorities. PAIRs reported considerable difficulties in trying to serve the large numbers of persons with disabilities who are eligible for the program. PAIR staff could not estimate how many individuals eligible for PAIR go unserved but believe the number to be significant.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Projects with industry

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI, Part A)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): 0¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$19,197	0	-\$19,197

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. No appropriations language or new authorizing legislation is sought.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Projects with Industry (PWI) program is to create and expand job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the participation of business and industry in the rehabilitation process. PWI projects promote the involvement of business and private industry through Business Advisory Councils (BACs) that identify jobs and careers available in the community and provide advice on needed skills and training. 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 the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

This current-funded program provides job development, job placement, and career development services, and, to the extent appropriate, training services to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain or advance in employment in the competitive labor market. Projects must determine eligibility for services in a manner consistent with section 102 of the Rehabilitation Act.

PWI grants are made to a variety of agencies and organizations, including business and industrial corporations, community rehabilitation programs, labor organizations, trade associations, and foundations. Competitive grants are awarded for a period of up to 5 years and may not exceed 80 percent of the total cost of a project. New awards may be made only to projects proposing to serve geographic areas that are unserved or underserved by the PWI program.

PWI grantees must provide to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) an annual evaluation of project operations in accordance with the established program standards and compliance indicators. Data and information contained in the report include the number of individuals with disabilities served, number of individuals with disabilities who achieved a competitive employment outcome, improvement of participants' employment status and earning power following services, and employment retention. In addition, continuation awards may be made only to grantees that are carrying out the provisions of their approved grant application. In order to receive continuation funding for the third and subsequent years, grantees must meet the above requirements and also demonstrate compliance with the performance indicators by submitting data for the most recent complete project year. If a

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Projects with industry

grantee does not demonstrate compliance on the basis of the previous year's data, the grantee has an additional opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the standards by submitting data from the first 6 months of the current project year.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

2004	\$21,799
2005	21,625
2006	19,538
2007	17,293
2008	19,197

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

No funds are requested for the PWI program in fiscal year 2009. The request reflects the Administration's effort to streamline job training programs and eliminate duplicative and overlapping programs. The Administration believes that the PWI program is such a program, because PWI and the much larger Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program serve the same target populations. In addition, the services provided by the PWI program may be provided by the larger VR State Grants program. In fact, many of the individuals served by PWI grantees also receive services under the VR State Grants program.

The program was initiated under the 1968 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act under the demonstration authority in section 304 (d), and was first funded in 1970. When the Act was reauthorized in 1978, the program's authority was moved to the new Title VI, Employment Opportunities for Handicapped Individuals, and the program's requirements were expanded. The program, created to engage the talent and leadership of private industry as partners in the rehabilitation process, authorized jointly financed projects with individual employers and other entities to provide training and placement in realistic work settings. Unfortunately, few private businesses were interested in operating PWI projects. A 1985 Department-funded evaluation of the PWI program found that most PWI projects were operated by traditional rehabilitation service providers and only a small number of projects were operated by the business sector. To ensure the involvement of business and industry in the program, PWI was amended in 1986 to require the establishment of business advisory councils. Since that time, the Business Advisory Council (BAC) has been the distinguishing feature of the PWI program.

Today, the business community is routinely involved in job training and employment programs. In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was enacted with the purpose of consolidating, coordinating, and improving employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs. Recognizing the importance of involving the business sector in job training and employment programs, WIA provided for local workforce investment boards in each State that include business, industry, labor, and other representatives. Two of the major functions of the BAC, identification of job and career availability within the community and the skills necessary to perform the identified jobs and careers, are now functions of the local workforce investment board under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The State VR agency is represented on the local board as a partner of WIA's one-stop delivery system. In addition, since 1992, the VR State agency has been required to have four representatives of business, industry, and labor on its State Rehabilitation Council.

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Projects with industry

The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review conducted in 2004 found that the program design is duplicative of the much larger VR State Grants program, which serves the same target population and provides similar services. A Department-funded evaluation of the PWI program published in December 2003 found that the individuals served by the PWI program do not differ much from those served by VR at the aggregate program level and that typically, PWI projects serve a specific subset of the population served by one or more local VR offices. Typically, PWI is one of several programs operated by a host organization, and the specific role of the PWI project at many, especially larger, grantee organizations is shaped by the other programs available at the host organization.

As the program operates today, the major contribution of PWI projects to the VR system is the provision of job placement services. Few PWI projects currently provide job skill training. Where available, VR agencies often refer their consumers to local PWI projects for job placement services. If funding for the program is eliminated, as proposed, the Department anticipates that State VR agencies will continue to refer individuals to effective PWI programs for placement services. However, like other VR service providers, these projects would be paid directly or by contract for their services by the State VR agency instead of being funded under a Federal PWI grant.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Continuation projects:	\$17,293 ¹	0	0
Number	65	0	0
Average Award	\$266	0	0
New projects:	0	\$18,902	0
Number	0	64	0
Average Award	0	\$295	0
Peer review of new award applications	0	\$103	0
Minority outreach	0	\$192	0

¹ Continuation funds for this program cannot be awarded to projects that are unable to demonstrate compliance with program standards and indicators. In FY 2007, funds amounting to just over \$2,245 thousand were not needed to make planned continuation awards, because six projects did not demonstrate sufficient performance to receive continuation funding and one project declined its FY 2007 award. These funds were transferred to the Demonstration and Training program (section 303 of the Rehabilitation Act).

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the

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progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To facilitate the establishment of partnerships between rehabilitation service providers and business and industry in order to create and expand employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Objective: *Ensure that PWI services (through partnerships with business and industry) result in competitive employment, increased wages, and job retention for individuals with disabilities.*

Measure: Percentage of individuals served who were placed into competitive employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	62.7	61.5
2005	63.0	51.9
2006	63.0	55.8
2007	55.0	
2008	56.0	

Assessment of progress: In response to a recommendation resulting from the program's PART assessment, RSA revised the program's data collection package used for reporting on FY 2005 and beyond to include additional data elements that are comparable to those collected by other job training programs. These data elements included the total number served and number of individuals exiting the program during the reporting period.

The revision of the data collection resulted in an unexpected problem with the reporting of data on the number of individuals served that directly affects the calculation of performance on this measure and the comparability of the FY 2005 data with previous year data. The new data collection requires grantees to report both the total number of individuals served in the reporting period and the number of "new" individuals served in the reporting period. The previous data collection required grantees to report data only on the number of "new" individuals served in the reporting period, but it appears, based on an analysis of 2005 and comparable 2004 data, that many of the grantees had previously been incorrectly reporting all individuals served. The more accurate reporting of individuals served in the new data collection resulted in a significant reduction in the number of "new" individuals served in FY 2005 as compared to previous years. To correct for this problem, the FY 2005 "placement rate" has been calculated as the percentage of individuals served who were placed into competitive employment of the total number of individuals served by the projects during the reporting period. This change in calculation resulted in a significantly lower placement rate as compared to previous years. The fiscal year 2007 target was adjusted to reflect the change in the calculation of the measure. No target is shown for FY 2009 because the program is proposed for termination.

In FY 2006, 94 percent of the 79 PWI projects in operation completed the first year of their grant and 6 percent completed their third and final year. The projects served a total of 7,512 individuals with disabilities and placed 4,189 of those individuals (55.8 percent) in competitive employment. Fiscal year 2007 data are expected to be available in February 2008.

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In assessing program performance, it should be noted that there is wide variation among grantees in the data reported and in their performance. For example, although the average number of placements per project was 53, the number ranged from 1 to 231 with a median of 41. Project placement rates ranged from 5.9 percent to 86.8 percent with a median of 56.0 percent. Similarly, while the average number served per project was 93, the number ranged from 16 to 292 with a median of 76.

The Department has added a new outcome measure that will measure the percentage of PWI participants exiting the program who are placed in competitive employment. Data to support this indicator were collected in the fiscal year 2006 reporting period. However, there are inconsistencies in the FY 2006 data that suggest that the projects did not collect and report the data accurately. Grantees have been provided technical assistance to address the problem. In addition, instructions for completing the data collection instrument are being revised to further clarify how data on program exits are to be reported.

Measure: Average increase in weekly earnings in dollars of individuals who are placed in competitive employment.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	\$233	\$247
2005	\$238	\$253
2006	\$245	\$248
2007	\$248	
2008	\$250	

Assessment of progress: In fiscal year 2006, the average change in earnings for participants placed in competitive employment from the time of project entry was \$248, a slight decrease from the level reported for 2005. The average change in earnings reported by projects ranged from a decrease of \$152 to an increase of \$546, with a median of a \$256 increase. The program continues to exceed the targets set for this measure. Fiscal year 2007 data are expected to be available in February 2008. No target is shown for FY 2009 because the program is proposed for termination.

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Efficiency Measures

Measure: The percentage of Projects With Industry projects whose annual average cost per placement is no more than \$11,000.

Year	Target	Actual
2006		73.4
2007	73	
2008	75	

Two efficiency measures have been established for the PWI program. These include average annual cost per placement and cost per participant. For the purpose of this measure, the annual cost per placement is calculated as annual Federal project funds divided by the total number of placements in the reporting period. This indicator measures the percentage of PWI projects whose average annual cost per placement is no more than \$11,000. The Department has collected baseline data and set performance targets. In FY 2006, 73.4 percent of the projects had a cost per placement of no more than \$11,000. The average annual cost per placement for the 79 projects operating in fiscal year 2006 was \$4,662. However, the annual cost per placement ranged from \$1,222 to \$125,174, with a median of \$5,952. Fiscal year 2007 data are expected to be available in February 2008. No target is shown for FY 2009 because the program is proposed for termination.

Measure: The percentage of Projects With Industry projects whose annual average cost per participant is no more than \$4,500.

Year	Target	Actual
2006		77.2
2007	Set baseline	
2008	Maintain baseline	

PWI is part of the Job Training Common Measure initiative. The common efficiency measure for job training programs is the cost per participant. Cost per participant is calculated as annual Federal project funds divided by the total number of persons served during the reporting period. Historically, the program has only collected data on the number of new individuals served under the program in the reporting period. The data collection instrument was revised in 2005 to report all individuals served by the program during the reporting period. This indicator measures the percentage of PWI projects whose average annual cost per participant is no more than \$4,500. The Department is collecting baseline data and will set performance targets based on fiscal year 2006 and 2007 data. For fiscal year 2006, the average annual cost per participant was \$2,599, with a range of \$917 to \$16,667, and a median of \$2,886. Fiscal year 2007 data are expected to be available in February 2008. No target is shown for FY 2009 because the program is proposed for termination.

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Projects with industry

Other Performance Information

Grantee Performance On Program Compliance Indicators

PWI grantees must provide an annual evaluation of project operations in accordance with the established program standards and compliance indicators. In order to receive continuation funding for the third and subsequent years, grantees must demonstrate compliance with the performance indicators established in program regulations by submitting data for the most recent complete project year. Program compliance indicators place an emphasis on services to individuals who are considered most in need of PWI services due to their impaired capacity to obtain competitive employment. In 2006, approximately 86.3 percent (6,482) of the total number of individuals served and 88.7 percent (3,717) of the total number of individuals placed in competitive employment were individuals with significant disabilities. In 2006, 75.8 percent (5,694) of total individuals served and 78.5 percent (3,290) of the total number of individuals placed had been unemployed at least 6 months at the time of project entry.

In FY 2006, about 34 percent (27) of the projects did not pass the compliance indicators. About 81 percent of these failing projects did not pass the placement indicator, a primary indicator. To pass the placement indicator, a project must place at least 55 percent of the individuals it serves into competitive employment. If a grantee does not demonstrate compliance on the basis of the previous year's data, the grantee has an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the standards by submitting data from the first 6 months of the current project year. Most of these projects were able to demonstrate compliance after submitting data from the first 6 months of the current fiscal year. However, six projects did not demonstrate sufficient performance and did not receive continuation funding in 2007.

Evaluation of The Projects With Industry Program

Assessment of the PWI program, as also noted in the recent PART assessment, is limited by the credibility of the data. In a Department-funded evaluation of the PWI program published in December 2003, the evaluators documented numerous concerns with the data collected and reported by PWI projects. In their review of participant files maintained by the 30 PWI projects visited during the study, the evaluators frequently encountered files lacking essential information, raising doubts about the quality and accuracy of the data that projects submit in compliance indicators reports. The project survey asked all respondents to report "the number of persons who achieved placement (i.e., a competitive employment outcome for a minimum of 90 days) during FY 2001," information identical to that required by the compliance indicators. A comparison of data submitted by projects on the two forms (i.e., project survey and compliance indicator reports), each of which asks for data from FY 2001, found that 19 of the 92 responding projects reported different numbers for persons placed during the year, including several that differed by more than 50 percent. The final report states that the fact "that one-fifth of the projects provided inconsistent information on such a fundamentally important variable as the number of persons placed raises serious questions about the accuracy of other data reported in compliance indicator submissions."

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Projects with industry

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The PWI program was assessed using the PART in 2004 and received an overall rating of "Adequate." As stated previously, the PART assessment found that the program design is duplicative of the much larger VR State Grants program, which serves the same target populations and provides similar services. Other identified weaknesses related to information on program performance. While the program had annual and long-term measures, targets, and annual data, the assessment also found short-comings in the quality of the data. For example, a 2003 evaluation study of the program found that the data are not credible and that projects' "data collection practices continue to undermine the program's ability to accurately measure its achievements." In addition, the assessment noted that data reported by grantees contained numerous errors.

The PART assessment also found that at the aggregate level, the program's outcomes appear to be comparable to those of the VR services program with respect to the percentage of persons who obtain employment and the average hourly earnings of those individuals. However, it was difficult to compare PWI performance with performance on similar measures for other vocational rehabilitation employment programs because its employment measure is calculated differently. In calculating the placement rate, PWI uses a similar numerator (individuals who maintain employment for 90 days), but uses a different denominator (i.e., number served rather than number exiting the program after receiving services). In addition, the computation for persons served only includes individuals entering the program during the reporting period and does not include individuals receiving services who entered the program in the previous reporting period. The assessment also found that RSA has had difficulty meeting the statutory requirement to conduct annual onsite compliance reviews of at least 15 percent of grantees and did not conduct site reviews in fiscal year 2004.

Program recommendations resulting from the PART assessment and progress on implementing those recommendations are provided below.

- *Implement a plan to improve grantee data collection and reporting.* In January 2005, RSA distributed an Information Memorandum to provide technical assistance to PWI grantees on data collection, including a model intake form developed by a currently-funded PWI grantee and modified by RSA program staff and information on an online database system developed by a grantee. RSA also revised and updated the PWI Web-based reporting system to incorporate additional edit checks and the new data elements. In addition, RSA sent out guidance and instructions on form completion and conducted follow-up conference calls in January 2006 with PWI grantees to discuss data/reporting requirements, provide technical assistance, and respond to grantee questions. Program staff reviewed the FY 2006 data submitted by grantees focusing on the reasonableness and consistency of data reported by individual grantees and contacted grantees to resolve data anomalies. A number of grantees continued to have difficulties collecting and accurately reporting data on individuals exiting the program. The Department has revised the program's data collection to clarify reporting on program exits and expects to use the new forms for new grantees in time for the 2009 reporting cycle. This spring, staff will review the FY 2007 data recently submitted by grantees and determine if additional actions are needed to improve reporting.
- *Revise program measures to be comparable to other job training programs and develop a strategy for collecting data to support the Administration's Job Training common measures.* The Department revised the program's data collection package to include data on total

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number served and number of individuals exiting the program. The data on the number of individuals exiting the program will allow the Department to calculate a measure of the competitive employment rate that can be compared with those for other RSA employment programs. Data on total number served will provide a count of both individuals who entered the project during the reporting period and those from the previous reporting cycle who continued to receive services. These data will be used in assessing performance using the common job training measure cost per participant. The new data elements were collected beginning with the FY 2005 reporting cycle. However, staff discovered numerous problems in the reporting of the new data items. Grantees' reporting of these data items improved in FY 2006. However, as stated above, grantees continued to have difficulties collecting and accurately reporting data on individuals exiting the program. As a result, the FY 2006 data on program exits is not sufficiently valid for use in measuring program performance.

A recent study found significant barriers to implementing the job training common measures in the PWI program, including grantees' capacity for data collection and reporting and grantees' ability to access and use Unemployment Insurance Wage (UI) Records. The report suggests that supplemental data sources are the most practical alternative due to grantees' difficulties in accessing and using UI Records. The Department is working with OMB to develop a feasible approach to collecting comparable data to evaluate the long-term impact of PWI services on the retention of jobs and earnings of program participants. A revised PWI data collection that would provide more comparable data will be implemented for use by the estimated 65 new projects to be awarded in FY 2008. These projects will report on their first-year performance (FY 2009 fiscal year) in December of 2009.

- *Improve use and transparency of project data to manage and improve the program, including posting summary analyses and key data on the Department's website.* Aggregate program performance data are now available to the public on the Department's website (see <http://www.ed.gov/programs/rsapwi/performance.html>). At the end of fiscal year 2005, the Department awarded a contract under the Program Improvement program to develop the capacity of RSA to effectively use performance data in managing and improving program performance at the national and grantee level. Changes to RSA's Management Information System (MIS) now allow project staff to query, generate reports, and review grantee-reported data. RSA staff used FY 2006 grantee efficiency measure data to identify low-performing grantees needing technical assistance. In addition, project performance is discussed during quarterly conference calls between grantees and program officers. The public can access published program data in the MIS through the Department's website at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/rsapwi/performance.html>.
- Develop and implement a plan to meet the program's statutory requirement for onsite compliance reviews. In response to this recommendation, a monitoring plan was developed to meet the program's statutory requirement to conduct onsite compliance reviews of 15 percent of the projects. In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, program staff conducted all of the required onsite reviews. Grantees have 30 days to submit a corrective action plan in response to deficiencies noted in their monitoring reports. The Department plans to continue to conduct the required reviews in FY 2008 and future years.

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Supported employment State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI, Part B)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): 0¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$29,181	0	-\$29,181

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. No appropriations language or new authorizing legislation is sought.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Supported Employment (SE) State grants program is to assist States in developing collaborative programs with appropriate public and private nonprofit organizations to provide supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Under this formula grant program, State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies receive supplemental funds to assist VR consumers with the most significant disabilities in achieving the employment outcome of supported employment. The term "supported employment" includes both competitive work and working in an integrated setting toward competitive work. Individuals in competitive employment must earn at the least the minimum wage.

Supported employment placements are achieved by augmenting short-term vocational rehabilitation services (supported employment services) with ongoing support provided by other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations (extended services). State VR agencies provide time-limited services for a period not to exceed 18 months, unless a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been established in the individualized plan for employment (IPE). Once this period has ended, the State VR agency must arrange for "extended services" provided by other appropriate State agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources for the duration of that employment.

An individual's potential for supported employment must be considered as part of the assessment to determine eligibility for the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program. The requirements pertaining to individuals with an employment goal of supported employment are the same in both the Title I VR State Grants program and the Title VI-B SE State Grants program. A State VR agency may support an individual's supported employment services solely with VR State Grant funds, or it may fund the cost of SE services in whole or in part with funds under the SE State Grants program. Title VI-B SE funds may only be used to provide supported employment services and are essentially used to supplement Title I funds.

To be eligible for this current-funded formula grant program, States must submit a supplement to their Title I VR State Grants program plan. States may carry over unobligated funds to the next fiscal year. Funds are distributed on the basis of population, except that no State receives

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less than \$300,000, or one-third of 1 percent of the sums appropriated, whichever is greater. The minimum allotment for Territories is one-eighth of 1 percent of the sums appropriated.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2004	\$37,680
2005	37,379
2006	29,700
2007	29,700
2008	29,181

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

Consistent with the Administration's initiative to reform the Federal government's overlapping training and employment programs, no funds are requested for the SE State Grants program. The Administration recognizes that supported employment can be an effective strategy in assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain competitive employment in integrated settings. However, supported employment is now an integral part of the VR State Grants program, and there is no longer a need for a separate funding stream to ensure the provision of such services.

The SE State Grants program was first authorized under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 to provide supplemental grants to assist States in developing collaborative programs with public agencies and private nonprofit organizations to provide training and time limited post-employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. At that time, supported employment was a promising new practice in employing individuals who traditionally would not have achieved employment in the integrated labor market. Initially, many rehabilitation professionals were skeptical about its feasibility and concerned about the potential costs. As a supplemental source of dedicated funds, the SE State Grants program provided an incentive for State VR agencies to provide supported employment services.

In addition, from 1986 to 1996, the Department of Education funded a number of supported employment discretionary grant projects designed to further develop and expand the provision of supported employment services. These included 54 State-wide systems change projects, 2 national scope projects, 2 national technical assistance projects, and 66 community-based supported employment projects. Finally, in fiscal year 1997, the Department awarded a 3-year cooperative agreement to establish a Supported Employment Consortium whose purpose was to identify and disseminate replicable policies, models, and supported employment practices and provide technical assistance. These efforts, along with other State and local efforts, resulted in a significant increase in the number of individuals receiving supported employment services through the VR State Grants program between 1992 and 1999. In fiscal year 1992, State VR agencies were providing supported employment services (including those funded with Title I and Title VI funds) to about 39,000 individuals. By fiscal year 1999, over 88,000 VR consumers were receiving supported employment services.

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Supported employment State grants

The SE State Grants program has accomplished its goal. State VR agencies recognize supported employment as an integral part of the VR program and a viable employment option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. State VR agencies continue to spend Title I funds (including State matching funds) to provide supported employment services for those individuals who require such services to participate in the integrated labor market. Since State VR agencies must give priority to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, the Department does not expect the number of individuals receiving supported employment services to decline as a result of this budget proposal. The Department will continue to monitor the number and outcomes of individuals receiving supported employment services.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Individuals with a supported employment IPE goal who received services and exited the program.	40,100	40,100	40,100
Employment outcomes: ¹	24,200	24,200	24,200
Supported employment outcomes ²	14,680	14,680	14,680
Employment without supports in an integrated setting ³	9,230	9,230	9,230
Other employment outcomes ⁴	290	290	290
Minority outreach	\$297	\$292	0

Note: Estimates are based on actual 2005 and 2006 closure data from the RSA-911 Case Service Report for all VR consumers with a supported employment goal identified on their IPE (including consumers who received support for SE services under Title I and/or under Title VI-B).

¹ Includes employment outcomes for VR consumers who had or are estimated to have a supported employment goal.

² Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal, the number who were employed in an integrated setting and receiving ongoing support services.

³ Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal, the number who met the employment outcome criteria for the VR State Grants program but who were not receiving ongoing support services.

⁴ Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal, the number who met the employment outcome criteria for the VR State Grants program who were either self-employed, employed in a Business Enterprise Program, a family worker, or a homemaker.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years for this program and the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by these programs.

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Supported employment State grants

Goal: Individuals with significant disabilities with a goal of supported employment will achieve high quality employment.

Objective: Increase the competitive employment outcomes of individuals with significant disabilities who receive supported employment services.

Measure: Of those individuals with significant disabilities who had a supported employment goal and achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who obtained competitive employment, including individuals who receive supported employment services funded under the VR State Grants program and/or the Supported Employment State Grants program.

Year	Target	Actual
2004	78	93
2005	93	93
2006	93	94
2007	93	
2008	94	

Assessment of progress: 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 toward competitive work (receipt of the minimum wage). The percentage of individuals with a supported employment goal and achieving an employment outcome who are working in competitive employment has increased significantly since the 1998 baseline level of 69 percent, and performance targets have been exceeded or met each year. Performance on this measure improved significantly after 2001 due, in part, to the fact that, beginning in fiscal year 2002, State VR agencies could no longer consider individuals who are working in non-integrated settings (e.g. extended employment or “sheltered employment”) to have achieved an employment outcome under the VR program. As a result, targets were increased for fiscal year 2005 and beyond. No targets are shown for 2009 because the program is proposed for termination.

Data from the FY 2006 RSA 911 Case Service Report show that a total of 40,082 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. About 58 percent of those individuals 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.

In Fiscal year 2006, approximately 24,126 individuals, or 60 percent of individuals whose service records were closed after receiving services who had a SE goal, including both consumers who received support for SE services under Title I and under Title VI-B, achieved an employment outcome. Of those who achieved an employment outcome, 94 percent of individuals with a supported employment goal achieved a competitive employment outcome. Fiscal year 2006 data also show that nearly 61 percent of the individuals who had a SE goal and achieved an employment outcome obtained a supported employment outcome (employment in the integrated labor market and receiving ongoing supports) and about 92 percent of those obtaining a

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Supported employment State grants

supported employment outcome were in competitive employment. Data for FY 2007 is expected to be available in February 2008.

Data indicate there is significant variation among State agencies in the percentage of individuals who have SE as an employment goal. For example, RSA-911 2006 State data show that the percentage of individuals with a SE goal of all individuals whose service records were closed after receiving services ranged from 0 to 30 percent. These data also show that, for 9 of the 56 State VR agencies, excluding agencies for the blind, 20 percent or more of all individuals receiving services had a SE goal, while for 14 of the agencies, less than 5 percent of all individuals receiving services had a SE goal.

Efficiency Measures

The efficiency measure developed by the Department for the Supported Employment State Grants program examines the percentage of State VR agencies whose cost per supported employment outcome is within a specified range. For the purpose of this measure, the annual cost per outcome will be calculated by dividing the amount of a State agency's allocation under this program by the total number of supported employment outcomes. The Department will use fiscal year 2007 data to establish a baseline and performance range, and set performance targets.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The Supported Employment State Grants program was assessed using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) in 2007 and received an overall rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The program has an annual measure and has met its targets, but needs to develop a long-term measure and implement its efficiency measure. The PART assessment found that the program has helped to address the need for supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities, but duplicates activities that can be provided through the much-larger Vocational Rehabilitation State grants program. Supported employment is now an integral part of the VR program and it is no longer necessary to maintain a separate supplementary grant program. In general, program data and evaluations show that the outcomes of individuals who receive supported employment (SE) services compare favorably to other VR consumers with significant disabilities. A study of the VR Services Program found that a year after program exit, 84 percent of those achieving an SE outcome were still working, compared with 83 percent of other VR consumers with significant disabilities.

The Department plans to take the following actions to address PART findings and improve the performance of the program:

- *Develop additional measures, including a long-term measure that adequately assesses the impact of the program; collect efficiency measure data; and set targets.* An efficiency measure that examines the cost per supported employment outcome has been developed. The next steps are to collect and analyze the data and establish performance criteria and targets for this measure. RSA is also developing a long-term performance measure to assess the impact of the program. The Department expects that these actions will be completed by June 2008.

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Supported employment State grants

- *Improve the collection and reporting of supported employment-related data.* The Department collects and compiles a variety of SE-related data from the RSA-911 Case Service Report and the RSA-2 Cost Report that are reported by State VR agencies on an annual basis. Recent monitoring visits and analyses of State data revealed inconsistencies in how State agencies report SE-related data in the R-911 Case Service Report. In response, RSA has issued guidance clarifying the reporting of employment status at closure with respect to supported employment outcomes. Additional changes will be made to improve the collection of SE-related data as RSA begins to revise the R-911 data collection during 2008.
- *Improve the use and transparency of national and State data to manage and improve the program.* Program performance data will be used in conducting State VR agency FY 2008 onsite monitoring. In FY 2008, RSA also plans to include key SE data in the State VR annual review reports that are posted on the Department's website at the end of the fiscal year.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Independent living

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII, Parts B and C, and Chapter 2)

Independent living State grants:	Chapter 1, Part B
Centers for independent living:	Chapter 1, Part C
Services for older individuals who are blind:	Chapter 2

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
Independent living State grants	\$22,193	\$22,193	0
Centers for independent living	73,334	73,334	0
Services for older individuals who are blind	32,320	32,320	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the independent living programs is to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and to integrate these individuals into the mainstream of American society. Independent living programs provide financial assistance to provide, expand, and improve independent living services; develop and support Statewide networks of centers for independent living; and improve working relationships among State independent living rehabilitation programs, centers for independent living, Statewide Independent Living Councils, Rehabilitation Act programs outside of Title VII, and other relevant Federal and non-Federal programs.

The independent living programs are current-funded. However, the Act contains a provision allowing all Title VII grantees to carry over funds that are not obligated and expended by the recipient for an additional fiscal year. States participating in the State Grants and Older Blind programs must match 10 percent of their grant with non-Federal cash or in-kind resources in the year for which the Federal funds are appropriated.

To be eligible for financial assistance under the Independent Living State Grants or Centers for Independent Living program, States are required to establish a Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Each State must also submit a State Plan for Independent Living that is jointly developed and signed by the director of the designated State vocational rehabilitation unit(s) (DSU) and the chairperson of the SILC.

The **Independent Living State Grants** program supports formula grants to States, with funds allotted based on total population. The fiscal year 2008 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2006 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2006. The fiscal year 2009 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2007 population estimates released

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Independent living

in December 2007. States may use these funds to provide resources to support the operation of the SILC and for one or more of the following purposes:

- to demonstrate ways to expand and improve independent living services;
- to provide independent living services;
- to support the operation of centers for independent living;
- to increase the capacity of public or nonprofit agencies and organizations and other entities to develop comprehensive approaches or systems for providing independent living services;
- to conduct studies and analyses, gather information, develop model policies and procedures, and present information, approaches, strategies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Federal, State, and local policymakers;
- to provide training on the independent living philosophy; and
- to provide outreach to populations who are unserved or underserved by programs under this title, including minority groups and urban and rural populations.

The **Centers for Independent Living** (CIL) program provides grants for consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private nonprofit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of independent living services. At a minimum, centers are required to provide the core services of information and referral, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and individual and systems advocacy. Most centers are also actively involved in one or more of the following activities: community planning and decisionmaking; school-based peer counseling, role modeling, and skills training; working with local governments and employers to open and facilitate employment opportunities; interacting with local, State, and Federal legislators; and staging recreational events that integrate individuals with disabilities with their non-disabled peers.

A population-based formula determines the total amount that is available for discretionary grants to centers in each State. In most cases, the Department awards funds directly to centers for independent living. If State funding for CIL operation exceeds the level of Federal CIL funding in any fiscal year, the State may apply for the authority to award grants under this program through its DSU. There are currently only two States, Massachusetts and Minnesota, that are both eligible and have elected to manage their own CIL programs.

In addition to funding centers for independent living, the Department must award between 1.8 and 2 percent of the funds appropriated under this part for grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to provide training and technical assistance with respect to planning, developing, conducting, administering, and evaluating centers for independent living. Each State must submit an annual performance report providing information regarding the centers' and SILCs' most pressing training and technical assistance needs.

The Rehabilitation Act establishes a set of standards and assurances that centers for independent living must meet and requires the Department to develop and publish indicators of minimum compliance with the standards. These standards and assurances are used in evaluating compliance in the following areas: philosophy, including consumer control and equal access; provision of services on a cross-disability basis; support of the development and

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achievement of the independent living goals chosen by consumers; advocacy to increase the quality of community options for independent living; provision of independent living core services; resource development; and community capacity-building activities, such as community advocacy, technical assistance, and outreach. Each year, the Department must conduct compliance reviews of at least 15 percent of the centers and one-third of the designated State units funded under this part.

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to award grants to any eligible agency that had been awarded a grant as of September 30, 1997. In effect, all centers funded by the end of fiscal year 1997 are "grandfathered in" and thus guaranteed continued funding as long as they continue to meet program and fiscal standards and assurances.

The **Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind** program supports services to assist individuals aged 55 or older whose recent severe visual impairment makes competitive employment extremely difficult to obtain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. Funds are used to provide independent living services, conduct activities that will improve or expand services for these individuals, and conduct activities to improve public understanding of the problems of these individuals. Services are designed to help persons served under this program to adjust to their blindness by increasing their ability to care for their individual needs. Services provided under this program are typically not covered under private insurance or Medicaid.

Grantees are State vocational rehabilitation agencies for persons who are blind and visually impaired or, in States with no separate agency for persons who are blind, State combined vocational rehabilitation agencies. When appropriations for this program exceed \$13 million—as they have since fiscal year 2000—awards are distributed to States according to a formula based on the population of individuals who are 55 years of age or older. The fiscal year 2008 and 2009 allotments are based on the resident population of individuals 55 years of age or older as of April 1, 2007. 2009 allotments will be revised when new population estimates by age group become available.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
State grants	
2004.....	\$22,020
2005.....	22,816
2006.....	22,588
2007.....	22,588
2008.....	22,193

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	(\$000s)
Centers for independent living	
2004.....	\$73,563
2005.....	75,392
2006.....	74,638
2007.....	74,638
2008.....	73,334
Services for older individuals who are blind	
2004.....	\$31,811
2005.....	33,227
2006.....	32,895
2007.....	32,895
2008.....	32,320

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests level funding of \$22.193 million for the Independent Living State Grants (State Grants) program, \$73.334 million for the Centers for Independent Living program (CIL), and \$32.32 million for the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind (Older Blind) program.

State Grants and Centers for Independent Living

The Administration requests \$22.193 million for the State Grants program and \$73.334 million for the CIL program, the same as the fiscal year 2008 appropriation. Funds requested for the State Grants program would continue the Department's support of 78 designated State units (DSUs) that use grant funds to support Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), provide independent living services in unserved and underserved geographic areas, promote coordination among centers for independent living, and provide assistance to new centers for independent living. An estimated 60 percent of State Grant funds are used to provide independent living services, either directly or through grants and contracts with centers for independent living and other providers. These services include skills training, communication services, and the provision of assistive devices and equipment.

The Administration's request for the CIL program would support the continuation of 340 existing centers. Funding has increased by nearly 56 percent from fiscal year 2000 to 2008, enabling the CIL program to support new centers and increase support for existing centers to better serve unserved and underserved populations. At the requested funding level, support for existing centers would continue, but the Department would not hold a competition for new centers.

Data from the revised reporting requirements are now available for the fiscal year 2006 project period for both the State Grants and CIL program. The reporting requirements for grantees have been revised to address the need for outcome measures identified in 2003 during the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review. The new reporting system will be

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supplemented by a renewed commitment to grant monitoring through on-site reviews. The program authority requires on-site reviews of 15 percent of all CIL grantees each year, but the program has not met this requirement for several years. As part of its Monitoring Redesign Initiative and administrative restructuring, RSA revised its site review protocol and realigned personnel to make sufficient staff and other resources available for meeting this requirement. In 2007, however, RSA conducted only 14 site reviews, significantly fewer than the statutory requirement. In 2008, RSA is scheduled to conduct 20 site reviews, approximately 40 percent of the statutory requirement.

Older Blind

The Administration requests level funding of \$32.32 million for the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program for fiscal year 2009. According to the 2000 census, 14.2 percent (about 4.7 million) of individuals 65 and older report having trouble with vision or hearing. The occurrence of a sensory disability was more than six times greater among older adults than working-age people. For this reason, the Administration believes a sustained investment in this program is warranted.

When appropriations for this program exceed \$13 million—as they have since fiscal year 2000—awards for this program are distributed to States according to a formula based on the population of individuals who are 55 years of age or older. At the requested funding level, an estimated 16 States would receive the minimum award of \$225,000, and the Territories would continue to be funded at the minimum level.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Independent Living State Grants:			
Number of Grantees	78	78	78
Minimum State award	\$301	\$296	\$296
Average State award	\$428	\$420	\$420
Minority outreach	\$226	\$222	\$222
Centers for Independent Living:			
Minimum State Allocation	\$785	\$785	\$785
States over the minimum allotment	28	28	28
Average State allocation	\$1,381	\$1,357	\$1,357
Largest State allocation	\$7,350	\$7,164	\$7,134
Minority outreach	\$746	\$733	\$733
Training and Technical Assistance	\$1,502	\$1,467	\$1,467
Peer review	\$7	\$10 ¹	0

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind:			
Number of Grantees	56	56	56
Average State award	\$623	\$612	\$612
Minority outreach	\$329	\$323	\$323

¹ No eligible nonprofits applied under the FY 2007 competition for a CIL grant for American Samoa, so the DSU administered the CIL funds for this area in 2007. RSA will solicit applications from eligible nonprofits again in 2008.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

Goal: To promote and support a philosophy of independent living—including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy—in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

Objective: *Through the provision of IL services (including the four IL core services), increase the percentage of consumers who report having access to services needed to improve their ability to live more independently and participate fully in their communities.*

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers consumers who report having access to previously unavailable appropriate accommodations to receive health care services, as a result of direct services provided by an Independent Living Center (including referral to another service provider).		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	66
2007	66	
2008	67	
2009	69	

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Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers consumers who report having access to previously unavailable assistive technology which results in increased independence in at least one significant life area, as a result of direct services provided by an Independent Living Center (including referral to another service provider).

Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	70
2007	70	
2008	71	
2009	73	

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers consumers who report having access to previously unavailable transportation, as a result of direct services provided by an Independent Living Center (including referral to another service provider).

Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	81
2007	81	
2008	83	
2009	84	

Assessment of progress: For these new measures, CIL grantees are required to report annually on the percentage of their consumers who report—as result of services provided by a CIL (including referral to another service provider), DSU, or DSU grantee or contractor—having access to previously unavailable transportation, appropriate accommodations to receive health care services, and/or assistive technology resulting in increased independence in at least one significant life area. The denominator is determined by the grantee based on the number of consumers who have goals specified in their Independent Living Plans that require measurable progress on these intermediate outcomes (access to transportation, health care services, and/or assistive technology) for their achievement. These are not the only outcomes of interest to CIL grantees or consumers, but RSA believes that a significant portion of CIL activities are directly related to these outcomes and that improved performance on these outcomes will result in increased independence for CIL consumers overall. Data for 2007 will be available in May 2008.

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Center consumers who move out of institutions into a community-based setting through the provision of Independent Living services (including the four independent living core services).

Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	54
2007	55	
2008	55	
2009	56	

Assessment of progress: RSA previously measured progress in deinstitutionalization by collecting data on the number of persons with disabilities who moved out of institutions as a result of receiving CIL services, but these data did not capture grantee improvement in this

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area. RSA issued revised guidance for the section 704 reporting requirements in fiscal year 2006 to ensure that the data are valid by clearly defining the outcomes being measured and setting standards for collection and reporting. Progress against the baseline will be assessed for the first time using FY 2007 data expected in May 2008.

Objective: *Increase access to community life for persons with disabilities through the provision of community services.*

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers' staff, board members and/or consumers creating/participating on community committees, in advocacy initiatives, public information campaigns, and/or other community events designed to increase the accessibility to transportation within the community.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	69
2007	69	
2008	70	
2009	71	

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers' staff, board members and/or consumers creating/participating on community committees, advocacy initiatives, public information campaigns, and/or other community events designed to develop relationships with health care providers within the community.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	64
2007	64	
2008	65	
2009	66	

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers' staff, board members and/or consumers creating/participating on community committees, advocacy initiatives, public information campaigns, and/or other community events designed to increase the availability /access to assistive technology within the community.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	56
2007	56	
2008	57	
2009	58	

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Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Centers' staff, board members and/or consumers creating/participating on community committees, advocacy initiatives, public information campaigns, and/or other community events designed to increase the compliance with applicable laws/regulations governing the number of affordable accessible housing units within the community.

Year	Target	Actual
2006	Set a Baseline	67
2007	67	
2008	68	
2009	69	

Assessment of progress: This measure replaces an indicator that measured the number of goals met each year without distinguishing between goals based on the time or level of resources needed to accomplish the goal. Data for 2007 will be available in May 2008.

Objective: *Increase the transparency and efficiency of the State Grants, CIL, and Older Blind programs.*

Measure: The number of months between the due date for Independent Living Center data and the release of the data to the public.

Year	Target	Actual
2004		7
2005	5	6
2006	5	
2007	5	
2008	5	
2009	5	

Assessment of progress: This new measure was developed in response to the PART finding that RSA was not doing enough to make program performance data available in a timely and transparent manner. Grantees are expected to provide the Department with annual performance data 3 months after each performance reporting period ends on September 30.

Objective: *Through the provision of services (either directly or through contracts), increase the percentage of consumers receiving services funded through the Older Blind program who report having access to services needed to improve their ability to live more independently and participate fully in their communities.*

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Measure: The percentage of Independent Living, Title VII, Chapter 2, consumers who have access to previously unavailable assistive technology aids and devices.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	Set a Baseline	48
2006	49	46
2007	50	
2008	52	
2009	54	

Assessment of progress: The program did not meet its performance target for 2006. Since this is a new measure, program staff will monitor grantee performance to see if technical assistance is warranted.

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Title VII, Chapter 2, consumers who report an improvement in activities of daily living skills.		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	Set a Baseline	53
2006	54	52
2007	55	
2008	56	
2009	57	

Assessment of progress: Although the number of consumers receiving training on activities of daily living increased, performance on this measure declined slightly compared to the previous year. Program staff are examining the cause of this decline.

Efficiency Measures

The Department has established two efficiency measures for the CIL program: (1) the number of consumer service records closed with all goals met for every \$10,000 in net operating funds and (2) the number of consumer goals accomplished per \$10,000 in net operating funds. In fiscal year 2007, program staff began pilot testing these measures during site reviews of CIL grantees to see how grantees respond to the measures and how the data can be used to help grantees improve their efficiency. By January 2008, RSA will analyze annual performance data at the grantee level using these measures and begin to work with grantees to use these measures to improve efficiency.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The State Grants and CIL programs underwent a PART review in 2003 for the fiscal year 2005 budget and received a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The PART assessment found that the IL programs collaborate and coordinate effectively with each other, the State units designated to administer IL projects, and Federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration. However, the programs did not have measures that demonstrate progress on

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long-term outcomes. In order to move these programs out of the "Results Not Demonstrated" category, the Department must produce evidence that the programs are effective, either through showing progress toward the long-term goals or rigorous program evaluation findings.

The PART recommendations are listed below in italics, followed by a description of actions the Department has taken and future plans:

- *Devise and implement an improved audit and site visit system to ensure that the agency is meeting its statutory oversight requirements.* RSA conducted 14 site reviews of CILs in fiscal year 2007, well below the 15 percent of grantees required by statute. The statutory requirement was enacted when there were far fewer CILs and may need to be revisited due to the significant increase in the number of grants administered under this program. RSA will conduct at least 20 reviews in FY 2008 and will implement a plan for targeting technical assistance and monitoring resources based on performance data for more efficient oversight with available resources.
- *Conduct periodic and high quality evaluations of each of the IL programs.* The Department is using program improvement funds appropriated under Section 12 of the Rehabilitation Act to develop more reliable methods to gauge consumer satisfaction. RSA will work to develop an evaluation plan for the IL programs by the end of FY 2008.
- *Develop at least one efficiency measure for each IL program.* RSA has established efficiency measures for the CIL program and is developing a reporting tool and methodology to use with these data to identify grantees in need of targeted assistance. By the end of fiscal year 2008, RSA will produce grantee-level efficiency data and analyses and outline the specific steps they will take to help grantees improve their efficiency.
- *Develop long-term performance goals and measures that reflect the four core areas of services and the standards and assurances for the IL State Grants and CIL programs.* The Department has developed annual and long-term performance measures that capture program objectives and revised the annual performance-reporting instrument to collect these data. Data for fiscal year 2006 were used to establish a baseline. RSA worked extensively with grantees to ensure that the data they submitted for the first reporting period were valid. RSA still needs to analyze these data and determine how they can inform program improvements. Progress toward the long-term targets will be assessed beginning with the FY 2007 data, which will be available in May 2008.
- Reduce the time needed to collect and analyze grantee performance reports and make the aggregate data available to the public on the Department's website in an accessible format. The first year of data from the revised section 704 annual performance-reporting instrument was due from grantees on December 31, 2006. RSA published these data on the ED website in May 2007, meeting its goal of publishing data within 5 months of their due date. For the fiscal year 2007 reporting period, the Department has set a target of 5 months from the end of each reporting period for the publication of these performance data on its website. By the end of FY 2008, RSA will make the 2007 data available on its website using the "quick reports" function developed for the VR program that permits comparisons of performance with other similar grantees.

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(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 12(a))

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$622	\$800	+\$178

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Section 12(a) of the Rehabilitation Act authorizes the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide technical assistance and consultative services to public and nonprofit 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 (WIA).

In addition, section 12(a) funds may be used to provide short-term and technical instruction, conduct special demonstrations, develop and disseminate educational or information materials, carry out monitoring, and conduct evaluations.

Program improvement funds are used to support activities that increase program effectiveness, improve accountability, and enhance the Department's ability to address critical areas of national significance in achieving the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act. 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) State Grants program and the provision of services to individuals with disabilities under the Act. This activity is current-funded.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

(\$000s)

2004	\$889
2005	843
2006	835
2007	835
2008	622

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The 2009 budget request for Program Improvement activities is \$800,000, an increase of \$178,000 from the 2008 level. Fiscal year 2009 funds would be used to address technical

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assistance needs identified as a result of monitoring and program improvement activities initiated in fiscal years 2006 and 2007 and implementation of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Performance Plan.

The Department has undertaken two major initiatives in its effort to improve the performance of the VR State Grants program. These include the implementation of a new monitoring process that focuses on the performance of State VR agencies and the development of a strategic performance plan for the VR program. RSA is developing a Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Performance Plan for the VR Program in order to ensure a long-term strategic focus on program performance, performance improvement, and outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities. RSA will use this plan to guide the administration of the VR program and address program challenges. The plan will assist RSA in monitoring progress of the VR program and to provide, appropriate, targeted technical assistance to State agencies toward the achievement of desired outcomes.

The new monitoring process represents a significant departure from past practice. Under the new monitoring process, State VR agencies and RSA collaboratively analyze the agency's performance and identify the areas that need improvement, including the factors that are affecting performance in those areas. Strategies are then developed to achieve measurable goals. In order for many of these strategies to be implemented successfully, RSA must provide technical assistance to State VR agencies. Based on the results of the first year of the new monitoring process, the need for technical assistance is considerable.

In addition, the Department recently conducted a survey to assess the technical assistance needs of State VR Agencies and State Rehabilitation Councils. State agencies are in need of technical assistance on a range of issues including, but not limited to, fiscal management, recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, effective practices for serving transition-age youths, developmentally disabled and chronically mentally ill individuals in supported employment, improving employment outcome rates for less successful groups of individuals, effective use of performance data for program improvement, quality assurance, and strategic planning.

Approximately half of the program funds would be used to continue support for the National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (NVRTAC) to be established in FY 2008. The Department would contract with an entity that would develop and disseminate materials and provide technical assistance to State VR agencies, either directly or through subcontracts, on issues not specifically addressed by other technical assistance centers that are planned for initiation in FY 2008. The NVRTAC would assist in coordinating the activities of the other centers and in identifying potential technical assistance providers as needed. The NVRTAC would also conduct reviews and analyses of data and products from other entities that provide technical assistance to State VR programs.

Program improvement funds will also be used to increase service delivery capacity, by providing forums for sharing promising practices, and by enhancing the capacity of grantees to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively and efficiently. Timely training and technical assistance will be delivered to RSA grantees and stakeholders using state-of-the-art communication methods as the primary means of dissemination, including web-cast conferences, web-based seminars (webinars), and RSA's new Dissemination and Technical Assistance Resource (DATAR) web-

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based resource. These strategies will allow RSA to reach a broader population of grantees and stakeholders without convening face-to-face meetings, greatly improving the cost effectiveness of providing ongoing training and technical assistance.

Finally, program improvements funds would also be used to assist the Department in testing and analyzing performance data on measures being developed in conjunction with the Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Performance Plan.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Funding for technical assistance activities:			
New	\$373	\$622	\$175
Continuations	<u>460</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>625</u>
Total	833	622	800
Number of activities:			
New	1	3	2
Continuation	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	5	3	4

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

A description of the major activities conducted in fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007 under the Program Improvement program is provided below. Information from these activities and evaluation activities conducted under section 14 of the Rehabilitation Act will assist the RSA to better target and coordinate funding priorities under this program and the Demonstration and Training program and to identify technical assistance needs. Information from RSA's new monitoring system will also assist the Department to identify critical performance improvement needs.

VR Strategic Performance Plan: In September 2005, the Department procured assistance from a contractor to develop a multi-year performance plan to identify appropriate goals, objectives, strategies, and outcome-oriented performance measures that will improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The plan will assist the Department in directing its resources (monitoring, technical assistance, training, demonstration, and evaluation) toward the implementation of policies and practices that are known to have a positive effect on increasing high-quality employment outcomes. The contractor assisting RSA in this effort drafted a preliminary report based on the discussions of an RSA steering group. A discussion paper that outlines the proposed goals and objectives of the plan was developed and disseminated for the purposes of soliciting comment from State VR agencies and other program stakeholders. RSA expects to complete the plan and disseminate it to State VR agencies in the summer of 2008.

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Assessment of the Technical Assistance Needs of State VR Agencies and State Rehabilitation Councils

In fiscal year 2005, the Department awarded a contract to identify the technical assistance needs of State VR Agencies, including administrative/ management and service delivery needs, and of State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs). Survey results indicate that State VR agencies and SRCs require technical assistance in the following areas:

- expanding the agency's resource base;
- building relationships with business and industry;
- recruiting and retraining qualified and diverse staff members;
- assessing and serving former VR consumers who reapply to the program;
- using performance data for program improvement;
- implementing effective strategies for consumers with traumatic brain injury, mental illness, and autism;
- conducting statewide needs assessment; and
- understanding the role and responsibilities of the SRC.

Findings from this study will assist RSA to target and improve the provision of technical assistance to these two constituencies. In addition, information from the technical assistance assessment will assist RSA to better target and coordinate funding priorities under its demonstration and program improvement programs. The final report was completed in 2007.

Developing the Capacity of RSA to Effectively Use Performance Data in Managing and Improving Program Performance

A key part of the Administration's Program Improvement initiative is the use of performance data to inform decision-making and planning. Weakness in the transparency and use of data to manage and improve RSA discretionary programs was a common finding in recently conducted Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) reviews. In fiscal year 2005, the Department awarded a contract to assist RSA in developing its capacity to effectively use the performance data it collects to manage and improve program performance at the national and grantee levels. The plan developed by the contractor is primarily focused on enhancing the capabilities of RSA staff to more effectively use the data collected from its discretionary program grantees. To date, the contractor has developed templates for the RSA Management Information System that provide tables and graphs structured to display key summary information and information for individual grantees, including data on program performance measures for the Projects With Industry and the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs, and more recently the Independent Living programs. The final step, providing assistance to staff on how to use the data templates and how to interpret and use the performance data, will be completed in fiscal year 2008.

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Developing, Implementing, and Maintaining a Web-Based Dissemination and Technical Assistance Resource

The September 2005 General Accounting Office report, entitled *Vocational Rehabilitation: Better Measures and Monitoring Could Improve Performance of the VR Program*, recommended that the Secretary take executive action to "...develop alternative means of disseminating best practices among state VR agencies...such as a central repository." RSA intends to broaden the dissemination of the information and publicize the availability of its monitoring and analytic work products. The Department awarded a contract in fiscal year 2006 to develop a web-based technical assistance resource (DATAR) that will provide broader access to a wide variety of vocational rehabilitation and independent living program resources. The web-based resource project will serve as the "doorway and card catalogue" for an extensive online repository to facilitate public access to the most current vocational rehabilitation and independent living program information, including demographic and performance measurement data, effective practices, program initiatives, and current issues, research, and literature. The contractor has completed project feasibility and risk management reports and developed the parameters for the website enhancements and the design of the website. The contractor is currently working on the development of a controlled working prototype of DATAR that RSA plans to display at the spring meeting of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation in April 2008. Feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated into the final DATAR product. If there are no major technical delays, RSA expects to implement the full DATAR product before the end of fiscal year 2008.

Developing the Capacity of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

The purpose of this initiative is to enhance SRCs' effectiveness in improving State VR programs and enhance opportunities for high-quality outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The SRC can play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the State VR program. During FY 2004, RSA developed a national SRC training curriculum with the assistance of Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RCEPS) and with input from the constituency. The curriculum was developed for use in two accessible formats, a power point presentation for use with a trainer and stand-alone power points set to motion as movies. However, the membership on SRCs is constantly rotating, creating a need for continuous training of new members. To address this challenge, State VR agencies and SRCs need sustainable training resources in a variety of accessible forms and delivery methods. The objectives of this SRC capacity building initiative are to develop systematic, sustainable training resources in multiple accessible formats that increase SRC members' knowledge of the VR program, improve members' understanding of their responsibilities, and enhance awareness of successful strategies and solutions for fulfillment of their responsibilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act. In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, the Department awarded grant supplements to the RCEP at Georgia State University to: (1) develop and test a self-paced web-based tutorial for both new members in their orientation or other members as a refresher that includes graphics, interactive content, and a quiz at the end of each module; (2) convene sessions with SRCs regionally in collaboration with RCEPs to demonstrate the features of the online tutorial and to develop additional capacity to carry out their responsibilities; and (3) through these activities, identify additional delivery methods (i.e., web-based; video) for training and technical assistance activities. This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2008.

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A Model Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Training/Technical Assistance to State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

Section 101(a)(15)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act requires State VR agencies to jointly conduct a comprehensive, statewide assessment with the State Rehabilitation Council at least once every 3 years, that describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within that State. Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act requires State VR agencies to develop goals and priorities in carrying out their VR program during the period in which the annual State plan is in effect, based on analysis of the comprehensive Statewide needs assessment (CSNA), including strategies the State will use to address the needs identified in the CSNA. Finally, the State VR agency must submit an annual report to the Commissioner that includes an evaluation of the extent to which the State's goals were achieved and, if not achieved, the factors that impeded achievement.

In reviewing FY 2007 State Plan submissions, RSA determined that State VR agencies have not carried out CSNAs that yield data that is sufficient to inform the development of goals and priorities. Many of the CSNAs do not address all of the required elements, and more importantly, even those CSNAs that do address the required elements, do not yield sufficient information on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State. In discussions with State agencies about the quality of their CSNAs, many State agencies readily admit that they do not have the expertise to carry out a proper CSNA, and have asked RSA to provide them with a model. RSA awarded a contract in FY 2007 to develop a model CSNA to assist State VR agencies and SRCs in conducting their own CSNAs and to improve the development of goals and priorities based on the CSNA. FY 2007 funds were used to support the full cost of this 2-year project.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Evaluation

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 14)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
	\$1,447	\$1,947	+\$500

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Secretary uses the funds appropriated under this authority to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including their general effectiveness in relation to their cost, their impact on related programs, and their structure and mechanisms for delivery of services. Studies are designed to provide information for policy decisions related to program management and effectiveness. In addition, subsection 14(f) of the Rehabilitation Act requires the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to identify and disseminate information on exemplary practices concerning vocational rehabilitation.

This is a current-funded program. Contracts and cooperative agreements are awarded for studies to be conducted by persons not immediately involved in the administration of the programs authorized by the Act.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2004	\$988
2005	1,488
2006	1,473
2007	1,473
2008	1,447

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$1.947 million for the evaluation program, an increase of \$500,000 over the 2008 level. The increase would be used to initiate an evaluation of the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). The last study of the Center was conducted 20 years ago. The Administration proposes to conduct an independent, comprehensive study of HKNC to evaluate the effectiveness of the Center's operations and how well it is addressing its statutory purpose and the needs of its service population. The study would address areas such as efficacy of the

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Evaluation

various services provided and approaches employed by the Center, the return on the investment of Federal resources, and the relevance of the Center's programs to the needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. We believe the study would provide useful feedback to the Center to assist it in planning future activities and setting priorities and to the Department in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities.

The remaining funds would be used to support the continuation of the multi-year national study of long-term post-program experiences of former VR consumers that was initiated at the end of fiscal year 2005. The emphasis of the study is on long-term employment status, earnings, and reductions in Federal benefits of individuals with significant disabilities who may require long-term support in order to maintain employment over time, including the role of post-employment services in enhancing these outcomes. The study is focusing on four subgroups of former VR consumers: (1) persons with mental illness, (2) persons with mental retardation, (3) transitional youth, and (4) persons who received Social Security disability benefits. The study will also provide information on the long-term outcomes and supports received by individuals from these four groups who exited the VR program with a supported employment outcome. The contractor will collect data on a nationally representative sample of VR consumers in these four groups who have recently exited the program through a baseline interview and two annual follow-up interviews. The study will be funded over a 5-year period at an estimated total cost of \$6 million.

In fiscal year 2008, all of the funds available under the Evaluation authority will be used to support the national study of VR post-program experiences. In fiscal year 2007, evaluation funds were used to support the study of VR post-program experiences, jointly support a National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) 5-year Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Vocational Rehabilitation, and to conduct targeted studies in 3 areas of State VR Agency practices, including cooperative agreements, comprehensive rehabilitation centers, and State VR Agency quality assurance practices and procedures. Fiscal year 2007 funds were also used to develop an evaluation design and uniform data collection forms to be used by the model projects, awarded in fiscal year 2007 under the Demonstration and Training program, demonstrating the use of promising transition practices in improving the postsecondary education and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Funding for evaluation activities:			
New	\$1,177	0	\$500
Continuations	296	\$1,447	1,447
Number of activities:			
New	4	0	1
Continuation	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	6	1	2

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Evaluation

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

A description of major studies and evaluations completed in fiscal years 2004 through 2007 is provided below. Information obtained from these studies along with information obtained from activities conducted under Program Improvement and findings from monitoring activities are being used by RSA to improve program performance.

An Assessment of Transition Policies and Practices in State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

Youths with disabilities face significant challenges as they transition to adult life. Timely and significant investment in VR services for youths with a disability before the beginning of their potential work life will give them the greatest opportunity to prepare themselves for self-support. The Department is currently conducting a study supported with fiscal year 2004 and 2005 funds to increase its understanding of the transition policies and practices among State VR agencies. The study will provide a descriptive national picture of transition policies and practices among State VR agencies, including the amount and source of resources supporting such practices, and will identify policy issues and promising State practices in the provision of transition services. This study focuses on the population of individuals with disabilities aged 14 and over who are transitioning from secondary school (or an equivalent educational institution) to post-school activities, including postsecondary education or training and employment. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Describe and classify State policies and practices for identifying and serving youth with disabilities who are transitioning from school to post-school outcomes;
- Identify and describe policy issues, promising practices, and other factors that facilitate effective collaboration, transition planning, and provision of services, including effective strategies, policies, and practices that promote successful collaboration with secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, employers, and independent living centers;
- Identify major obstacles to collaboration and early intervention in transition planning; and
- Examine the influence of financial factors, including provision of complementary or matching funds to the VR agency by educational or education-related agencies. Where they exist, identify non-Title I (VR) resources used to support transition practices.

The interim report was completed in November 2006 and site visits to identify promising practices were conducted in February and March 2007. The draft final report has been submitted by the contractor and is currently being reviewed by the Department. A copy of the draft final report is available online at <http://www.vrtransitionstudy.org/reports/final.html>.

Evaluation of Projects Demonstrating the Use of Adult Education Literacy Services by State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to Improve the Earnings of Individuals with Disabilities

The purpose of the literacy evaluation, which received its final year of funding in 2007, is to assess whether instruction in the Wilson Reading System and the provision of relevant support services, as carried out by five Department-funded model demonstration projects, have an impact on the literacy skills, utilization of postsecondary education, employability, and earnings

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Evaluation

and benefits of VR consumers with poor literacy skills, particularly individuals with learning disabilities. The contractor will be conducting follow-up activities in fiscal year 2007 and 2008. The final report is expected in the fall of 2009.

Assisting Discretionary Grantees to Implement the Common Measures for Employment and Training Programs

In addition to the VR State Grants program, several of the Department's discretionary programs that assist individuals with disabilities to obtain employment are included in the Job Training Common Measures Initiative. These programs include VR Grants to Indians, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, and Projects with Industry. Non-public and tribal organizations funded under discretionary grant programs face greater challenges in implementing the job training common measures. The Department contracted with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to assess the ability of these grantees to access and utilize Unemployment Insurance Wage Record (UI) data. The contractor conducted a survey of all grantees to determine the degree to which they can access and report UI data and the degree to which they can utilize other methods of collecting and reporting common measures data. The final report submitted to the Department in December of 2005 assesses existing grantee capacity to obtain the data required to implement the Common Measures and suggests options each program might pursue to enhance their capacity for complete and accurate reporting.

Variables Related to State VR Agency Performance

To assist the Department in better understanding State agency performance, address the wide variation in individual State agency performance, and improve overall program performance, the Department conducted a 2-year study to examine the variables related to State VR agency performance. In particular, the study examined the variables associated with high and low State performance on the VR Standard 1 indicators measuring the VR program's impact on employment. The final report (October, 2004) summarizes the study findings by dimension of inquiry (i.e., aspect of agency operations examined), identifies influential variables on overall agency performance and variables that influence performance on specific indicators, and reviews study findings on measuring adequate use of resources. Some of the variables associated with overall performance that were identified by the study are within the control of the VR agency and others are not. Variables identified that were within an agency's control whose effects were consistently beneficial across all areas of performance include: strong leadership, effective communication, and use of performance data and automated case management systems. Variables outside the direct control of agency management with the most pervasive influence over agency performance include: agency type, labor market conditions, and funding levels.

Final published reports for RSA evaluation studies completed in fiscal years 2002 through 2003, as well as the final and interim reports of the Longitudinal Study of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program are available online at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/rehab/eval-studies.html>.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Helen Keller National Center

(Helen Keller National Center Act)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$8,362	\$7,862	-\$500

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC) was created by Congress in 1969, and operates under the auspices of Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Inc. The Center provides services on a national basis to individuals who are deaf-blind, their families, and service providers through two component programs: a national headquarters center located in Sands Point, New York, with a residential training and rehabilitation facility where deaf-blind individuals receive intensive specialized services, and a network of 10 regional field offices that provide referral, counseling, and transition assistance to deaf-blind individuals and technical assistance to service providers. In addition, the Center uses private funds to provide seed money to State and private agencies to encourage them to establish or expand programs for individuals who are deaf-blind. These programs also receive targeted training and technical assistance from the Center.

The purpose of the program at the national headquarters center is to provide direct services for individuals with deaf-blindness in order to enhance their potential for employment and to live independently in their home communities. The program strives to provide clients with meaningful contact with the environment, improved means of communication, constructive participation in the home and community, increased employability, and other development pertinent to their rehabilitation. The headquarters program also offers training and consultation to other programs serving individuals who are deaf-blind through a technical assistance center and national training team.

The Center employs regional representatives in each of the 10 Federal regions. These representatives provide a variety of services, including training for service agency staff, general technical assistance, and help in developing direct service plans for deaf-blind clients for State vocational rehabilitation counselors, mental health workers, and special education programs. In addition, the regional staff provide counseling, information, transition assistance, and referral services for individuals who are deaf-blind and their families

HKNC also operates a number of special projects related to deaf-blindness. These include a service project for individuals who are elderly and deaf-blind and a national parent and family

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

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services project. In addition, the Center operates an international internship program for professionals in the field of deaf-blindness. These interns are professionals who are financially supported by their sponsoring agencies during their stay and are expected to initiate and complete at least one project while at HKNC. HKNC is current-funded and receives an award on a noncompetitive basis.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2004	\$8,666
2005	10,581 ¹
2006	8,511
2007	8,511
2008	8,362

¹ The amount shown for fiscal year 2005 included a one-time earmark of \$1.984 million for HKNC.

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration's request for the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) is \$7.862 million, \$500,000 below the appropriation for fiscal year 2008. The Department believes the request is sufficient to support a range of educational, independent living, and training programs for individuals who are deaf-blind. In addition to the \$7.862 million for operations, the Administration's request includes \$500,000 under the Rehabilitation Evaluation program for an evaluation of HKNC.

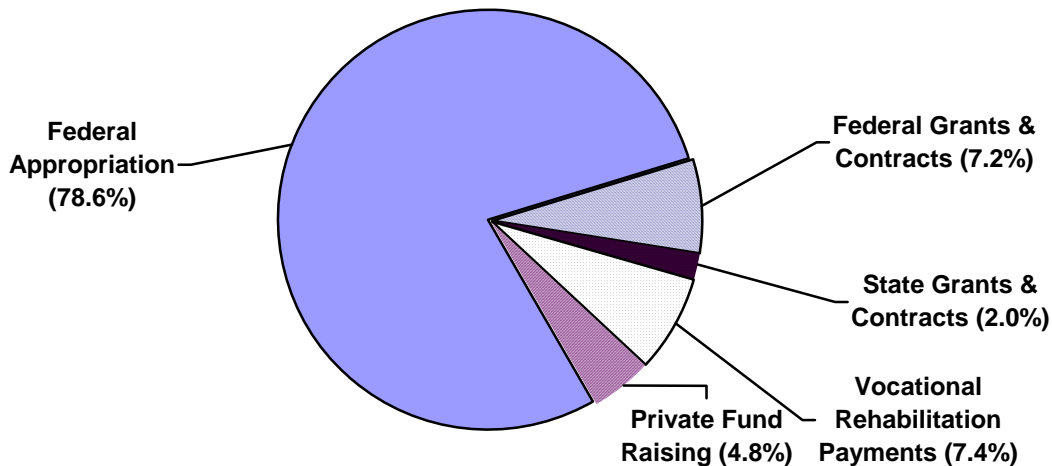
The Federal appropriation for HKNC represented about 78.2 percent of HKNC's total budget in fiscal year 2006, the last year for which the Department has information. While HKNC only provides direct services to a target figure of 95 adult clients per year for the regular training provided by its headquarters program, approximately 62 percent of the Center's total budget supports the operations of this program. This represents a large investment for a very small number of clients. In fiscal year 2007, the Center only served 78 adult clients, 17 fewer than the target. There is very little outcome data related to the performance of HKNC to justify this large investment. The only study conducted of the Center was completed in fiscal year 1988 and covered the fiscal year 1986 program year. The information in that study is now over 20 years old. An independent, comprehensive study of HKNC is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Center's operations, how well it is addressing its statutory purpose, and changes that might be made to better address the needs of its service population. The study that is being proposed by the Administration would address areas such as the efficacy of the various services provided and approaches employed by the Center, the return on the investment of Federal resources, and the relevance of the Center's programs to the needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. The study also would provide useful feedback to the Department in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities and to the Center to assist it in planning future activities and setting priorities.

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Other Sources of Funding: In addition to funds provided through the appropriation, the Center receives funding from a variety of State, private, and other Federal sources. The following chart shows the sources and percentages of the Center's fiscal year 2006 operating budget of over \$13.45 million. The percentage shown for the Federal appropriation includes \$1.984 million provided in a one-time earmark for fiscal year 2005 that was used in fiscal year 2006.

FY 2006 Operating Budget (\$13.45 million)



HKNC would use approximately 70 percent of the amount requested for fiscal year 2009, or \$5.5 million, to support training; the residence; maintenance and plant operations; and administrative functions at the Center's headquarters facility. The Center uses these funds to support 11 direct services departments, including audiology; case management; communications; independent living; low vision; medical; orientation and mobility; vocational services; individualized client support services in the areas of socialization, work skills, technology, and crisis intervention; clinical social work services; and staff functions such as payroll and benefits. At the request level, the Center estimates that it would serve approximately 95 adult clients with deaf-blindness at its headquarters facility and provide short-term training for approximately 12 high school students, 10 senior citizens, and 5 students in the use of technology in fiscal year 2009. The technology program was started in fiscal year 2004. Under this program, consumers receive 2 to 4 weeks of intensive training on specific computer applications or a type of adaptive technology, such as screen magnification, Braille display, or screen readers.

HKNC would devote approximately 30 percent of the amount requested, or \$2.36 million, to its field services and community education programs, including the activities of HKNC's 10 regional centers. These programs help State agencies and other programs to serve or acquire the capacity to serve individuals who are deaf-blind through training provided by its National Training Team (NTT) and community education program, and technical assistance provided by its regional centers. The regional representatives provide individual and program assessment, referrals and follow-up, advocacy, consultation, technical assistance, and training through 18 representatives stationed in 10 regional offices. The NTT provides training nationwide on a request basis, with the requesting agency covering the travel costs for the team. The NTT also

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coordinates on-site conferences and workshops across the country to train professionals working with individuals who are deaf-blind. The regional centers provide technical assistance to individuals who are deaf-blind, professionals in the field, and family members in planning and obtaining services to assist individuals who are deaf-blind to live and work independently in the community. The Center also provides field services and community education programs, including training provided by the NTT.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Number of individuals served:			
At headquarters:			
Adult training program clients	78	95	95
Short-term training:			
High school students	12	12	12
Senior citizens	7	10	10
Technology training	9	5	5
Through regional representatives: ¹			
Consumers	1,283	1,600	1,600
Families	433	450	450
Agencies/organizations	664	1,050	1,050
HKNC FTE	137.5	135	135

Note: Impact data are provided according to fiscal year, as opposed to HKNC's program year of July to June. The number of individuals served in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 and full-time equivalent (FTE) figures are estimates based on historical trend data, which may or may not be consistent with data for the immediate prior year.

¹ Individuals served by the regional representatives include individuals attending workshops or conferences in which HKNC participates, who receive materials from the Center, or who receive technical assistance, referral services, or counseling from regional staff. The regional offices began using a new data collection system in fiscal year 2007 that resulted in lower, but potentially more accurate output data. The estimates for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 are based on earlier projections. Additional data is necessary before a trend analysis can be conducted that can be used to estimate future numbers of clients to be served by the regional offices.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

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Goal: Individuals who are deaf-blind will become independent and function as full and productive members of their local community.

Objective: *Individuals who are deaf-blind receive the specialized services and training they need to become as independent and self-sufficient as possible.*

Measure: The percentage of adult consumers who meet their training goals, of adult consumers seeking employment who are placed in employment, and of adult consumers seeking to maintain their ability to live independently or move to less restrictive settings who achieve their goals.

Year	Target				Actual			
	# of Adult Consumers	% of Training goals met	% in Less Restrictive Settings	% Placed in Employment	# of Adult Consumers	% of Training goals met	% in Less Restrictive Settings	% Placed in Employment
2004	95	88	70	45	93	90	69	46
2005	95	88	70	45	89	89	91	41
2006	95	88	72	45	91	93	96	46
2007	95	90	75	45	78			
2008	95	90	75	45				
2009	95	90	75	45				

Assessment of progress: The 78 adult clients attending the HKNC rehabilitation training center in fiscal year 2007 were 17 less than the target and far fewer than the number served for the previous several years. HKNC points out that the number of consumers served may fluctuate from year to year due to factors beyond the control of the Center, such as changes in State vocational rehabilitation program funding or policy. In addition to its traditional adult consumers, HKNC also provides short-term training for youth in high school, senior citizens, and those seeking training in the use of technology. For example, the high school students participate in career exploration, college preparation, and other services offered by the Center. However, the students return to high school after their training. The high school students and senior citizens are not included in the counts of adult consumers and consumers placed in employment or less restrictive settings. Clients who participate in short-term training in the use of technology are included in the count of adult consumers. Clients receiving technology training, high school students, and senior citizens are included in the calculation of the percentage of training goals met.

The percent placed in employment measure refers to outcomes for those individuals who came to the Center with a specific vocational objective. For example, while 42 adult clients completed training in the Center's vocational services unit in fiscal year 2006, only 22 individuals specified employment goals. Of these 22 individuals, 9 clients, or 41 percent, found some form of employment. This included six graduates who found competitive employment¹ and three who

¹Competitive employment is defined under the State Vocational Rehabilitation program as work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting, and 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.

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were placed in supported employment. (Supported employment services support an individual with disabilities in maintaining employment by providing ongoing supports such as job coaches and on-site accommodations). Of the remaining 13 clients with employment objectives, 11 were seeking competitive employment and 2 were seeking supported employment. The 20 clients who did not have employment objectives included 7 homemakers, 1 attending postsecondary education, 5 who came for short-term training in technology, and 7 who discontinued training for various reasons such as family or medical emergencies or difficulty adjusting to the program.

The less restrictive settings measure refers to clients who move from restrictive settings such as living with parents or guardians, assisted living settings, and nursing homes to their own home or apartment or supported living such as group homes. In fiscal year 2004, HKNC revised the method it uses to calculate the percentage of clients placed in less restrictive settings. The percentage was previously taken of the number of consumers who received independent living training. The percentage is now taken only of those consumers with a specific goal to move to a less restrictive living situation. We believe that this is a more accurate measure of the Center's efforts in this area. The percentages for fiscal years 2004 through 2006 reflect the new methodology. In fiscal year 2007, HKNC further revised this measure to include participants in the independent living program whose goal is to maintain their ability to live independently in their current living situation. The Center believes that it is as important to help consumers who need assistance in maintaining their ability to live independently as those seeking to move to less restrictive settings.

The Center also evaluates the progress of clients in achieving the goals stated in their individualized training plans (ITPs). This measure represents the percent of training goals achieved by all adult consumers served during the program year. The consumers and their instructors mutually develop these instructional objectives. The method for reporting these data was changed in fiscal year 2004. Previously, this measure included outcomes for high school students and for senior citizens participating in short-term training programs. However, the Center and Department agreed that it would be a more accurate reflection of the Center's performance if this measure were limited to results for adult clients enrolled in the formal program. The percentages for fiscal years 2004 through 2006 reflect the new measure. In addition, the figures also include clients enrolled in the technology training program.

Objective: *Increase the capacity of deaf-blind consumers to function more independently in the home community.*

The Department has raised concerns to HKNC that outcome measures are needed to assess the performance of its field services and in-service training. The regional offices and training programs are consuming an increasing percentage of HKNC resources. However, there are no outcome measures specific to these activities. In fiscal year 2006, the Center hired an external evaluation expert to assist it to develop new performance measures and data collections to determine the effectiveness and impact of its field services and in-service training. The process has resulted in the development of the following four proposed measures.

Measure: The percentage of State and local service providers who demonstrate improved knowledge/skill acquisition 6 months after completing HKNC training.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Helen Keller National Center

Assessment of progress: The purpose of this measure is to assess the impact of HKNC training programs on professionals who work with individuals who are deaf-blind and attend workshops or other trainings conducted by HKNC. This measure would be calculated as the percentage of service providers who demonstrate knowledge and/or skill acquisition 6 months after HKNC training. The Center is field-testing pre- and post-training surveys of knowledge attainment and use of specific interventions by training participants. The plan for the follow-up survey is to randomly sample training participants 6 months following the training to assess their experiences. We anticipate that baseline data will be available in fiscal year 2008 and will be summarized in future HKNC annual reports.

Measure: The percentage of consumers served by HKNC regional offices who successfully secure employment.

Measure: The percentage of consumers served by HKNC regional offices who successfully retain employment.

Measure: The percentage of consumers served by HKNC regional offices who successfully achieve/maintain independent living outcomes.

Assessment of progress: The three measures listed above will assess the long-term impact of HKNC programs on outcomes for individuals who are deaf-blind who are served through the HKNC regional offices.

HKNC has developed a new data collection for its regions that is designed to measure the impact of the regional offices' efforts through the identification of performance indicators that are tied to the HKNC State Plans. The Center has not previously tracked clients to see if employment or independent living outcomes are maintained or assessed the role of its regional offices related to these outcomes. In the 2007 program year, the regional offices began using the new data collection system. The system is capturing data differently and the representatives are reporting activities according to the new service codes developed by the Center. At least 2 to 3 years of data will be necessary in order to accumulate sufficient information to establish targets. Initial data was collected during fiscal year 2007 and will be provided to the Department in the annual report for fiscal year 2007. We anticipate receiving the data and the report in fiscal year 2008.

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National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): To be determined¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
	\$105,741	\$105,741	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; the program was authorized in FY 2008 through appropriations language. Reauthorizing legislation is sought for FY 2009.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The mission of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) is to generate, disseminate, and promote new knowledge to improve the options available to persons with disabilities, and help them participate fully in society -- including the workplace. NIDRR conducts comprehensive and coordinated programs of research and related activities to maximize the full inclusion, social integration, employment, and independent living of individuals of all ages with disabilities. NIDRR's focus includes research in such areas as employment, health and function, participation and community living, assistive technology, and disability demographics.

NIDRR's work supports key elements of the President's New Freedom Initiative, which is focused on removing any remaining barriers to equality faced by Americans with disabilities. The NIDRR Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs), for example, are working to improve assistive technologies that will allow persons with disabilities to participate more fully in society and the workplace. The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program is sparking the development of new rehabilitation technology by providing funds to small businesses with strong research capabilities. The Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) grants support advanced training for engineers, medical personnel, and other professionals, to build capacity for disability studies and rehabilitation science.

The purposes of NIDRR are to:

- Promote, coordinate, and provide for research, demonstration and training, and related activities with respect to individuals with disabilities;
- Widely disseminate findings, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from its activities; and
- Provide leadership in advancing the quality of life of individuals with disabilities.

NIDRR's research is extramural, conducted through a network of individual research projects and centers of excellence located throughout the Nation. Most funding is awarded through

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National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

competitive grants, and most of the funds are awarded to universities or providers of rehabilitation or related services.

NIDRR funding supports a portfolio of projects that are aligned with NIDRR's three long-term goals, which are:

- Goal 1: Advancing knowledge through capacity building,
- Goal 2: Advancing knowledge through research and related activities, and
- Goal 3: Advancing knowledge through translation and dissemination.

On February 15, 2006, NIDRR published a final *Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2005—2009* in the *Federal Register*, which outlines its strategies for achieving these goals. Continued support for NIDRR activities will build on past success and continue to yield substantial benefits to individuals with disabilities. Improved care, as well as improvements in assistive technology and supportive services, can play an essential role in enhancing the quality of life for persons with disabilities, including the growing population of elderly individuals with disabilities. Improved supports and services designed to enhance employment opportunities also are vitally important.

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs). The RERCs conduct research on issues dealing with rehabilitation technology, including rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology devices and services. The new *Long-Range Plan* notes that NIDRR's leadership in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology development has played a major role in creating technology for use by individuals with disabilities in their daily lives. Activities include developing and disseminating innovative methods of applying advanced technology, scientific achievements, and psychological and social knowledge to rehabilitation problems and the removal of environmental barriers; developing and disseminating technology designed to lessen the effects of sensory loss, mobility impairment, chronic pain, and communication difficulties; scientific research to assist in meeting the employment and independent living needs of individuals with severe disabilities; and stimulating 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 5 years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than 5 years.

Future research may build upon recent advances in biomaterials research, composite technologies, information and telecommunication technologies, nanotechnologies, micro electro-mechanical systems, sensor technologies, and the neurosciences. A particular focus may be the further application of the principles of universal design to the development of new products. Products that incorporate the principles of universal design often prove to be highly useful for non-disabled individuals, as well as the growing elderly population.

*Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC)*s. RRTCs receive funding to conduct coordinated and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination in general problem areas that are specified by NIDRR. More specifically, RRTCs conduct research to improve rehabilitation methodologies and service delivery systems, alleviate or

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stabilize disabling conditions, and promote maximum social and economic independence for persons with disabilities; provide training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to help rehabilitation personnel provide more effective rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities; and serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for providers and for individuals with disabilities and their representatives. Typically, awards are for 5 years. However, NIDRR may also award grants for less than 5 years to support new or innovative research.

Model Systems. NIDRR funds model systems projects in three areas: spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, and burn injury. Model systems funding supports 5-year grants to establish innovative projects for the delivery, demonstration, and evaluation of comprehensive medical, vocational, and other rehabilitation services to meet the wide range of needs of individuals in one of these three areas. Grantees in each of the three areas contribute to a national database that is supported by NIDRR funding.

- *Model Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems.* The Model Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) program funds research to meet the wide range of needs of individuals with spinal cord injuries. (See <http://www.ncddr.org/rpp/hf/hfdw/mscis/>.) The projects also disseminate information to individuals with SCI and others.
- *Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems.* The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Model Systems projects are research and demonstration grants designed to advance the understanding of TBI and its consequences and improve rehabilitation outcomes. (See <http://www.tbinc.org/registry/>.)
- *Burn Injury Model Systems.* The Burn Model Systems (BMS) projects are research and demonstration grants designed to establish, demonstrate, and evaluate a model system of care for burn injury survivors. The goal of the projects is to reduce disability by improving treatment and rehabilitation. (See <http://mama.uchsc.edu/pub/NIDRR/index.html>.)

Field-Initiated Projects (FIP). Field-Initiated Projects conduct research and development that address a wide range of topics identified by investigators, not by NIDRR. Most awards are made for 3 years.

Assistive Technology Fund/Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR). SBIR awards support the development of new rehabilitation technologies 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. This 2-phase program takes a product from development to market readiness. During Phase I, firms conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of an idea. During Phase II, they expand on the results and pursue further development. In order to be eligible, small businesses must: be American-owned and independently operated; be for-profit and employ no more than 500 employees, and; the principal researcher must be employed by the business.

Outreach to Minority Institutions. The Rehabilitation Act requires that 1 percent of funds appropriated for programs authorized under certain titles be reserved for awards to minority entities and Indian tribes, or to provide outreach and assistance to minority entities and Indian tribes.

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Other Grant Awards. NIDRR makes awards in a variety of other areas, including Switzer research fellowships, Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) projects, and Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP). Switzer research fellows receive 1-year fellowships to carry out discrete research activities that are related to NIDRR's research priorities or to pursue studies in areas of importance to the rehabilitation community. The ARRT program supports grants to institutions to provide advanced training in research to physicians, nurses, engineers, physical therapists, and other professionals. Grants are made to institutions to recruit qualified persons with doctoral or similar advanced degrees with clinical, management, or basic science research experience and prepare them to conduct independent research in areas related to disability and rehabilitation. These training programs must operate in interdisciplinary environments and provide training in rigorous scientific methods. The DRRP awards support grants with a special emphasis on conducting authorized activities in a particular priority area.

Other Activities: NIDRR funding also supports a variety of other activities, including collaborative projects with other agencies; development and maintenance of grantee reporting systems; program review; and reporting, evaluation, long-range planning, and the *Interagency Committee on Disability Research* (ICDR). The primary purpose of the ICDR, authorized under Section 203(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act, is to promote cooperation across various Federal agencies in the development and execution of disability and rehabilitation research activities. (See <http://www.icdr.us/>.)

NIDRR funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$106,652
2005.....	107,783
2006.....	106,705
2007.....	106,705
2008.....	105,741

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$105.741 million for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), level with the 2008 appropriation. Past support for NIDRR has yielded substantial benefits in a variety of areas, including advancements in technology, policy changes, and improvements in rehabilitation and disability research.

NIDRR-funded technology research has led to a wide range of technological improvements to aid individuals with disabilities. Grantees conduct research to improve everything from specialized prosthetics to everyday appliances. Recent examples include a wide range of new technologies. One Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) grantee developed the "CIR Prosthetic Casting System," which offers a

Figure 1. The CIR Prosthetic Casting System.

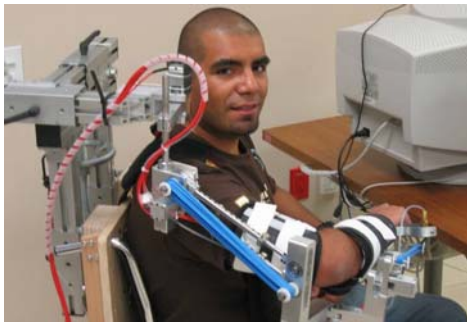


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fast, cheap, portable means of fabricating lower extremity prosthetic sockets to help meet the needs of amputees in underserved areas, particularly in countries affected by landmines. Using recyclable sand, the system is capable of producing a positive model of the residual limb of a trans-tibial (below-knee) amputee for prosthetic socket fabrication in less than 1 minute. The system drastically reduces the amount of labor, time, and cost previously associated with the prosthetic fabrication process. (<http://www.ideanet.org/content.cfm/?id=595C7F>) This technology has been used in rehabilitation centers and schools in India, Vietnam, Tanzania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

Figure 2. Prototype of the T-WREX assistive therapy device, developed with NIDRR funding.



RERC support for rehabilitation technology led to the “T-WREX” device, which allows individuals with severe motor impairment to practice arm movement without continuous, direct supervision from a rehabilitation therapist. Because many insurance providers limit coverage for such treatment, this non-robotic (i.e. passive) device is designed to allow home-based “tele-rehabilitation,” without the costs associated with one-on-one supervision in clinical settings (<http://www.smpp.northwestern.edu/MARS/Project5.htm>).

RERC support for accessible information technology led to the implementation of accessible kiosks in post offices and at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. The “Lids Off” jar opener, developed with NIDRR RERC funding and marketed by Black and Decker, allows individuals with limited hand strength to easily open jars of a variety of sizes—a boon for the elderly or individuals with limited dexterity.

“Pay-off” from such investments can take a variety of forms, and often takes years. For example, a 1999 Field-Initiated Projects (FIP) grant to study neuromuscular reorganization to improve the control of artificial limbs supported work that led to the eventual development of a prosthetic arm that is controlled by thought and is now privately funded (<http://www.ric.org/bionic/index.php>).

Model systems research has led to improved care and rehabilitation for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and severe burns, resulting in shorter periods of care and faster reintegration into their communities. In the area of TBI, NIDRR support has led to the development of information resources such as the Center for Outcomes Measurement in Brain Injury (COMBI) (<http://www.tbims.org/combi/>), which provides detailed information on reliability and validity in the use of outcomes assessment tools. Other TBI work involves research on strategies to provide cognitive retraining for individuals with traumatic brain injury.

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Although rehabilitation research and assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities can play a life-changing role for individuals with disabilities in such key areas as transition, recovery, and accessibility, they often fall within the category of “orphan technologies.” In the absence of compelling evidence that such technologies actually will be useful to non-disabled individuals, manufacturers often do not see work in the area as being cost effective. Because this is the case, there is a compelling argument for continued Federal funding, to help jump-start development of innovations in this area.

Figure 3. The “Lids-Off” jar opener, developed with NIDRR funding and marketed by Black and Decker.



New activities that are being proposed for 2009 include shifting additional funds into support for research and other activities to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Other highlights are discussed below.

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs). In 2009, NIDRR proposes to fund RERCs at approximately \$17.0 million, of which approximately \$3.8 million would be used to make 4 new awards in the following areas: tele-rehabilitation; telecommunication; and cognitive rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC). In 2009, NIDRR proposes to fund RRTCs at approximately \$16.5 million, of which approximately \$7.5 million would be used to make 8 new awards and approximately \$9.9 million would be used to cover continuation costs for 13 existing RRTCs.

Model Systems. In 2009, NIDRR plans to use approximately \$19.3 million to support ongoing work in model systems: \$9.8 million to support continuations in the area of spinal cord injury, \$7.7 million to support continuations in traumatic brain injury, and \$1.8 million for continuations in the area burn injury.

Field-Initiated Projects (FIP). Proposed 2009 funding is \$12.2 million, which would allow continuation funding for projects awarded in prior years as well as approximately 20 new grant awards.

Assistive Technology Fund/Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR). In 2009, NIDRR plans to spend approximately \$1.2 million to support SBIR continuations, and \$2.4 million to support new phase I and II awards.

Outreach to Minority Institutions. Continuation funding for three projects awarded in 2006 would use all of the funds set aside for activities in this area in fiscal year 2009.

Other Grant Awards. NIDRR anticipates making approximately 12 new awards in other areas in 2009, including approximately 7 awards for Switzer research fellows, 2 awards for Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) projects, and 3 awards for Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP). Priority areas for the DRRP program in 2009 will likely emphasize employment-related topics, including: transition to employment; knowledge translation of employment research findings, and the role of assistive technology in improving employment

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outcomes. Fiscal year 2009 funding also would support the continuation costs of ARRT and DRRP awards, including the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, made in prior years.

Other Activities: NIDRR funding in this category will be used to support collaborative projects with other agencies; development and maintenance of grantee reporting systems; program review; reporting, evaluation, long-range planning; and the *Interagency Committee on Disability Research* (ICDR). Funds in this category also support Abledata (<http://www.abledata.com/>), which provides online information about assistive technology products and rehabilitation equipment.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (000s)

	Funding			Number of Awards		
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	\$17,599	\$11,248	\$6,596	22	12	7
2008 awards	0	6,650	6,650	0	7	7
2009 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,800</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Sub-total	17,599	17,898	17,046	22	19	18
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	18,436	6,150	2,275	26	14	4
2008 awards	0	7,650	7,650	0	9	9
2009 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7,450</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>
Sub-total	18,436	13,800	17,375	26	23	21
Model Systems						
Spinal Cord Injury						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	10,370	8,920	3,275	18	18	3
2008 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,493</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18</u>
	10,370	8,920	9,768	18	18	21
Traumatic Brain Injury						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	7,825	7,225	6,625	19	18	17
2008 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>1,075</u>	<u>1,075</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	7,825	8,300	7,700	19	20	19
Burn Injury						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	1,750	1,750	1,750	5	5	5

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (000s)

	Funding			Number of Awards		
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Field-Initiated Projects						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	\$11,782	\$8,065	\$4,645	74	47	23
2008 awards	0	4,000	4,000	0	20	20
2009 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,600</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>23</u>
Sub-total	11,782	12,065	13,245	74	67	66
Other Grant Awards						
Awards in 2007 and prior years	22,848	19,903	16,047	43	41	34
2008 awards	0	8,600	4,371	0	18	10
2009 awards	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,940</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>
Sub-total	22,848	28,503	24,358	43	59	55
Minority Outreach	1,070	1,070	1,070	3	3	3
Small Business Innovation Research	4,087	3,405	3,625	NA	NA	NA
Other activities	9,039	9,000	8,599	NA	NA	NA
Mary Switzer Fellowships	550	505	505	8	7	7
Peer review of new grant applications	<u>1,349</u>	<u>525</u>	<u>700</u>			
Sub-total	16,095	14,505	14,499			
Total, NIDRR	106,705	105,741	105,741			

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

In 2004, NIDRR established three long-term goals: To advance knowledge through capacity building, to advance knowledge through research and related activities, and to advance knowledge through translation and dissemination. NIDRR will measure progress towards meeting these goals through both long-term and annual performance measures. Progress towards meeting long-term goals will be assessed every 3 years.

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Goal 1: Advance knowledge through capacity building: Increase capacity to conduct and use high-quality and relevant disability and rehabilitation research and related activities designed to guide decision-making, change practice and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

NIDRR has established two measures to assess progress towards meeting the capacity-building goal. The first measure, which serves as both a long-term and an annual measure, is:

Measure: The percentage of NIDRR grantees that are conducting at least one multi-site, collaborative controlled trial.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006		5
2007	n/a	
2008	n/a	
2009	n/a	

Assessment of progress: NIDRR intends to collect 2 years of data before establishing targets for this measure. In 2006, 5 percent of 265 NIDRR Model Systems grantees conducted at least one multi-site collaborative controlled trial. This measure only includes NIDRR research grantees funded under NIDRR's Model Systems program, which includes Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, and Burn Model Systems, because these are the only NIDRR grantees for which it is appropriate to expect that multi-site collaborative controlled trials might be conducted. In 2007, grants in these areas accounted for approximately 19 percent of NIDRR's total appropriation.

The second measure is:

Measure: The percentage of NIDRR-supported fellows, post-doctoral trainees, and doctoral students who publish results of NIDRR-sponsored research in refereed journals.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006		8.8
2007	n/a	
2008	n/a	
2009	n/a	

Assessment of progress: For this measure, refereed journals are those journals that are recognized by the Thompson Institute for Scientific Information. See: <http://www.thompsonscientific.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=master>. NIDRR intends to collect 2 years of data before establishing targets for this measure. In 2006, there were 498 currently-supported NIDRR fellows and doctoral students, and a total of 44 publications by these individuals appeared in refereed journals. A single author was counted only once if he or she produced multiple peer-reviewed publications, and fellows or graduate students who co-authored a publication were counted individually for their contributions to one publication. This measure only includes NIDRR research grantees funded under NIDRR's RRTC's, RERC's, ARRT's, MS, DRRP, and FIP. In 2007, grants in these areas accounted for approximately 62 percent of NIDRR's total appropriation. These data do not include awards funded by the SBIR program.

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Goal 2: Advance knowledge through research and related activities: Generate scientific-based knowledge, technologies, and applications to inform policy, change practice, and improve outcomes.

NIDRR will use the following long-term measure to assess progress towards Goal 2:

- By 2015, increase by at least 20 percent the number of accomplishments (e.g., new or improved tools, methods, discoveries, standards, interventions, programs, or devices developed or tested with NIDRR funding) that have been judged by expert panels to advance the field.

Assessment of progress: NIDRR has been reviewing one-third of its grant portfolio each year since 2005. Reviewers who are experts in disabilities research were asked to rate the accomplishments reported by grantees. Baseline data for this measure were initially expected by fall 2007; however, the Department is currently pursuing a dramatic re-design of this peer review mechanism to improve the quality, reliability, and utility of expert reviews, along with data generated by such reviews. Due to planned changes in the review process, NIDRR expects that data from the first 3 years will not be comparable with data produced by subsequent reviews.

Two annual measures also provide information on progress towards meeting Goal 2:

Objective: *Generate scientific-based knowledge, technologies, and applications to inform policy, change practice, and improve outcomes.*

Measure: Percentage of NIDRR-funded grant applications that receive an average peer review score of 85 or higher.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		89
2005		99
2006	85	99
2007	90	96
2008	99	
2009	99	

Assessment of progress: This measure assesses the extent to which NIDRR funds grant applications that are judged by expert review panels to be of high quality. Data for the measure include all grant awards made within a given fiscal year. Data to date suggest that NIDRR makes awards to high-scoring grantees.

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Measure: Percentage of new grants that include studies funded by NIDRR that assess the effectiveness of interventions, programs, and devices using rigorous and appropriate methods.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		59
2005	65	49
2006	65	Not collected
2007	65	35
2008	65	
2009	65	

Assessment of progress: This measure provides information on the proportion of NIDRR grantees that are engaged in experimental or quasi-experimental projects to determine whether interventions, programs, and devices are effective. Because NIDRR funds a wide range of types of grants—including those engaged in statistical analysis, dissemination of information, and more basic developmental work—NIDRR does not believe it is appropriate to require all grantees to conduct intervention research and development, and therefore has set a target of 65 percent, or approximately two-thirds of its portfolio. NIDRR does not appear to be on track to meet this target, but intends to propose priorities for future competitions that will help to ensure that such studies are conducted, when appropriate. NIDRR also is examining the peer review criteria to determine whether modifications would help ensure that the goal is met.

Goal 3: Advance knowledge through translation and dissemination: Promote the effective use of scientific-based knowledge, technologies, and applications to inform policy, improve practice, and enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities.

NIDRR has developed two measures to assess progress towards meeting the translation and dissemination goal. These measure are:

Measure: The number of new or improved NIDRR-funded assistive and universally designed technologies, products, and devices transferred to industry for potential commercialization.		
Year	Target	Actual
2007		26
2008	n/a	
2009	n/a	

Assessment of progress: NIDRR intends to collect 2 years of data before establishing targets for this measure. In 2007, there were 26 NIDRR grantees implementing development projects through which technologies, products, or devices being designed were at the commercialization stage. This measure includes development projects funded by NIDRR through SBIRs, RERCs, RRTC's, and FIPs. In 2007, grants in these areas accounted for approximately 49 percent of NIDRR's total appropriation.

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Measure: The average number of publications per award based on NIDRR-funded research and development activities in refereed journals.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004	5	3
2005	5	4
2006	2	3
2007	4	
2008	6	
2009	8	

Assessment of progress: For this measure, refereed journals are those journals that are recognized by the Thompson Institute for Scientific Information. See: <http://www.thompsonscientific.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=master>. This measure only includes NIDRR research grantees funded under NIDRR's RRTC's, RERCs, ARRTs, MS, DRRP, and FIP. In 2007, grants in these areas accounted for approximately 62 percent of NIDRR's total appropriation. These data do not include awards funded by the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

Efficiency Measures

NIDRR has established efficiency measures that assess its performance in announcing grant competitions on a regular schedule and notifying applicants in a timely manner. A regular announcement schedule will allow potential applicants to better schedule their workload. NIDRR's goal is to announce all grant competitions for each fiscal year by the beginning of the fiscal year (October 1) and to notify applicants whether they have received an award within 6 months of application closing dates.

Measure: The percentage of grant competitions for a given fiscal year that are announced by the beginning of that fiscal year (October 1).		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		23
2005		8
2006	25	11
2007	50	69
2008	90	
2009	95	

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Measure: The percentage of grant awards issued within 6 months of the competition closing date.		
Year	Target	Actual
2004		83
2005	90	57
2006	90	87
2007	90	100
2008	90	
2009	90	

Assessment of Progress: NIDRR has improved the timeliness of competition announcements, and also is making progress towards its goal of notifying grantees in a timely manner. Since the advent of the Combined Notice in 2006, NIDRR succeeded in announcing approximately 11 percent of grant competitions by October 1 in fiscal year 2006, and 69 percent in fiscal year 2007. NIDRR also succeeded in ensuring that 100 percent of grant awards were issued within 6 months of the competition closing date in fiscal year 2007.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

NIDRR was assessed in 2003 using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), and it received a "Results Not Demonstrated" rating, largely due to the lack of specific long-term performance measures. A key PART recommendation was that the Department should articulate substantive, long-term research objectives for the program that have measurable outcomes. In addition, the assessment recommended that NIDRR include a larger portion of its grants in its performance measurement system; establish a regular schedule for independent evaluations; examine its portfolio, using the Long-Range Plan as a guide, to determine whether targeting funds on a smaller number of research priorities would improve its ability to meet long-term goals for the program; and develop a comprehensive plan with sufficient detail to know what specific projects would be funded or not funded with budget changes. NIDRR responded to these recommendations by establishing long-term goals for the program; revising its program review procedures to include its smaller grants; working with other agencies to fund a new Institute of Medicine study; and identifying new awards that would be made in 2006 and 2007.

NIDRR was re-assessed in 2005 and received a rating of "Adequate." Shortcomings noted in the PART review were that budget requests were not explicitly tied to the accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and that the program does not collect and make performance data on individual grantees available to the public on an annual basis. In addition, NIDRR has limited data on progress towards performance goals.

The PART improvement plan recommendations for NIDRR are presented below, followed by a description of the Department's actions to address them.

- *Collect baseline performance data for long-term performance goals and take steps to ensure that complete, timely, and accurate performance information is available for funded activities.* NIDRR is currently working to obtain baseline data for long-term performance goals and to ensure that complete, timely, and accurate performance information is available for funded activities. NIDRR has been reviewing one-third of its grant portfolio each year since 2005.

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Reviewers who are experts in disabilities research were asked to rate the accomplishments reported by grantees. Baseline data for this measure were initially expected by fall 2007; however, the Department is currently pursuing a dramatic re-design of this peer review mechanism to improve the quality, reliability, and utility of expert reviews, along with data generated by such reviews. Due to planned changes in the review process, NIDRR expects that data from the first 3 years will not be comparable with data produced by subsequent reviews. It is not yet clear when new data will be available.

- *Establish a regular schedule for announcing grant competitions and competition results to allow applicants to better schedule their workload.* In FY 2006, for the first time, NIDRR announced nearly all priorities in a single notice, which was published in the *Federal Register* on February 7th, 2006. NIDRR succeeded in announcing 69 percent of FY 2007 grant competitions by the beginning of the fiscal year, a dramatic improvement over previous years. NIDRR's ultimate goal is to align the grant competition announcement schedule with the Annual Portfolio Assessment Expert Review process, to ensure that feedback from panel members may be incorporated into subsequent priorities.
- *Review and revise the research portfolio to focus on a more strategic set of priority areas that will help achieve its goals.* The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) is currently working to promote stronger linkages between NIDRR's investments and areas of demonstrated need across the Department, such as programs that focus on similar populations and outcomes currently administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). For example, in fiscal year 2009 NIDRR plans to focus more strategically on a variety of employment-related new awards that will address many of the vocational and rehabilitation needs associated with individuals receiving services through RSA's programs.
- *Review and revise the design of NIDRR's current annual peer review panel process to improve the quality, reliability, and management utility of the expert panel reviews, along with the data produced by such reviews.* NIDRR is currently working to improve the quality, reliability, and utility of performance data collected through the current peer review process, and expects to make significant progress towards meeting this goal in fiscal year 2008.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Assistive technology

(Assistive Technology Act of 1998)

FY 2009 Authorization (\$000s): Indefinite ¹

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$29,920	\$25,655 ²	-\$4,265

¹Not more than \$1,235 thousand may be used for National Activities, unless the amount available for AT State grants exceeds \$20,953,534, in which case not more than \$1,900 thousand may be used for National Activities.

²Funds are requested only for AT State Grants and National Activities; no funds are requested for the Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act is to provide States with financial assistance that supports programs designed to maximize the ability of individuals with disabilities of all ages and their family members, guardians, advocates, and authorized representatives to obtain AT devices and AT services. AT devices are defined as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. A few examples of such devices are computer or technology aids, modified driving controls, and durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs or walkers. The programs supported are comprehensive statewide programs that are designed to increase the:

- availability of, funding for, access to, provision of, and training about AT devices and services;
- ability of individuals with disabilities of all ages to secure and maintain possession of AT during periods of transition, such as transition between school and home and home and work;
- capacity of public and private entities to provide and pay for AT devices and services;
- involvement of individuals with disabilities in decisions about AT devices and services;
- coordination of AT-related activities among State and local agencies and other private entities;
- awareness of and facilitate changes in law, regulations, procedures, policies, practices, and organizational structures, in order to improve access to AT; and
- awareness of the benefits of AT among targeted individuals and entities in the general population.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Assistive technology

Assistive Technology (AT) State grant program

The AT State grant program has been a population-based formula grant program since fiscal year 2005. The purpose of these grants to States is to support comprehensive statewide programs that maximize the ability of individuals with disabilities of all ages to access and acquire AT. States must establish consumer-responsive advisory councils with a majority membership of individuals with disabilities who use AT to advise on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these statewide programs.

Under the formula, States and outlying areas are allocated a base amount that is not less than the amount they received in fiscal year 2004 (totaling \$20,288,534). Funds appropriated in excess of the base amount are divided in half and distributed equally to each State and by a State population-based formula so that each State receives not less than \$410,000 and outlying areas receive \$125,000. If funds remain after increasing all States and outlying areas to these minimums, the remainder is again divided and distributed to States with 80 percent being allotted through the State population-based formula and 20 percent allotted in equal shares. The fiscal year 2008 allotments are based on the July 1, 2006 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2006. The fiscal year 2009 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2007 population estimates released on December 27, 2007.

Each State must submit an application that contains measurable goals, with time lines, that address the AT needs of individuals with disabilities related to: education (including goals related to the delivery of AT devices and services to students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)); employment (including goals related to the Rehabilitation Act's Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program); telecommunications and information technology; and community living. The application must include information on how the State will determine whether they have met their goals. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is given the authority to hold States accountable for a lack of progress toward these goals.

The application must also contain a detailed description of how the State will implement each of the required activities. Required activities include State-level activities and State leadership activities. States must spend a minimum of 60 percent (unless the State elects to comply with the State flexibility provision in section 4(e)(6) described below) of their formula grant funds on four State-level activities: State financing programs, device reutilization programs, device loan programs, and device demonstrations. States may, however, direct their funds towards these activities in varying amounts if they use other State or non-Federal funds to support these activities at a comparable or greater level.

States may use up to 40 percent of their AT State grant program funding on State leadership activities, with at least 5 percent of that amount devoted to technical assistance and training related to transition for students exiting school or adults entering community living. The State leadership activities include the provision of technical assistance and training to targeted individuals and entities focused on promoting the general awareness of the benefits of AT; skills development for persons involved in the assessment of the need for AT; the appropriate application of AT; and the integration of AT devices and services in plans required to be developed under other Federal laws, such as the IDEA's Individualized Education Program and the Rehabilitation Act's Individualized Plan for Employment. In addition, States must use a portion of their grant funds on public awareness activities, including the continuation and maintenance of a statewide system of information and

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referral, and coordination and collaboration activities amongst entities in the States that are responsible for the provision of AT.

The law provides States with flexibility to decide to carry out only two or three State-level activities, rather than all four. If a State elects to carry out two or three State-level activities, it must spend a minimum of 70 percent of its funds on those activities, while spending not more than 30 percent on the State leadership activities.

The AT Act specifies what a State must include in its annual progress report to RSA, including data on: the State's financing program, device loan program activities, device reutilization programs, device demonstrations, including an analysis of those individuals who benefited from each of these programs; training activities; the Statewide system of information and referral; and the outcomes of any improvement initiatives carried out by the State. The report must also provide data on the use of resources, including any contributed to the program by other public and private entities, and the level of customer satisfaction.

Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology

Formula grants for protection and advocacy (P&A) systems established under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act support protection and advocacy services to assist individuals with disabilities of all ages in the acquisition, utilization, or maintenance of AT services or devices. Funds are distributed on a State population basis, with a minimum annual grant of \$50,000. Outlying areas must receive not less than \$30,000 annually. Also, the Act requires a minimum award of \$30,000 to the P&A system serving the American Indian consortium. The fiscal year 2007 allotments were based on the July 1, 2005 population estimates published by the Census Bureau in December 2005. The fiscal year 2008 allotments are based on the July 1, 2006 population estimates published in December 2006.

National Activities

The AT Act provides authority for the provision of technical assistance—through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements on a competitive basis—to individuals with disabilities of all ages, AT State grant program grantees, and to protection and advocacy systems. The AT Act requires the Secretary to make an award to renovate, update, and maintain the National Public Internet Site (<http://www.assistivetech.net>). In addition, the AT Act includes authority for grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to assist grantees in developing and implementing effective data collection and reporting systems.

In designing its technical assistance activities, the Department must consider the input of directors of AT State grant programs and Alternative Financing programs, individuals with disabilities who use AT, family members, and protection and advocacy service providers, among others. The technical assistance must respond to specific requests for information and disseminate information to States, entities funded under the AT Act, and any other public entities that seek information about AT. The technical assistance must provide model approaches for the removal of barriers to accessing AT, examples of effective program coordination, and practices that increase funding for AT devices.

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Alternative Financing program

In fiscal year 2005, the AT Act authorized the Secretary to award grants under the Alternative Financing program (AFP), as authorized in title III of the AT Act in effect prior to October 25, 2004. This authority was extended in fiscal year 2006 through appropriations language. Although no new awards are being made, the Alternative Financing Programs funded previously continue to operate. In addition financing programs are among the State level activities specified under the AT State grant program.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(\$000s)
2004.....	\$25,943
2005.....	29,760
2006.....	30,452
2007.....	30,452
2008.....	29,920

FY 2009 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$25.655 million in fiscal year 2009 for Assistive Technology (AT), a decrease of \$4.265 million from the 2008 appropriation for these programs. The AT State Grant program and National Activities would be funded at their 2008 level. These programs enable individuals to acquire technology they might not otherwise be able to obtain—technology that improves their quality of life, and in many cases, enables them to work or participate in other productive activities. No funds are requested for the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) for Assistive Technology program, which provides services that are authorized and can be provided by other P&A programs.

The request includes \$24.620 million for the AT State grant program, the same level as the 2008 appropriation for this program. These funds will be used by States to carry out the first year of their 2008 State plan. The State plans must describe how the State intends to carry out its AT State grant program to meet the AT needs of individuals with disabilities in the State, to achieve the measurable goals required by the AT Act, and to comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

The fiscal year 2009 request also includes \$1.035 million for National Activities technical assistance, which will provide continuation funding for three cooperative agreements that began in previous fiscal years. These agreements are for a National Information Internet System, State training and technical assistance, and data collection and reporting assistance.

No funds are requested for the AT Act's Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology program in fiscal year 2009. These services are authorized and can be provided by other existing P&A programs. Specifically, AT services are provided by the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program authorized under section 509 of the Rehabilitation Act, for which the Administration is requesting \$16.201 million.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
AT State grant program	\$25,058	\$24,620	\$24,620
Protection and advocacy program	4,341	4,265	0
National activities	<u>1,053</u>	<u>1,035</u>	<u>1,035</u>
Total	30,452	29,920	25,655

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2009 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Under the AT Act, each State is required to establish measurable goals for access to and acquisition of AT, with timelines for meeting those goals. These goals must address the AT needs of individuals with disabilities in the State in the domains of education, employment, community living, and telecommunications and information technology (IT).

In order to measure the increase in the acquisition of AT, the following three measures have been established for the AT State grant program. The Department is requiring States to survey individuals served under this program to determine whether those who obtained AT (for education, employment, or community living purposes) believe they would not have otherwise obtained the AT device or service. Once several years of data have been analyzed, the Department will establish a target against which State performance will be assessed.

Goal: To increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

Objective: *To increase acquisition of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.*

Measure: Targeted individuals and entities as defined by the AT Act obtain devices and services in the domains of (1) education, (2) employment, and (3) community living despite systemic and cost barriers.

The percent of States that met or exceeded the target established for appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained AT for:

- (1) education purposes,
- (2) employment purposes, or
- (3) community living

through State financing activities or reutilization programs who would not have obtained the device or service.

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The first year of data for these three measures are expected in spring, 2008.

In order to measure the increase in the access to AT, the Department has established the following 4 measures for the AT State grant program. The Department is requiring States to collect information from individuals served under this program regarding whether the services helped the individual to make an informed decision. Once several years of data have been analyzed, the Department will establish a target against which State performance will be assessed.

Objective: *To increase access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.*

Measure: Targeted individuals and entities as defined by the AT Act have increased access to AT in the domains of (1) education, (2) employment, (3) community living, and (4) telecommunications/IT because of exposure that enables them to make informed decisions.

The percent of States that met or exceeded the target established for appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration and/or loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service:

- (1) for educational purposes,
- (2) for employment purposes,
- (3) for community living, or
- (4) that meets an IT/telecommunications need.

Efficiency Measures

The efficiency measure established for the **Alternative Financing program (AFP)** will continue to be used to measure activities conducted as a result of this program. This measure is calculated by dividing the total amount loaned by a State by the Federal AFP grant funds awarded to that State. As shown below, this measure varies considerably across States, depending on how long the program has been operating, the mechanisms States use to make alternative financing available (e.g., guaranteed loans, interest rate buy-down loans, non-guaranteed low interest loans, guaranteed and interest rate buy-down loan, and direct loans), and differences in the amount paid from the AFP permanent account to cover administrative and program costs.

Goal: **To increase availability of, funding for, access to, and provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services.**

Objective: Reduce barriers associated with the cost of assistive technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities.

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Measure: Alternative Funding Program (AFP): The amount loaned per \$1 million Federal investment.						
Year	Target	Actual (\$ in millions)				
	Cumulative \$ Loaned per \$1M Federal	Annual Federal Investment	Annual Amount Loaned	Cumulative Federal Investment	Cumulative Amount Loaned	Cumulative \$ Loaned per \$1M Federal
2004		35.82	11.10	53.25	26.64	.50
2005		0	12.05	53.25	38.69	.76
2006	.75	3.94		57.19		.92
2007	.75	2.61		59.80		
2008	.80	0				
2009	1					

Assessment of progress: The AFPs began to operate during the fiscal year following the fiscal year from which they received their Federal funding. Therefore, the annual Federal investment data are shown in the fiscal year following the year in which the funds were awarded. For example, the \$2.61 million shown in fiscal year 2007 was appropriated in fiscal year 2006. No funds were appropriated for fiscal years 2007 or 2008.

The amount loaned per \$1 million has fluctuated greatly from year-to-year, depending on the number of new programs being established, the type of program being implemented, and the availability of additional funds. The amount loaned per \$1 million Federal investment dropped from \$610,000 in fiscal year 2001 to \$450,000 in fiscal year 2002 when 10 new States began to operate. In fiscal year 2003, the amount loaned per \$1 million rose to \$890,000, when all States were in their second or third year of operation. As expected, the data for fiscal year 2004 reflect a drop to \$500,000 loaned per \$1 million as 15 new States were awarded Federal funds, with many not having any activity to report, and 11 previously funded States expanded their programs.

Since fiscal year 2004 the amount loaned has continued to rise as States have operated their programs for many years. RSA has raised their target to \$1 million loaned per million invested for fiscal year 2009, and is contemplating a new efficiency measure that may look at how many States loan a certain amount per \$1 million.

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Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	57,890,480	55,816,789	55,750,321	(66,468)
Alaska	9,450,153	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
Arizona	56,406,863	57,950,200	58,927,705	977,505
Arkansas	36,527,457	35,809,204	35,820,909	11,705
California	277,134,998	275,593,209	274,420,710	(1,172,499)
Colorado	34,772,217	36,013,729	36,419,452	405,723
Connecticut	20,347,775	19,947,115	19,835,261	(111,854)
Delaware	9,479,164	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
District of Columbia	12,633,414	12,618,252	12,643,839	25,587
Florida	154,108,575	152,844,034	152,952,893	108,859
Georgia	76,685,255	92,258,790	93,055,342	796,552
Hawaii	11,254,618	11,052,823	10,968,800	(84,023)
Idaho	15,724,609	15,867,655	16,046,968	179,313
Illinois	106,346,174	105,254,070	104,758,019	(496,051)
Indiana	66,226,265	66,660,094	66,517,968	(142,126)
Iowa	32,386,805	31,155,664	31,022,932	(132,732)
Kansas	27,641,991	26,929,144	26,856,197	(72,947)
Kentucky	51,376,929	51,743,094	51,756,428	13,334
Louisiana	43,077,993	56,383,213	56,124,975	(258,238)
Maine	15,289,010	15,030,202	14,916,702	(113,500)
Maryland	39,862,465	38,114,000	37,914,219	(199,781)
Massachusetts	46,477,556	45,530,340	45,366,175	(164,165)
Michigan	96,240,255	97,347,491	96,619,628	(727,863)
Minnesota	43,804,626	43,124,084	43,061,552	(62,532)
Mississippi	42,112,807	41,288,450	41,143,756	(144,694)
Missouri	61,038,559	62,037,506	61,953,637	(83,869)
Montana	11,147,011	10,762,027	10,808,699	46,672
Nebraska	17,947,911	17,356,124	17,300,973	(55,151)
Nevada	15,547,425	17,931,565	18,247,234	315,669
New Hampshire	10,799,787	10,736,013	10,681,867	(54,146)
New Jersey	54,674,747	55,184,632	54,729,805	(454,827)
New Mexico	22,861,133	22,684,862	22,681,280	(3,582)
New York	147,134,022	147,351,564	146,514,623	(836,941)
North Carolina	88,755,384	92,812,979	93,835,881	1,022,902
North Dakota	9,342,387	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
Ohio	118,396,849	120,400,886	119,651,127	(749,759)
Oklahoma	40,564,976	40,628,883	40,704,263	75,380
Oregon	35,110,466	35,175,174	35,298,408	123,234
Pennsylvania	125,030,800	121,101,676	120,403,167	(698,509)
Rhode Island	10,276,323	10,051,281	9,935,299	(115,982)
South Carolina	50,594,695	50,734,708	51,172,761	438,053
South Dakota	9,518,089	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
Tennessee	66,251,309	65,575,720	66,104,904	529,184
Texas	212,142,313	217,749,584	219,250,468	1,500,884
Utah	26,821,027	28,030,439	28,684,697	654,258
Vermont	9,464,158	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
Virginia	63,649,548	62,084,119	62,130,119	46,000
Washington	48,880,519	51,125,448	51,257,913	132,465
West Virginia	25,539,997	25,312,666	25,119,332	(193,334)
Wisconsin	54,831,961	55,246,877	55,250,498	3,621
Wyoming	8,519,853	9,463,837	9,463,837	0
American Samoa	924,424	928,801	921,439	(7,362)
Guam	2,052,208	2,877,628	2,890,650	13,022
Northern Mariana Islands	1,126,126	1,159,806	1,177,312	17,506
Puerto Rico	68,548,083	71,021,021	70,799,255	(221,766)
Virgin Islands	1,965,456	1,974,343	1,961,616	(12,727)
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	34,444,000	34,892,000	34,892,000	0
Other (non-State allocations)	0	0	0	0
Total	2,837,160,000	2,874,043,000	2,874,043,000	0

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Client Assistance State Grants

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	152,753	149,933	149,794	(140)
Alaska	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Arizona	199,052	201,029	205,172	4,144
Arkansas	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
California	1,210,950	1,188,556	1,183,151	(5,405)
Colorado	156,351	154,965	157,357	2,392
Connecticut	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Delaware	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
District of Columbia	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Florida	596,218	589,750	590,754	1,004
Georgia	304,063	305,275	308,944	3,669
Hawaii	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Idaho	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Illinois	427,758	418,336	416,010	(2,326)
Indiana	210,202	205,828	205,384	(444)
Iowa	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Kansas	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Kentucky	139,870	137,123	137,288	165
Louisiana	151,607	139,786	138,962	(824)
Maine	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Maryland	187,694	183,079	181,854	(1,225)
Massachusetts	214,451	209,859	208,765	(1,094)
Michigan	339,196	329,129	326,004	(3,125)
Minnesota	172,023	168,453	168,236	(217)
Mississippi	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Missouri	194,395	190,479	190,272	(207)
Montana	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Nebraska	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Nevada	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
New Hampshire	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
New Jersey	292,177	284,430	281,145	(3,285)
New Mexico	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
New York	645,309	629,403	624,627	(4,776)
North Carolina	291,015	288,732	293,287	4,555
North Dakota	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Ohio	384,212	374,195	371,160	(3,035)
Oklahoma	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Oregon	122,028	120,649	121,297	649
Pennsylvania	416,572	405,578	402,423	(3,154)
Rhode Island	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
South Carolina	142,607	140,877	142,668	1,791
South Dakota	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Tennessee	199,846	196,872	199,280	2,409
Texas	766,140	766,379	773,735	7,355
Utah	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Vermont	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Virginia	253,620	249,166	249,624	458
Washington	210,731	208,510	209,369	859
West Virginia	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
Wisconsin	185,543	181,148	181,313	165
Wyoming	119,554	117,465	117,463	(2)
American Samoa	53,800	52,860	52,859	(1)
Guam	53,800	52,860	52,859	(1)
Northern Mariana Islands	53,800	52,860	52,859	(1)
Puerto Rico	131,111	128,050	127,577	(473)
Virgin Islands	53,800	52,860	52,859	(1)
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	0	0	0	0
Other (non-State allocations)	0	0	0	0
Total	11,781,990	11,576,168	11,576,000	(168)

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Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	209,900	206,047	205,849	(198)
Alaska	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Arizona	273,521	276,264	281,951	5,687
Arkansas	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
California	1,663,983	1,633,378	1,625,903	(7,475)
Colorado	214,844	212,962	216,243	3,281
Connecticut	161,659	157,505	157,505	0
Delaware	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
District of Columbia	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Florida	819,273	810,466	811,824	1,358
Georgia	417,818	419,525	424,555	5,030
Hawaii	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Idaho	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Illinois	587,789	574,900	571,688	(3,212)
Indiana	288,842	282,859	282,242	(617)
Iowa	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Kansas	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Kentucky	192,197	188,441	188,663	222
Louisiana	208,326	192,101	190,964	(1,137)
Maine	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Maryland	257,914	251,597	249,907	(1,690)
Massachusetts	294,680	288,400	286,888	(1,512)
Michigan	466,094	452,307	448,000	(4,307)
Minnesota	236,380	231,497	231,193	(304)
Mississippi	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Missouri	267,121	261,766	261,475	(291)
Montana	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Nebraska	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Nevada	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
New Hampshire	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
New Jersey	401,485	390,879	386,354	(4,525)
New Mexico	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
New York	886,730	864,959	858,373	(6,586)
North Carolina	399,888	396,791	403,039	6,248
North Dakota	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Ohio	527,951	514,240	510,054	(4,186)
Oklahoma	163,390	160,356	160,900	544
Oregon	167,681	165,802	166,689	887
Pennsylvania	572,419	557,367	553,017	(4,350)
Rhode Island	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
South Carolina	195,958	193,601	196,057	2,456
South Dakota	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Tennessee	274,611	270,552	273,854	3,302
Texas	1,052,766	1,053,200	1,063,279	10,079
Utah	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Vermont	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Virginia	348,503	342,418	343,038	620
Washington	289,569	286,546	287,719	1,173
West Virginia	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
Wisconsin	254,958	248,944	249,164	220
Wyoming	160,311	157,505	157,505	0
American Samoa	80,155	78,753	78,753	0
Guam	80,155	78,753	78,753	0
Northern Mariana Islands	80,155	78,753	78,753	0
Puerto Rico	180,161	175,973	175,318	(655)
Virgin Islands	80,155	78,753	78,753	0
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	68,758	67,555	67,555	0
Other (non-State allocations)	296,809	291,617	291,618	1
Total	16,489,440	16,200,937	16,201,000	63

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Supported Employment State Grants

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	395,927	377,983	0	(377,983)
Alaska	301,254	300,000	0	(300,000)
Arizona	204,709	506,794	0	(506,794)
Arkansas	305,253	300,000	0	(300,000)
California	3,138,729	2,996,357	0	(2,996,357)
Colorado	396,437	390,668	0	(390,668)
Connecticut	306,635	300,000	0	(300,000)
Delaware	301,595	300,000	0	(300,000)
District of Columbia	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Florida	1,511,747	1,486,763	0	(1,486,763)
Georgia	770,969	769,599	0	(769,599)
Hawaii	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Idaho	302,701	300,000	0	(300,000)
Illinois	1,108,729	1,054,628	0	(1,054,628)
Indiana	532,980	518,893	0	(518,893)
Iowa	305,607	300,000	0	(300,000)
Kansas	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Kentucky	362,536	345,687	0	(345,687)
Louisiana	384,409	352,401	0	(352,401)
Maine	302,498	300,000	0	(300,000)
Maryland	486,495	461,543	0	(461,543)
Massachusetts	555,846	529,057	0	(529,057)
Michigan	879,179	829,736	0	(829,736)
Minnesota	436,176	424,671	0	(424,671)
Mississippi	305,521	300,000	0	(300,000)
Missouri	492,899	480,198	0	(480,198)
Montana	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Nebraska	303,324	300,000	0	(300,000)
Nevada	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
New Hampshire	302,476	300,000	0	(300,000)
New Jersey	740,832	717,050	0	(717,050)
New Mexico	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
New York	1,672,612	1,586,727	0	(1,586,727)
North Carolina	754,295	727,894	0	(727,894)
North Dakota	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Ohio	995,858	943,349	0	(943,349)
Oklahoma	301,492	300,000	0	(300,000)
Oregon	309,410	304,156	0	(304,156)
Pennsylvania	1,079,736	1,022,464	0	(1,022,464)
Rhode Island	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
South Carolina	369,630	355,153	0	(355,153)
South Dakota	301,467	300,000	0	(300,000)
Tennessee	517,990	496,314	0	(496,314)
Texas	1,942,594	1,932,047	0	(1,932,047)
Utah	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
Vermont	301,175	300,000	0	(300,000)
Virginia	657,371	628,150	0	(628,150)
Washington	546,205	525,655	0	(525,655)
West Virginia	303,434	300,000	0	(300,000)
Wisconsin	470,455	456,675	0	(456,675)
Wyoming	300,000	300,000	0	(300,000)
American Samoa	37,125	36,476	0	(36,476)
Guam	37,125	36,476	0	(36,476)
Northern Mariana Islands	0	36,476	0	(36,476)
Puerto Rico	332,438	322,814	0	(322,814)
Virgin Islands	37,125	36,476	0	(36,476)
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	0	0	0	0
Other (non-State allocations)	297,000	291,811	0	(291,811)
Total	29,700,000	29,181,141	0	(29,181,141)

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Independent Living State Grants

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Alaska	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Arizona	333,190	336,132	343,214	7,082
Arkansas	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
California	2,026,987	1,987,334	1,979,185	(8,149)
Colorado	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Connecticut	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Delaware	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
District of Columbia	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Florida	997,999	986,096	988,219	2,123
Georgia	508,965	510,437	516,804	6,367
Hawaii	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Idaho	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Illinois	716,016	699,482	695,905	(3,577)
Indiana	351,853	344,156	343,568	(588)
Iowa	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Kansas	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Kentucky	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Louisiana	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Maine	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Maryland	314,178	306,118	304,207	(1,911)
Massachusetts	358,965	350,897	349,224	(1,673)
Michigan	567,773	550,323	545,342	(4,981)
Minnesota	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Mississippi	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Missouri	325,393	318,492	318,289	(203)
Montana	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Nebraska	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Nevada	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
New Hampshire	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
New Jersey	489,069	475,584	470,302	(5,282)
New Mexico	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
New York	1,080,171	1,052,397	1,044,882	(7,515)
North Carolina	487,124	482,776	490,612	7,836
North Dakota	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Ohio	643,124	625,676	620,880	(4,796)
Oklahoma	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Oregon	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Pennsylvania	697,292	678,150	673,177	(4,973)
Rhode Island	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
South Carolina	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
South Dakota	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Tennessee	334,518	329,181	333,358	4,177
Texas	1,282,428	1,281,431	1,294,310	12,879
Utah	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Vermont	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Virginia	424,529	416,621	417,574	953
Washington	352,739	348,641	350,235	1,594
West Virginia	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Wisconsin	310,577	302,890	303,303	413
Wyoming	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
American Samoa	27,952	27,464	27,464	0
Guam	27,952	27,464	27,464	0
Northern Mariana Islands	27,952	27,464	27,464	0
Puerto Rico	301,477	296,212	296,207	(5)
Virgin Islands	27,952	27,464	27,464	0
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	0	0	0	0
Other (non-State allocations)	225,878	221,934	221,930	(4)
Total	22,587,840	22,193,388	22,193,000	(388)

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Services for Older Blind Individuals

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	496,740	487,465	487,460	(5)
Alaska	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Arizona	603,916	606,661	606,654	(7)
Arkansas	310,599	304,391	304,388	(3)
California	3,258,597	3,168,533	3,168,497	(36)
Colorado	409,385	416,511	416,506	(5)
Connecticut	387,735	371,497	371,493	(4)
Delaware	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
District of Columbia	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Florida	2,231,399	2,186,358	2,186,333	(25)
Georgia	776,709	795,702	795,693	(9)
Hawaii	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Idaho	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Illinois	1,255,008	1,218,955	1,218,941	(14)
Indiana	637,259	625,545	625,537	(8)
Iowa	337,920	326,277	326,273	(4)
Kansas	283,182	276,413	276,409	(4)
Kentucky	442,616	435,278	435,273	(5)
Louisiana	446,705	421,441	421,436	(5)
Maine	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Maryland	558,434	542,771	542,765	(6)
Massachusetts	687,166	672,267	672,260	(7)
Michigan	1,042,799	1,019,899	1,019,887	(12)
Minnesota	510,501	500,881	500,876	(5)
Mississippi	294,533	288,038	288,035	(3)
Missouri	625,786	609,053	609,045	(8)
Montana	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Nebraska	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Nevada	236,723	237,150	237,148	(2)
New Hampshire	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
New Jersey	920,160	891,375	891,365	(10)
New Mexico	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
New York	2,051,257	1,985,566	1,985,543	(23)
North Carolina	878,679	883,496	883,486	(10)
North Dakota	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Ohio	1,238,987	1,202,152	1,202,139	(13)
Oklahoma	380,832	370,451	370,447	(4)
Oregon	392,064	393,727	393,722	(5)
Pennsylvania	1,473,131	1,419,592	1,419,576	(16)
Rhode Island	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
South Carolina	453,628	455,243	455,237	(6)
South Dakota	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Tennessee	632,822	626,567	626,559	(8)
Texas	1,948,128	1,938,805	1,938,782	(23)
Utah	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Vermont	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
Virginia	757,843	741,565	741,556	(9)
Washington	625,107	623,223	623,216	(7)
West Virginia	227,290	225,000	225,000	0
Wisconsin	584,462	569,010	569,004	(6)
Wyoming	225,000	225,000	225,000	0
American Samoa	40,000	40,000	40,000	0
Guam	40,000	40,000	40,000	0
Northern Mariana Islands	40,000	40,000	40,000	0
Puerto Rico	407,681	400,263	400,259	(4)
Virgin Islands	40,000	40,000	40,000	0
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	0	0	0	0
Other (non-State allocations)	328,947	323,203	323,200	(3)
Total	32,894,730	32,320,324	32,320,000	(324)

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	52,237	50,716	0	(50,716)
Alaska	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Arizona	68,071	68,000	0	(68,000)
Arkansas	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
California	414,113	402,038	0	(402,038)
Colorado	53,468	52,418	0	(52,418)
Connecticut	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Delaware	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
District of Columbia	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Florida	203,891	199,488	0	(199,488)
Georgia	103,982	103,262	0	(103,262)
Hawaii	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Idaho	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Illinois	146,282	141,506	0	(141,506)
Indiana	71,884	69,623	0	(69,623)
Iowa	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Kansas	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Kentucky	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Louisiana	51,846	50,000	0	(50,000)
Maine	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Maryland	64,187	61,928	0	(61,928)
Massachusetts	73,337	70,987	0	(70,987)
Michigan	115,996	111,330	0	(111,330)
Minnesota	58,827	56,981	0	(56,981)
Mississippi	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Missouri	66,478	64,431	0	(64,431)
Montana	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Nebraska	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Nevada	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
New Hampshire	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
New Jersey	99,917	96,211	0	(96,211)
New Mexico	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
New York	220,679	212,900	0	(212,900)
North Carolina	99,519	97,666	0	(97,666)
North Dakota	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Ohio	131,390	126,575	0	(126,575)
Oklahoma	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Oregon	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Pennsylvania	142,457	137,190	0	(137,190)
Rhode Island	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
South Carolina	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
South Dakota	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Tennessee	68,342	66,593	0	(66,593)
Texas	262,000	259,234	0	(259,234)
Utah	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Vermont	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Virginia	86,731	84,283	0	(84,283)
Washington	72,065	70,530	0	(70,530)
West Virginia	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Wisconsin	63,451	61,275	0	(61,275)
Wyoming	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
American Samoa	30,000	30,000	0	(30,000)
Guam	30,000	30,000	0	(30,000)
Northern Mariana Islands	30,000	30,000	0	(30,000)
Puerto Rico	50,000	50,000	0	(50,000)
Virgin Islands	30,000	30,000	0	(30,000)
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	30,000	30,000	0	(30,000)
Other (non-State allocations)	0	0	0	0
Total	4,341,150	4,265,163	0	(4,265,163)

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Assistive Technology State Grants Program

State or Other Area	2007 Actual	2008 Estimate	2009 Estimate	Change from 2008 Estimate
Alabama	424,825	417,263	417,223	(40)
Alaska	415,401	410,706	410,764	58
Arizona	582,060	574,719	575,614	895
Arkansas	452,866	446,659	446,678	19
California	989,070	958,270	957,026	(1,244)
Colorado	442,385	435,072	435,586	514
Connecticut	387,165	380,107	379,903	(204)
Delaware	398,934	394,121	394,153	32
District of Columbia	356,765	352,337	352,352	15
Florida	635,923	619,620	619,809	189
Georgia	560,774	551,385	552,171	786
Hawaii	431,926	426,769	426,685	(84)
Idaho	404,910	399,824	399,978	154
Illinois	573,002	559,069	558,537	(532)
Indiana	449,564	440,632	440,523	(109)
Iowa	427,067	420,597	420,480	(117)
Kansas	388,104	381,837	381,774	(63)
Kentucky	447,737	440,421	440,449	28
Louisiana	475,980	466,467	466,277	(190)
Maine	445,919	440,653	440,550	(103)
Maryland	470,639	462,058	461,778	(280)
Massachusetts	489,927	480,872	480,620	(252)
Michigan	630,950	618,462	617,759	(703)
Minnesota	464,612	456,540	456,482	(58)
Mississippi	373,217	366,595	366,498	(97)
Missouri	529,491	520,942	520,886	(56)
Montana	427,956	423,062	423,103	41
Nebraska	437,821	432,272	432,221	(51)
Nevada	394,939	389,373	389,735	362
New Hampshire	413,631	408,409	408,344	(65)
New Jersey	458,023	446,885	446,149	(736)
New Mexico	425,768	420,203	420,206	3
New York	655,918	636,668	635,590	(1,078)
North Carolina	511,805	501,884	502,865	981
North Dakota	355,215	350,491	350,482	(9)
Ohio	532,483	519,199	518,514	(685)
Oklahoma	409,399	402,574	402,654	80
Oregon	402,340	395,643	395,777	134
Pennsylvania	657,094	643,017	642,304	(713)
Rhode Island	354,387	349,256	349,128	(128)
South Carolina	492,878	485,736	486,119	383
South Dakota	403,819	399,032	399,090	58
Tennessee	418,463	410,024	410,539	515
Texas	798,887	781,010	782,581	1,571
Utah	434,208	428,597	429,136	539
Vermont	392,261	387,559	387,506	(53)
Virginia	468,232	458,505	458,591	86
Washington	453,356	444,887	445,062	175
West Virginia	406,069	400,417	400,273	(144)
Wisconsin	445,159	436,665	436,690	25
Wyoming	347,903	343,327	343,353	26
American Samoa	125,000	125,000	125,000	0
Guam	125,000	125,000	125,000	0
Northern Mariana Islands	125,000	125,000	125,000	0
Puerto Rico	410,773	403,545	403,433	(112)
Virgin Islands	125,000	125,000	125,000	0
Freely Associated States	0	0	0	0
Indian set-aside	0	0	0	0
Other (non-State allocations)	0	0	0	0
Total	25,058,000	24,620,237	24,620,000	(237)