

# Learn and Serve America

Performance Report for  
Program Year 2006–2007

*April 2008*



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 



## **Our Mission:**

*Improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering*

# *Learn and Serve America*

The **Corporation for National and Community Service** (hereinafter “the Corporation”) provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities through three programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

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***Introduction and  
Terms and Definitions***

## Learn and Serve America Performance Report Program Year 2006-2007

This report, *Learn and Serve America Performance Report for Program Year 2006-2007*,<sup>1</sup> provides program data for organizations that received funds from Learn and Serve America for the 2006-2007 program year (spanning July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007).<sup>2</sup> The report illustrates where Learn and Serve America funds are distributed, how many participants are being engaged in Learn and Serve America-funded activities, and the extent of institutionalization for organizations that receive support through Learn and Serve America. The data presented in the report are taken from the annual data collection system, Learn and Serve Systems Information Exchange (LASSIE).<sup>3</sup>

The report begins with an introduction to the Corporation for National and Community Service, the nation's largest grantmaker supporting service and volunteering. The mission and goals of Learn and Serve America are then summarized, followed by a description of the program's funding mechanisms. The introductory section concludes with terms and definitions that characterize Learn and Serve America. Following this introductory material is the body of the report, which consists of a comprehensive section depicting Learn and Serve America's *K-12 Formula* grant program in the form of state profiles, and sections that depict Learn and Serve America's *K-12 Competitive*, *Higher Education*, and *Community-Based Organization* grant programs. Appendixes containing more detailed data conclude the report.

### Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service was established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. The Corporation supports a range of national and community service programs, providing opportunities for individuals to serve full- or part-time or as part of a team. The Corporation's three major service programs are AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation works to foster a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

### Learn and Serve America's Missions and Goals

Learn and Serve America encourages civic participation and volunteerism throughout the country by supporting service-learning programs that help more than one million students meet community needs while improving their academic skills and learning the habits of good citizenship. For more than a decade, Learn and Serve America programs have integrated service with school curricula, a practice known as service-learning. In effective service-learning programs, both learning and service are emphasized. For example, students in quality service-learning programs are graded on what they learn, as they would be in any class. At the same time, they are expected to carry out service projects of genuine benefit to the community. All Learn and Serve America programs are required to specify the ways in which they will foster the development of program participants' knowledge, skills, civic responsibility, and civic engagement.

<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared for the Corporation by Westat, Rockville, Maryland, under contract number CNSHQC03003.

<sup>2</sup> The 2006-2007 program year represents the first year in a new Learn and Serve America 3-year grant cycle. For more information on programs reported under the 2006-2007 program year, see page ix.

<sup>3</sup> Learn and Serve America's data collection system is a web-based system. Copies of the LASSIE survey instruments and a public-use dataset can be found on the LASSIE web site: [www.lsareports.org](http://www.lsareports.org).

Learn and Serve America resources are available in the form of grants to state education agencies (SEAs), nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, Indian Tribes, and State Commissions on National and Community Service. These grantees act as intermediaries, providing subgrants, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and administrative help to local programs. These local programs, in turn, establish partnerships between schools and community-based organizations by engaging students, teachers, and volunteers to address critical community issues.

## How Funds Are Distributed and Used in Learn and Serve America

Learn and Serve America has three main categories of grants: *K-12 School-Based* grants, *Higher Education* grants, and grants to *Community-Based Organizations*. In the following sections, we describe the ways in which each category of funds is distributed and offer examples of how the grants affect local communities.

### ***K-12 School-Based Grants***

There are two types of *K-12 School-Based* grants: *Formula* and *Competitive*. In the *K-12 Formula* award program, funds are made available to all 50 states,<sup>4</sup> the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico on the basis of a population-based funding structure. *Formula* grants are awarded to SEAs that, in turn, distribute these funds to schools and school districts within their states.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, *K-12 Competitive* funds are awarded on the basis of a competitive grant process. Grantees may include SEAs, as well as Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories, and nonprofit organizations.

Recipients of *K-12 School-Based* grants are required to provide subgrants to school districts and individual schools for the operation of service-learning programs. In addition, grantees provide training and technical assistance, evaluation, and administrative help to local programs. In some cases, the recipients of subgrants may opt to grant part or all of their funds to other school districts or individual schools. Throughout this report, these “third tier” recipients of funds are referred to as sub-subgrantees.

- Throughout Carroll County, Maryland, students participated in the Chestnut Project. As part of their microbiology classes, the students addressed the plight of the American chestnut tree by growing chestnut seedlings in mini-orchards on school grounds, tracking tree growth, and testing trees for blight resistance. With technical training provided by a community partner, MdBioLab, thousands of students in grades 7-12 learned about the growth and transplanting of trees and worked in microbiology labs to isolate the DNA of the fungus that kills chestnuts. The American Chestnut Foundation has used the students’ research in their efforts to preserve the tree in Maryland. Through the Chestnut Project, Carroll County students gain greater interest in science. While 30 percent of students nationwide take science electives, 90 percent of Carroll County school juniors and seniors elect to take science courses after completing the three science courses required for high school graduation.

<sup>4</sup> While funds are made available to all 50 states, South Dakota and Vermont did not apply for funding for the 2006-2007 program year.

<sup>5</sup> In this report, the Formula Award for each grantee represents the amount of formula funds awarded for the 2006 grant year, although 38 grantees awarded funds to subgrantees under no-cost extensions from the previous grant cycle. Those states providing no-cost-extension awards can be identified in Appendix 1.



## Learn and Serve America

- In Quaker Valley, Pennsylvania, students conducted the “Sit and Be Fit” project to help residents at Leetsdale Manor, a local low-income senior citizen apartment complex, to improve their quality of life. Through the school’s Service Learning Center, students received training from the local YMCA Physical Education Instructors to design exercise methods for seniors and organized a weekly exercise and wellness program for the residents of Leetsdale Manor. The weekly exercise classes were supplemented by healthy living presentations, which included a healthy snack prepared by students in Foods classes, and guest speakers who presented on health issues for senior citizens. At the end of the year, students wrote a recipe book of simple healthy meals and gave each Leetsdale Manor resident a copy. The project proved rewarding for both the students and the residents, who developed close relationships with one another.

**Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories Grants.** Up to three percent of *K-12 Competitive* funds are set aside specifically for Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories. Grantees may operate direct service-learning programs, subgrant funds to Tribal or U.S. Territory schools, and/or develop partnerships with organizations to operate programs. Grant funds can be used to operate service-learning programs that engage K-12 students, implement teacher training or program evaluation, or support service-learning coordinators.

- The Fort McDermitt Paiute/Shoshone Tribe in McDermitt, Nevada, which is located in a rural and remote section of the state, partnered with the McDermitt Combined School to involve students, along with adult volunteers, in service-learning projects focused on mentoring, community and economic development, and preservation of tribal culture. During the program, high school students mentored elementary school students and presented lessons to elementary classrooms on good citizenship. In collaboration with two other tribal communities—Owyhee and Pyramid Lake—the program also implemented Project Ignition, where students learned about safe driving techniques and designed ways to teach these techniques to other students. The program established the McDermitt Fire and Emergency Exploring Post, a service organization that offered young men and women ages 15 to 20 the chance to learn more about fire and emergency service career opportunities, and offered stargazing events where students shared what they had learned in astronomy class with community members and visiting tourists. Students also taught traditional dances, songs, chants, and stories and gave performances at local events and powwows.
- Students at John F. Kennedy High School in Guam were involved in service-learning projects that focused on school safety, a serious problem for the school, which serves 2,400 students in a building built for only 1,500. Through a school survey and extensive discussions, the students identified that the overcrowding led to a lack of space for breaks, lunch, and student activities as well as conflict and fighting. As part of student-driven service-learning projects, students built Peace Pavilions, where students could come together, work out their problems, and alleviate school congestion. They also erected a Peace Pole on which the message of peace was written in different languages. To showcase the school’s diversity as an asset, students created a student-owned radio station to broadcast music, public service announcements, commercials, skits, poems, and original songs to promote appreciation for diversity and tolerance.



## **Higher Education Grants**

*Higher Education* grants are awarded in two ways. First, funds may be awarded to institutions of higher education (colleges, universities) that operate service-learning programs within their individual institutions. These grants are referred to as *Higher Education Individual* grants. *Higher Education Consortia* grants provide funds to a lead organization, which may be a college, university, or nonprofit organization, for a consortium of higher education institutions. For example, and hypothetically, Atlantic State University might be the lead institution of a group of state universities along the Eastern seaboard that includes New England State University, Northern State University, Southern State University, and Gulf State University. With these *Higher Education Consortia* awards, the lead institution serves as the grantee that subgrants to other colleges and universities within the consortium for the promotion of service-learning activities.

- Otterbein College's Creative Literacy Alliance is a service-learning partnership between Otterbein College and Genoa Middle School in Westerville, Ohio. Otterbein College students enrolled in a course on teaching creative writing in the community served as Poets-in-Residence at the middle school, teaching over 300 diverse and economically disadvantaged urban youth literacy habits and strategies. The Creative Literacy Alliance also connected children with nationally recognized artists-in-residence, poet Helen Frost and playwright Michael London. Otterbein College students collaborated with middle school students to write, direct, and act in social justice plays to raise awareness in their community about violence, bullying, and identity issues. The plays were performed throughout the city as a teen community awareness program. The middle school teachers and staff attributed their success in improving student proficiency scores in reading to the Creative Literacy Alliance.
- The Pilot Street Partnership is a joint program of the Virginia Tech Service-Learning Center in Blacksburg, Virginia, and Refugee and Immigration Services in Roanoke, Virginia. Service-learning students enrolled in communication, language, history, and international studies courses provided four Survival English as a Second or Other Language (Survival ESOL) classes providing basic and essential language skills for adults. The Virginia Tech students also offered after-school homework help for school-aged children, a writing class for youth and adults, and bi-monthly programming in science and art. Working with the Pilot Street Partnership helped the college students enhance their understanding of international cultures, knowledge of social and political issues, and their capacity for communication across cultures.

## **Community-Based Organization Grants**

Finally, *Community-Based Organization* grants are available to state service commissions and national and regional nonprofit organizations. These awardees, in turn, establish subgrants with local nonprofit organizations, school districts, and individual schools. For the purposes of this report, distinctions have been made between *Community-Based State Commission* grants, which provide funds to state commissions for service and volunteering, and *Community-Based Nonprofit* grants, which provide funds to other regional and national nonprofit organizations.

## Learn and Serve America

- Children for Children, a New York City-based nonprofit organization that supports programs that foster civic engagement among children, partnered with the After-School Corporation to engage youth from 15 different after-school programs across New York City under the “Building Healthy Communities” initiative. Through service-learning activities designed to combat childhood obesity, the program engaged fourth grade students from The Poe Cottage School (PS 246) in the Bronx in a “Healthy Smoothie and Cookbook Sale.” The students developed ways to introduce their peers, families, and community members to appealing healthy foods and recipes, which provided options to replace community members’ dependence on unhealthy snacks. The students also educated community members on diabetes and raised money to support the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International. As part of the program, students developed their critical thinking skills through research on children’s health issues and created a cookbook that was based on benefits of different foods and nutritional guides. The students not only engaged peers, families, and members of the school and greater community, but raised awareness about health and provided resources to support healthy behavior.
- The Camp Fire USA Heartland Council in Kansas City, Kansas, is one of 13 Camp Fire councils participating in the *Prepare Today-Lead Tomorrow* initiative, an emergency preparedness service-learning program. In the 2006-07 program year, 71 Heartland Council teens participated in the initiative, which engages teens in intensive service-learning experiences; creates opportunities for youth to have key leadership roles in community preparedness efforts; and improves the level of preparedness in families, schools and communities. One group of service-learners, who elected to focus on fire safety, participated in a training with a local Fire Marshall and presented the fire safety preparedness information to their church congregation. One service-learner became an overnight hero when he was able to rescue his family from a fire in his home, thanks to his fire safety training. In addition, over the course of the program year, over 517 Camp Fire USA teens across the country participated in *Prepare Today-Lead Tomorrow*. These teens were able to teach emergency preparedness lessons to almost 12,000 youth and family members, better equipping their communities for emergencies.

### ***Grants and Subgrants During the 2006-2007 Program Year***

A new three-year grant cycle for Learn and Serve America funds began during the 2006-2007 program year. Under this new grant cycle, 50 *K-12 Formula* grants, 13 *K-12 Competitive* grants, 27 *Higher Education* grants, and 12 *Community-Based Organization* grants were awarded. In addition, 97 grantees from the previous grant cycle (including 27 *K-12 Formula*, 23 *K-12 Competitive*, 34 *Higher Education*, and 13 *Community-Based Organization*) applied for no-cost extensions in order to distribute unused funds. Data presented in this report include programs funded under both the new and previous grant cycles, unless otherwise noted. For a list of those *K-12 Formula* grantees that funded programs under both new and no-cost extension grant funds, see Appendix 1. For data representing programs funded only by 2006 *K-12 Competitive*, *Higher Education* and *Community-Based Organization* grants, see Appendix 3.

## Learn and Serve America

In addition, seven grantees from the previous grant cycle received supplemental funds to assist with service-learning activities that provide hurricane relief. Programs funded under this supplemental grant are included in the data reported. Grantees receiving these supplemental funds include: 1 *K-12 Formula* grantee [Mississippi (\$111,000)]; 1 *K-12 Competitive* grantee [Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning (\$90,000)]; 4 *Higher Education Consortia* grantees [University of Southern Mississippi (\$90,000); Brown University (\$90,000); United Negro College Fund Special Programs Corporation (\$90,000); and Tulane University (\$100,000)]; and 1 *Community-Based State Commission* grantee [Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (\$49,000)].

Finally, six *K-12 Formula* grantees received supplemental funds under the 2006 grant year through the *School-Based Competitive Small State Capacity* grants. These *Formula* grantees were given funds in addition to the amount awarded through the population-based formula to provide them with a total grant amount of \$225,000. These six states, with the breakdown of population-based funds/small state capacity funds, include: District of Columbia (\$49,442/\$175,558), Idaho (\$71,576/\$153,424), Maine (\$82,345/\$142,655), Montana (\$52,772/\$172,228), Rhode Island (\$61,402/\$163,598), and Utah (\$117,784/\$107,216).

## Terms and Definitions for Learn and Serve America

**Community-Based Organization Grants.** Through a competitive process, community-based awards are made to nonprofit organizations and to State Commissions on National and Community Service. Recipients then establish subgrants with public or private nonprofit youth-serving organizations, as well as K-12 schools and school districts, to create or replicate service-learning programs. The grantees may also provide training and technical assistance to these local programs. *Community-Based Organization* grants are used to build partnerships with K-12 schools and higher education institutions to engage school-age youth (ages 5 to 17) in service-learning activities. For the purposes of this report, Community-Based Organization grants have been broken out by those given to State Commissions and those given to other regional and nonprofit organizations.

- **Community-Based Organization – Nonprofit.** Community-based grants are made to regional and national nonprofit organizations on a competitive basis. A grantee organization may subgrant its awarded funds across two or more states.
- **Community-Based Organization – State Commissions.** Community-based funds are competitively awarded to state service commissions, which then subgrant the funds to nonprofit organizations within their states.

**Higher Education Grants.** Through a competitive granting process, the Corporation awards funds directly to individual colleges and universities or to higher education consortia to create and strengthen programs and courses at higher education institutions that integrate community service with academic study. Grants support partnerships between higher education institutions and local communities. Higher education institutions may also conduct research and evaluation, provide technical assistance, and supplement Federal Work-Study programs that focus on community service.

- **Individual Colleges and Universities.** A portion of Learn and Serve America higher education funds is distributed to colleges and universities that use the grant funds to support service-learning activities within the college and university. Colleges and universities reported under the *Individual Higher Education* grants do not subgrant any of their funds to other institutions.
- **Consortia.** Learn and Serve America higher education funds are also allocated to colleges and universities in the form of *Consortia* grants. In the case of consortia grants, a college, university, or nonprofit organization, such as Campus Compact, serves as the grantee with fiscal responsibility for administering the grant. *Consortia* grantees use the funds and provide subgrants to colleges and universities for service-learning activities, training and technical assistance, curriculum development, research, and evaluation.

**Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories Grants.** Up to three percent of *K-12 Competitive* funds are set aside for Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories. Grantees may elect to either subgrant or directly operate service-learning activities in Tribal or U.S. Territory schools. Tribal and U.S. Territory grantees use the grants and subgrants to work in partnership with local organizations to implement service-learning activities for students ages 5 to 17. They may also use funds for teacher training, program evaluation, or to support service-learning coordinators. Data from Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories are reported through the *K-12 Competitive* grant profile.

**Individual School and School District Programs.** Under the *K-12 School-Based* grants, funds may be subgranted to either an individual school or a school district to operate service-learning projects in one or more classrooms. For this report, school and district data indicate that Learn and Serve America funds were administered at either the school or the district level; however, in either case, activities or service-learning projects are carried out within classrooms. Although reporting is done at the school and school district level, this does not mean that service-learning activities are being conducted throughout the entire school or school district.

**Institutionalization and the Institutionalization Index.** Learn and Serve America encourages its grantees and subgrantees to adopt service-learning as a strategy to strengthen civic engagement and academic performance. Based on the field's understanding of the various policies and practices that support the institutionalization of service-learning, the Institutionalization section is intended to demonstrate the extent to which Learn and Serve America programs have succeeded in developing service-learning programs that will last beyond the grant period. For K-12 programs, an Institutionalization Index was calculated to allow comparison among states: each indicator was rounded to two significant digits; the Institutionalization Index score reflects the sum of the values for these five indicators.

**K-12 School-Based Grants.** School-based programs are funded through *K-12 Formula* grants and *K-12 Competitive* grants. Grantees make subgrants to schools and school districts to create or replicate service-learning programs in classrooms throughout their states. Schools and school districts use the grants and subgrants to work in partnership with local organizations to implement service-learning activities for students ages 5 to 17. Schools and school districts may also use funds for teacher training, program evaluation, or to support service-learning coordinators. In 2006, Learn and Serve America initiated the *School-Based Competitive Small State Capacity* grants, which are available to *Formula* grantees that receive less than \$225,000 through the population-based grant.

- **K-12 Formula.** *Formula* grants are distributed to SEAs according to a population-based formula. Learn and Serve America formula grants are available to all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (for the 2006-2007 program year, South Dakota and Vermont did not request *K-12 Formula* funds). SEAs must submit an application to Learn and Serve America in order to receive *Formula* funds. SEAs typically subgrant to local education agencies which, in turn, subgrant to schools and school districts that administer service-learning programs.
- **K-12 Competitive.** *Competitive* funds are available to SEAs, schools, state service commissions, nonprofit organizations, and Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories to create or

replicate service-learning programs at schools and educational nonprofit organizations and to train teachers, administrators, adult volunteers, service-learning coordinators, and students in service-learning.

- **School-Based Competitive Small State Capacity.** These competitive grants are available to states that receive less than \$225,000 through *K-12 Formula* funds. The grants provide funds for these small states to build the capacity of states to institutionalize and support service-learning activities. Six SEAs received *Small State Capacity* grants in Program Year 2006-2007, which brought the grant amount to a \$225,000 threshold. The breakdown between Formula grant/Small State Capacity grant for these six grantees is as follows: District of Columbia (\$49,442/\$175,558), Idaho (\$71,576/\$153,424), Maine (\$82,345/\$142,655), Montana (\$52,772/\$172,228), Rhode Island (\$61,402/\$163,598), and Utah (\$117,784/\$107,216).

**LASSIE (Learn and Serve Systems Information Exchange).** LASSIE is the annual data collection instrument for Learn and Serve America's grantees, subgrantees, and sub-subgrantees that operate service-learning activities. Data collection is conducted via a web-based survey at [www.lsareports.org](http://www.lsareports.org). Copies of the LASSIE survey instrument, as well as a public-use dataset, can be found on the web site.

**Learn and Serve America.** Learn and Serve America encourages civic participation and volunteerism throughout the country by supporting service-learning programs that help more than one million students meet community needs while improving the students' academic skills and teaching them the habits of good citizenship. These resources are available to SEAs, nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, Indian Tribes, U.S. Territories, and State Commissions on National and Community Service. These grantees act as intermediaries, providing subgrants, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and administrative help to local programs. These local programs, in turn, establish partnerships between schools and community-based organizations by engaging students, teachers, and volunteers to meet critical local needs.

**Learn and Serve America Program.** For the purposes of this report, the term program is used to indicate a school, school district, nonprofit organization, or higher education institution that receives Learn and Serve America funds and uses those funds directly to operate service-learning activities. A program may be a grantee, subgrantee, or sub-subgrantee of Learn and Serve America funds.

**Learn and Serve America Project.** For the purposes of this report, a Learn and Serve America *project* is a subcategory of a program and is used to indicate a set of service-learning activities that take place within a school, organization, or institution that is funded in whole or in part by Learn and Serve America funds. There may be multiple projects within a Learn and Serve America program; for example, a higher education program may distribute its Learn and Serve America funds to multiple classrooms, where the sets of activities that take place within each classroom would be considered separate projects.

**No-Cost Extension.** Learn and Serve America grantees are selected in three-year funding cycles, whereby grantees receive an initial year of funding and are eligible for the renewal of the grant



for an additional 2 years, subject to available funding and the successful completion of grant requirements from the previous year. The “2003 Cycle” began in Program Year 2003-2004 and ended in Program Year 2005-2006. The “2006 Cycle” began in Program Year 2006-2007 and will last through Program Year 2008-2009. At times, grantees are unable to disperse all of the grant funds within the timeframe for a given grant cycle. In these cases, grantees apply for a no-cost extension, which allows them an additional year to subgrant the remaining funds. Grantees do not receive any additional funding from the Corporation under the no-cost extension. From the 2003 grant cycle, 97 grantees applied for no-cost extensions including: 27 K-12 Formula, 23 K-12 Competitive, 34 Higher Education, and 13 Community-Based Organization. Appendix 1 provides information on the K-12 Formula grantees who received no-cost extensions.

**Service-Learning.** Service-learning is defined through the Learn and Serve America statute as an educational method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated within an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participant is enrolled; and provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience. [42 U.S.C. 12511]<sup>6</sup>

**Service-Learning Participant.** Service-learning participants are those individuals who learn and develop through active participation in a service-learning program as defined by Learn and Serve America’s statute (see definition of service-learning). For K-12 school and community-based programs, participants include students ages 5 to 17 while in higher education programs, participants include students, faculty, staff, and community members who participate in service-learning activities.

**Typical Grantee.** For *K-12 Competitive*, *Higher Education Individual and Consortia*, and *Community-Based Nonprofit and State Commission* grants, data are provided for the typical grantee or a representation of the median or average data for all grantees. When calculating data for the typical grantee, data reported by all programs under each grant are aggregated, and then the average or median is calculated at the grantee level. For example, when reporting the number of service-learning participants for the typical grantee, the number of service-learning participants reported under each grant is aggregated, and the median total number of service-learning participants at the grantee level is reported. When data are reported by percentages, the average is calculated after aggregating program data for each grantee. Note: *Higher Education Individual* grantees do not subgrant their funds; therefore, for this grant type, data at the grantee level include only the individual higher education institution.

<sup>6</sup> The Learn and Serve America statute was approved under the National and Community Service Trust Act (as amended through P.L. 106-170, approved 12-17-99) [42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq].