
Planning for the Future

To continue the course explicitly outlined in the 1998 Amendments to the Act, RSA has established four strategic objectives and a set of program activities to provide strategic direction for fiscal year 2000. The four objectives are designed to: open up new employment and independent living opportunities for individuals with disabilities; implement programmatic changes contained in the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act; strengthen monitoring and technical assistance services to state VR agencies and grantees; and promote excellence in VR programs under the Act.

Under the first strategic objective to ensure increased employment and independent living opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the future, RSA managers and administrators will carry out activities in the following key areas:

- Collaborate to establish linkages between the Act and WIA and the Rehabilitation Act to expand the effectiveness of programs and services delivered by state VR agencies in the environment created under WIA
- Plan and conduct the National Employment Conference to be held in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2000
- Facilitate the involvement of state VR agencies and tribal VR projects in state welfare-to-work programs designed to help former welfare recipients with disabilities achieve employment outcomes
- Develop and disseminate information describing effective practices, model cooperative agreements and policies regarding school-to-work programs and transition services, including those operated by tribal VR projects
- Establish and maintain linkages with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation to reduce work disincentives and enable SSA recipients and beneficiaries to secure and maintain employment outcomes
- Create working partnerships between Projects With Industry (PWIs), state VR agencies and tribal VR projects

The agency's second strategic objective, to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the 1998 Amendments, includes the following primary activities:

- Issue final regulations to implement the 1998 Amendments
- Conduct briefings and training sessions on new regulations
- Revise current systems, policies and procedures as needed to make sure that the Amendments are appropriately implemented

The third objective for fiscal year 2000 is focused on the provision of monitoring and technical assistance to RSA-funded programs to ensure effective program management and to strengthen accountability. In support of this objective, RSA will:

- Conduct formula and discretionary grant reviews, provide technical assistance to state VR agencies and grantees, and develop and revise self-assessment tools for use by the state agencies and grantees
- Strengthen RSA's monitoring and technical assistance system
- Improve the system for using information derived from monitoring activities
- Expand opportunities for developing and disseminating program data tables
- Revise and implement the RSA VR program monitoring system in accordance with input from key stakeholders
- Develop strategies for the monitoring and technical assistance provision related to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Finally, as a fourth objective, RSA will promote excellence in rehabilitation practices through a range of activities that will include conferences and meetings of a national scope and a state-of-the-art publication. To accomplish that objective, the agency will:

- Plan and conduct the 11th Annual Rehabilitation Education Conference
- Continue to support the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues in conjunction with CSAVR and Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs
- Plan and conduct the National Conference on American Indian Rehabilitation
- Plan and conduct a National Conference on Informed Choice in the VR Process
- Publish a special issue of the American Rehabilitation on "High-quality Employment"

RSA will present progress and accomplishments related to each of these four objectives and the activities identified to support them in its Annual Report for fiscal year 2000.