

Archived Information

STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (INCLUDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT)

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

Relationship of Program to Volume 1, Department-wide Objectives: These objectives support Strategic Plan Goal 3.4 (lifelong learning) ensuring access to services that provide adults with disabilities the opportunity to strengthen their skills and improve their earning power over their lifetime.

FY 2000—\$2,353,739,000

FY 2001—\$2,413,944,000 (Requested budget)

OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SERVED BY THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) STATE GRANT PROGRAM ACHIEVE EMPLOYMENT CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PARTICULAR STRENGTHS, RESOURCES, ABILITIES, CAPABILITIES, AND INTERESTS.

Indicator 1.1 Number achieving employment: The number of individuals with disabilities who achieve employment will increase by at least 1 percent annually.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>The number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome</i>		<p>Status: The 1999 data are expected to be available by March 2000. We expect the data to show that we have achieved our target.</p> <p>Explanation: FY 1999 target was surpassed in FY 1998. There was a significant increase in the number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome in FY 1998. In prior years, the annual percentage change has varied considerably. The average annual increase for FYs 1994 to 1997 was 1.2 percent.</p>	<p>Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) state data from the R-113. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> March 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Appropriate crosschecks and edits to verify and validate the quality of these data are in place but are not well documented. Written procedures will be developed for the collection, cleaning, and analysis of data.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	211,503			
1998:	223,668 (5.8%)*			
1999:	No data available			215,770
2000:				228,160
2001:		230,450		
<p>*Note: The number in parentheses indicates the percent change in the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome from the previous year.</p>				
Indicator 1.2 Percentage of individuals obtaining employment: The percentage of all persons served who obtain employment will increase.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage obtaining employment</i>		<p>Status: The 1999 data are expected to be available by March 2000, and are expected to show that the target has been achieved.</p> <p>Explanation: From fiscal years 1994 – 1997, the percentage of individuals receiving services who obtained employment remained steady at around 61 percent. In FY 1998, the percentage of individuals who obtained an employment outcome increased to 62 percent, exceeding our 1999 and 2000 target for this indicator. We have established new 2000 and 2001 targets for these indicators based on performance in 1998.</p>	<p>Source: RSA state data from the R-113. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> March 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same as discussed under Indicator 1.1.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	61.2%			
1999:	No data available			61%
2000:				62.7%
2001:				63%

Indicator 1.3 Percentage of individuals obtaining competitive employment: Of individuals obtaining employment, the percentage who obtain competitive employment will increase. Among individuals with significant disabilities obtaining employment, the percentage obtaining competitive employment will increase.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of all individuals with disabilities who obtained competitive employment</i>			<p>Status: The 1999 data are expected to be available by September 2000. We expect the data to show that progress toward the target has been made.</p>	<p>Source: RSA state data from the R-911. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> September 2000.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	81.2% (171, 743)*		<p>Explanation: The 1998 data show a small decline in the percentage; however, the actual numbers increased. In September 1997, the Federal minimum wage increased from \$4.75 to \$5.15. Because, under this program, individuals must be earning at least the minimum wage to, in part, meet the criteria for competitive employment, the change in the minimum wage has affected performance on this indicator.</p> <p>The FY 1999 target established in 1998 for individuals with significant disabilities was set at a low level based on an error in the 1997 data. Data for FY 1997 have been corrected and targets for the years 1999 through 2001 have been adjusted accordingly.</p>	<p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Accuracy/consistency of reporting is contingent upon counselors' interpretations of definitions. Timeliness is dependent upon submittal of clean data from 80 grantees (respondents). Limited staff resources affect ability to check data for reasonableness and publish data quickly.</p> <p>Written procedures will be developed for the collection, cleaning, and analysis of data. Publication of final regulations implementing the Standards and Indicators under section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act will provide a method to ensure timeliness of data reporting on the part of 80 grantees. Steps will also be taken to improve reasonableness checks of data.</p>
1998:	80.1% (179,154)*			
1999:	No data available	82.3%		
2000:		82.5%		
2001:		82.7%		
<i>Percentage of individuals with significant disabilities who obtained competitive employment</i>				
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	79.1% (134,736)*			
1998:	78.6% (143,026)*			
1999:	No data available	80.0%		
2000:		80.5%		
2001:		80.7%		
* Note: The number in parentheses indicates the actual number of competitive employment outcomes.				

Indicator 1.4 Improved earnings: Among individuals exiting the program in competitive employment, the median ratio of their average hourly wage to the state's average hourly wage for all individuals in the state who are employed will increase.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Median ratio for general and combined agencies</i>			<p>Status: We expect the target to be met in 1999.</p>	<p>Source: RSA state data from the R-911. Department of Labor data on state average hourly wage. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> September 2000.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	0.57		<p>Explanation: The 1999 data are expected to be available by September 2000. We expect the data to show that the target was achieved.</p>	<p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p>
1998:	0.57			
1999:	No data available	0.57		
2000:		0.58		
2001:		0.58		

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
				<p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same limitations and planned improvements reported under 1.3 apply to this indicator. In addition, the data for this indicator are limited by the fact that the required comparison involves numbers reported from two different sets of state-reported data.</p>
Indicator 1.5 Own income as primary support: The percentage of individuals who report upon obtaining employment that their own income is their primary source of support will increase.				
Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of individuals who report upon obtaining employment that their own income is their primary source of support</i>			<p>Status: The 1999 data are expected to be available by September 2000. We expect the data to show that progress toward the target has been made.</p> <p>Explanation: The 1998 data show a small decline in the percentage; however, the actual numbers increased. Therefore, we expect the 1999 target to be met.</p>	<p>Source: RSA state data from the R-911. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> September 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same as discussed under Indicator 1.3.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	74.5% (157,691)*			
1998:	73.7% (164,918)*			
1999:	No data available	74.5%		
2000:		75%		
2001:		75%		
* Note: The number in parentheses indicates the actual number of individuals whose own income is their primary source of support.				
Indicator 1.6 Employment retention: Eighty-five percent of individuals obtaining competitive employment will maintain employment and earnings 12 months after closure.				
Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of consumers in the VR longitudinal study sample obtaining competitive employment who maintain employment and earnings 12 months after closure</i>			<p>Status: FY 1999 target was exceeded.</p> <p>Explanation: Actual performance data cover an 18-24-month period. We expect future performance to be at the 85 percent level. However, the Longitudinal Study of the VR Program is ending and we will not have a new data source until FY 2001.</p>	<p>Source: VR Longitudinal Study for 1996-1999. The Department is in the process of developing a standard annual data collection mechanism for this indicator that will include data from all state VR agencies. Future data will be available in 2001. <i>Frequency:</i> Future data will be provided annually. <i>Next Update:</i> December 31, 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Rigorous data collection design was developed by contractor and approved by OMB. Several quality control mechanisms are in place.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: The longitudinal study sample is nationally representative, but it does not include all VR consumers. The Longitudinal study was not designed to provide fiscal year cohorts.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1996-1997:	85%			
1998-1999:	86%	85%		
1999-2000:		85%		
2000-2001:		85%		

Indicator 1.7 Satisfaction with employment: At least 75 percent of VR consumers will report they are satisfied with their employment outcome.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of consumers in the VR longitudinal study sample who reported they were very or mostly satisfied with their employment outcome</i>		<p>Status: No 1999 data, but FY 1997-1998 performance exceeded the 1999 target.</p> <p>Explanation: Actual performance data cover an 18-24-month period. We expect future performance to be at least at the 75 percent level. However, the Longitudinal Study of the VR Program is ending and we will not have a new data source until FY 2001.</p>	<p>Source: VR Longitudinal Study for 1995-1998. The Department is in the process of developing a standard data collection mechanism for this indicator that will include data from all state VR agencies. Future data will be available in 2001.</p> <p>Frequency: Future data will be provided annually.</p> <p>Next Update: December 31, 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Rigorous data collection design was developed by contractor and approved by OMB. Several quality control mechanisms are in place.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: The longitudinal study sample is nationally representative, but it does not include all VR consumers. The Longitudinal study was not designed to provide fiscal year cohorts.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1996:	72%			
1998:	76%			
1999:	No data available			At least 75%
2000:				At least 75%
2001:		At least 75%		

OBJECTIVE 2: RSA WILL HELP STATES IMPROVE SERVICES AND OUTCOMES FOR CONSUMERS.

Indicator 2.1 Availability and use of data: The time required by RSA to produce an accessible national database will decrease until it reaches 6 months after the close of the fiscal year.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Number of months after the close of the fiscal year at which time the database was available</i>		<p>Status: Positive movement toward target.</p> <p>Explanation: Implementation of the VR standards and indicators required by Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act will provide an incentive for states to report data in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Source: RSA Central Office records, 1998.</p> <p>Frequency: Annually.</p> <p>Next Update: September 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Reviewed by Department staff. No formal verification procedure applied.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: None</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	14.5			
1998:	14			
1999:	No data available			No target set
2000:				9 months
2001:		6 months		

OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES BUT ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of individuals with a supported employment goal who achieved a competitive employment outcome</i>			<p>Status: The 1999 data are expected to be available by September 2000. We expect the data to show that progress toward the target has been made.</p> <p>Explanation: The 1998 data show a small decline in the percentage; however, the actual numbers increased. In September 1997, the Federal minimum wage increased from \$4.75 to \$5.15. Because, under this program, individuals must be earning at least the minimum wage to, in part, meet the criteria for competitive employment, the change in the minimum wage has affected performance on this indicator.</p>	<p>Source: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) state data from the R-911. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> September 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Verified by ED attestation process and ED <u>Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Data</u>.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Same as discussed under Indicator 1.3.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	69.6% (14,605)*			
1998:	69.1% (16,113)*			
1999:	No data available	71.0%		
2000:		71.5%		
2001:		71.7%		
<p>*Note: The number in parenthesis indicates the actual number of individuals with a supported employment goal who achieved a competitive employment outcome.</p>				

KEY STRATEGIES
<p><u>Strategies Continued from 1999</u></p> <p>To assist in the achievement of performance targets established for indicators under Objectives 1 and 3, the Rehabilitation Services Administration will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop a monitoring and technical assistance plan for state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies that addresses performance on program outcome measures. ❖ Identify and disseminate information regarding effective practices for assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve appropriate employment outcomes and provide training as needed. ❖ Review, revise, and improve the issuance of Rehabilitation Services Administration’s policy and guidance directives to state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. ❖ Ensure that Rehabilitation Services Administration staff is trained and able to effectively monitor state performance and provide technical assistance. ❖ Develop coordinated approaches among Federal agencies (e.g., the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Social Security Administration) that affect employment of individuals with disabilities. <p><u>New or Strengthened Strategies</u></p> <p>To assist in the achievement of performance targets established for indicators under Objectives 1 and 3, the Rehabilitation Services Administration will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Beginning in fiscal year 2001, develop state Vocational Rehabilitation agency performance improvement plans with state agencies that are performing below standards established under Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act. ❖ Encourage state agencies to coordinate planning and service delivery with partners in the Workforce Investment System in order to improve vocational rehabilitation program outcomes. ❖ To decrease the time required by Rehabilitation Services Administration’s to produce an accessible data base (Objective 2), the Department will publish regulations on program standards and indicators that include consequences for not submitting the data needed to assess performance in a timely manner.

HOW THIS PROGRAM COORDINATES WITH OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

- ❖ To increase the employment retention and earnings of consumers and also increase their occupational skill attainment, Rehabilitation Services Administration will coordinate with its partners under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, especially the Department of Labor, in conducting workforce activities through statewide and local systems. The VR program is a mandatory partner in the one-stop delivery system under Title I of Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
- ❖ In facilitate a seamless passage from school to work, Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will coordinate transition services and activities for students with disabilities.
- ❖ To increase competitive employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities, Rehabilitation Services Agency will coordinate with the Social Security Administration in implementing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING PROGRAM GOAL

- ❖ Numerous work disincentives exist, on the Federal, state, and local levels, that discourage individuals with significant disabilities from seeking and maintaining employment.
- ❖ Despite the advances brought about by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, many employers remain reluctant to hire individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Cost of providing Vocational Rehabilitation services has increased as a result of serving increased numbers of individuals with significant disabilities whose rehabilitation is more costly.
- ❖ Minimal increases in program funding above the cost of living.
- ❖ Limited personnel and travel resources for effective program monitoring.

INDICATOR CHANGES

From FY 1999 Annual Plan (two years old)

Adjusted—None.

Dropped

- ❖ Indicators 1.6, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 4.2 were dropped.
- ❖ Objective 2 and its indicators were dropped.

From FY 2000 Annual Plan (last year's)

Adjusted

- ❖ The FY 2000 performance target for Indicator 1.2 was raised from 61 percent to 62.7 percent, based on actual 1998 performance.
- ❖ In Indicator 1.3, the FY 1999 and FY 2000 performance targets for individuals with significant disabilities were raised (from 65.5 percent to 80.0 percent for 1999 and from 66 percent to 80.5 percent for 2000) because initial targets were set at a low level based on an error in the 1997 data.

Dropped

- ❖ Indicator 2.1 on satisfaction with services has been dropped because the longitudinal study does not provide data for 1999. We will consider adding it again after a standard mechanism for data collection is developed.
- ❖ Indicator 2.2 on basic RSA monitoring has been dropped because full compliance is a statutory requirement.
- ❖ Indicator 2.3 on conducting comprehensive review has been dropped because the Rehabilitation Services Administration is changing its monitoring system.

New—None.