



Associates Inc.

*Center for the Advancement
of
Rehabilitation and Disability Studies*

**Disability- and Rehabilitation-Related
Projects from the
Twenty-Nine Year History
of Social Policy Research
by
Abt Associates Inc.
1965-1994**

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Related Research

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Center Director
March 1994

Abt Associates Inc.

Abt Associates Inc., founded in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in early 1965, is an employee-owned social science research firm with approximately 460 full-time professional employees. Our areas of specialization are in research, evaluation, and analysis of social problems, programs, and policies under contract to federal, state, and local government agencies, including the Department of Defense, private industry, and educational institutions in the U.S. and overseas. The company's main offices are located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with a Washington, D.C., area office in Bethesda, Maryland, and an office in Chicago, Illinois.

Approximately 25 percent of the professional staff have Ph.D.s or equivalent degrees, while another 50 percent hold master's level degrees. Staff educational and professional backgrounds cover a broad range of disciplines including, economics, sociology, psychology, law, statistics, mathematics, public administration, urban planning, anthropology, medical and biological sciences, architecture, and engineering. Our skills include systems analysis, interviewing, survey design, simulation/gaming, computer processing, and management science. The union of these qualifications provides a unique basis for Abt Associates' long experience and high level of capability in such fields as program planning and demonstrations, large-scale program and policy evaluations, statistics and methodology, computer technology, information systems development and management, training, and curriculum development.

The firm is divided into 13 substantive areas:

- Health Policy Research
- Health Services Research and Evaluation
- Housing, Income Security and Employment
- Education and Child Development
- Law and Public Policy
- Biostatistics and Epidemiology
- Business Strategy Group
- Environmental Research
- Financial Services Area
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- International Health and Economic Development
- Statistical and Evaluation Surveys
- Survey Research Group

Coordination and communications among these areas, access to outside sources of information concentrated in the nearby academic communities, and effective management systems enable Abt Associates to offer the wide range of capabilities, experience, and skills necessary to fulfill its contractual agreements successfully.

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF REHABILITATION AND DISABILITY STUDIES

Background:

Over the past 28 years Abt Associates has undertaken over 40 contracted research projects in the general area of rehabilitation and disability studies with a total worth of almost \$22 million and an average size of nearly \$533,000. This body of work has dealt with issues in education, employment, health care, housing, income security, insurance, law, transportation, and other substantive areas. The passage and signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and its phasing in over the next thirty years is certain to create policy research opportunities in all areas of American life and hence cut across all areas in which Abt conducts social research.

Purpose:

The cross-cutting nature of rehabilitation- and disability-related research, combined with the desirability of having a specific locus for specialized expertise, has suggested strongly the advisability of establishing a Center for the Advancement of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies within Abt's Health Policy Research Area. The Center's current core area of operations is in service to the grant and contract shops within the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education: NIDRR (National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research), RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration), and OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs); as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Social Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other federal and state agencies. However, the Center can lend expertise to contract proposals, grant applications, and actual project performance in any substantive research Area with a rehabilitation/disability component, while drawing upon specialized and often little known experience scattered throughout the company, as well as the outside academic community and other organizational resources. The Center also maintains an important relationship with the non-profit Abt Health Care Research Foundation.

The Model:

The paradigm for the Center is not altogether unlike an academic research institute which has a Director, Fellows (Senior Analyst/Project Director level staff drawn from around the firm), Associates (less senior level Abt people), and Adjunct Fellows (academicians and other outside consultants willing to participate in Center activities). The Center also plans in future to offer summer internships to graduate students from appropriate disciplines, giving priority to those who themselves have disabilities. Publication of Abt research findings in this field are actively encouraged and relationships with other research organizations.

Rehabilitation/Disability Projects by Client

Dept./Office of Education (includes all Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare)

Rehabilitation Services Administration:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
AMIS	Evaluate, Revise, and Develop the RSA Data Retrieval and Management System Using New Data Elements	RSA HEW	09/30/78 06/30/82	D
RESTOR	An Evaluation of the Rehabilitation Services Administration Research and Training Center Program	OHD HEW	10/01/76 11/12/77	B
REVUE	Evaluation of Eligibility Determination in State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies	RSA DoEd	09/30/86 01/31/89	C
RSVB	Feasibility Study of Retirement and Health Insurance for Blind Vendors	RSA HEW	06/30/75 11/08/75	B

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
CASE	Preparation of Case Studies to Improve Education of Handicapped Children	HEW	06/27/72 03/27/73	B
EXIT	Assessment of the Adjustment of Deinstitutionalized Mentally Retarded People to Community Life		07/02/74 12/31/76	
IVY	National Study of Higher Education Facilities and Services for Handicapped Students	BEH OfEd	07/01/74 07/30/76	B
NOTICE	Identifying Strategies for Assisting LEAs and SEAs to Meet Procedural Safeguards Afforded Handicapped Children and Their Parents	BEH OfEd	10/01/78 05/29/81	C

*\$ Values: A = < \$100K, B = \$100K-500K, C = \$501K - \$1 Mil., D = > \$1 Mil.

Abt Associates Inc. REHABILITATION & DISABILITY RESEARCH, Page 2

Office of Human Development:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
ALPHA	Comprehensive Review and Evaluation of the Instruments Used by Programs for the Developmentally Disabled	OHD HEW	09/27/77 07/09/78	B
3D	A Special Study of the Definition of Developmental Disabilities	OHD HEW	09/30/76 10/31/77	B

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Other:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
ARCH	Assessment of Selected Resources for Severely Handicapped Children and Youth	OfEd	07/05/73 04/30/76	C
FARTRAN	Integrated Assessment and Skills Transfer: Applications to Transition from School to Work	OfEd	09/30/86 03/29/87	A
FLEX	Functional Assessment in Vocational Rehabilitation: Validation, Extension, and Application	NIHR DoEd	04/01/83 03/31/86	B
STP	Special Teens and Parents Study of the Impact of P.L. 94-142	OfEd HEW	10/01/78 11/20/80	B
TACKLE	NIDDR Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Technical Assistance Coordinator	NIDDR	09/30/91 09/29/94	D

Department of Health and Human Services

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
MAMA	AIDS Outreach to Pregnant Women and Their Children	NIDA PHS	09/30/88 09/29/91	D

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Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration: (continued)

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
PARTNERS	AIDS Outreach to Female Prostitutes and Sexual Partners of Intravenous Drug Abusers	NIDA PHS	03/28/88 03/27/91	D

Health Care Financing Administration:

HELPERS	Staff-Assisted Home Dialysis Demonstration Project	HCFA	06/01/91 12/01/95	C
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National Institute of Mental Health:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
AIDSTRAIN	Training of Health Care Providers to Address AIDS	NIMH	02/10/88 02/09/91	C

Social Security Administration:

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
NETWORK	Evaluation of Project Network	SSA	06/30/92 12/30/97	D

Department of Housing and Urban Development

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
SECTN811	Evaluation of the HUD Supportive Housing Programs for Persons with Disabilities (subcontract from AREA, Inc.)	AREA for OPDR	10/01/92 09/30/94	C
SPLUSC	Evaluation of the Shelter Plus Care Program for Severely Disabled Home- less Persons	OPDR	02/23/93 06/15/95	C

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Department of Veterans Affairs

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
DISABLED	Updating VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities:	DVA	08/8/90 09/13/90	A
DISABLED-2	Updating the Medical Criteria for VA's Disability Rating Schedule: Muscular, Respiratory, and Orthopedics Systems	DVA	03/27/91 06/07/91	B
DISABLED-3 (no descrp)	Updating the Medical Criteria for the VA's Disability Rating Schedule	DVA	08/23/91 01/17/92	B

Department of Transportation

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
DCTRANS	Accessibility of the Washington D.C. Transit System	DOT	10/01/71 12/31/72	A
HANDI	Study of the Transportation Needs of the Handicapped	DOT	04/18/68 08/30/69	B

Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
PURCHASE	Methodology Development for a Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Javits-Wagner O'Day (JWOD) Program	Comm.	10/01/93 06/30/94	B

General Accounting Office

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
GAO-2 (no descrp)	Study Methodology and Sample Design to Identify Weaknesses in Social Security Disability Criteria and Determination Process	GAO	04/04/90 06/30/90	A

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Abt Associates Inc. REHABILITATION & DISABILITY RESEARCH, Page 5

General Accounting Office (continued)

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
GAO-3 (no descrp)	Study Methodology and Sample Design to Determine Reasons for Racial Differences with Social Security Disability Denial Rates	GAO	04/04/90 06/30/90	A
GAO-5 (no descrp)	Study Methodology and Sample Design to Determine Reasons for Wide Variance Among States in Social Security Disability Allowance Rates	GAO	04/04/90 06/30/90	A

State and Local

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
MIFLEX	Functional Assessment Rating System Pilot Installation and Test	St of MI	08/25/86 06/30/87	A
MS (no descrp)	Epidemiological and Psychosocial Aspects of Multiple Sclerosis	Nat'l MS Society	04/16/90 04/15/91	A
MS2 (no descrp)	Produce the Multiple Sclerosis Fact Book	Nat'l MS Society	07/01/91 06/30/92	B
OHFLEX	Functional Assessment Rating System Distributed Access in Multi-User Environment	St of OH RSC	10/01/85 03/31/86	A
PA-PAS	Feasibility Study for a Personal Assistance Services Home and Community-Based (2176) Medicaid Waiver Program	St of PA	01/07/93 08/30/94	B
PASHN	Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Severe Handicaps	St of PA	02/01/88 04/30/89	B
TRURO	The Development of Concepts for Small Business Enterprises to be Operated by the Handicapped in Nova Scotia	Sub Abt CAN	05/08/81 07/31/81	A

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State and Local (continued)

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
WISFLEX/ WISFLEX2	Functional Assessment Rating System Office Aggregation and Forms Production/Phase II Installation of FARS	St of WI	09/30/85 09/29/86	A
WYFLEX	Functional Assessment Rating System Statewide Installation	St of WY	12/15/85 06/15/86	A

International

<u>Code Name</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>\$ Size*</u>
TANZAIDS	Economic Impact of Aids in Tanzania	World Bank	12/10/90 02/01/91	A

41 Projects Total \$21,851,731 Ave. Worth \$532,969

(Range: \$4,668 - \$5,388,922)

NOTE: In the following section are presented 1-2 page project summaries, arranged alphabetically by Abt project code name for ease of reference. No written project summary exists for those annotated "no descrp" (no description) in the preceding listings.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institute of Mental Health

Training of Health Care Providers to Address AIDS

Abt Associates Inc. completed a three-year contract awarded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to develop a comprehensive training program for health care providers to address all aspects of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Abt Associates worked closely with its subcontractor, the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, to develop, deliver and evaluate the training program.

The AIDS training program focused on specific groups of health care professionals--nurses, social workers, psychologists, counselors, dentists, physicians' assistants, and others currently providing health care to AIDS patients (including hospice workers and home health aides). A total of 3,000 health care providers were trained.

A modular education program was developed with flexibility to accommodate the diverse concerns facing specific provider groups in the course of their professional responsibilities. The model curricula was built upon the AIDS Action Committee's previous efforts, and a Curriculum Advisory Panel and the AAC's Medical Advisory Board assisted in the development of the program. Training topics included the epidemiology of AIDS, methods for conducting medical and mental health work-ups, identifying the medical, psychiatric and neurological complications of HIV infection, and various psycho-social issues faced by patients, families, and health care providers.

Although the AIDS trainings varied in length, the average program was presented over a six-week period, with three-hour sessions held once a week. Pacing the training over a period of several weeks enabled the providers to digest the information presented, anticipate future sessions, and it facilitated expression of fear concerning the syndrome and associated frustrations in caring for terminally ill patients. Abt Associates and AIDS Action staff worked with appropriate associations and certification boards for program accreditation for continuing education credits for those attending the program.

Additionally, a "train the trainer" module was provided to those health care providers responsible for training others in their institutions. Semi-annual update workshops were provided to participants to assure they kept abreast of the latest findings concerning the disease.

A systematic evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the curricula, materials, and training approaches in increasing providers' knowledge before and after attendance in the program. The evaluation strategy also assessed the effectiveness of continuing education and follow-up sessions in enhancing provider awareness, attitudes, and knowledge of the syndrome.

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Government Project Officer
Chief, Psychiatry Education Program
National Institute of Mental Health
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Contract No. NIMH-278-88-0006 (ES)

Period of Performance: February 10, 1988 - February 9, 1991

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Office of Human Development
Developmental Disabilities Office

Comprehensive Review and Evaluation of the Instruments
Used by Programs for the Developmentally Disabled

Abt Associates Inc. conducted a comprehensive review and evaluation of the instruments used by programs for the developmentally disabled for the Developmental Disabilities Office in the Office of Human Development. The purpose of this contract was to provide the background information necessary for service providers at all levels to make informed choices about assessment instruments and procedures for program planning, operation and evaluation purposes. The contract:

developed a set of evaluation criteria for use in the review of instruments currently used to measure developmental progress;

- reviewed selected instruments in terms of these criteria and reported the results; and
- developed a "User's Manual" for staff of local and state programs serving developmentally disabled persons which presents the standards for instruments and guidelines for their implementation.

Standards were developed based on a literature review and with major input of a panel of twelve (12) experts selected by Abt Associates and the Developmental Disabilities Office. Based on the literature review, a state-of-the-art paper on the technical and programmatic aspects of developmental assessments was produced as well as an annotated bibliography topics.

The Review Panel was used for a number of purposes throughout the conduct of the project, both through their participation during formal meetings and through review of materials sent to them between meetings and through telephone discussions. The panel met three times during the course of the project to assist staff in developing a set of evaluation criteria for use in the review of assessment instruments, selecting and reviewing instruments in terms of these criteria, and developing standards and implementation guidelines for programs using assessment instruments.

Abt Associates Center for the Advancement of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies

This project resulted in a series of products:

- a set of reviewed tests;
- a state-of-the-art paper and annotated bibliography; and
- a "User's Guide" for state and local programs relating to the selection and use of instruments in program operations.

The approach to this project was strongly rooted in a concept of utility; the products were designed and developed with the ultimate users in mind and were oriented to practical considerations. These products are useful to developmental disabilities councils, developmental disabilities staff, direct services agencies, and ultimately to developmentally disabled individuals in making decisions such as:

- What types of behavior should they be measuring?
- What types of instruments should they use to measure these behaviors?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each instrument or type of instrument?
- What are the resource requirements of a particular measure?
- Under what circumstances are different instruments best used?
- How can the multiple purposes of client assessments (i.e., the development of a specific service plan at one extreme, and the evaluation of a total program at the other extreme) be reconciled?

Client Contact:

Kristen Rogge
Project Officer
Developmental Disabilities Office
Dept of Health, Education & Welfare
330 C Street, S.W., Room 3528
Washington, D.C. 20202
(202) 245-1338

Contract No. HEW-105-77-5005

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Rehabilitation Services Administration

Evaluate, Revise, and Develop the RSA Data Retrieval
and Management System Using New Data Elements

Under contract to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Abt Associates conducted a two-year study to evaluate, revise, and develop the RSA data retrieval and management system. The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive, integrated Management Information System (MIS) for RSA which would allow for cross-referencing (and other forms of interaction) among current data bases and would provide new systems for unsatisfied information needs. This MIS was developed in a way which maximized user benefits by:

- Involving users intimately in the system's design thereby, (1) assuring them that the system would respond to their needs, and (2) encouraging them to comply with the system's data requirements and to use its outputs;
- Developing a system sufficiently flexible to respond to unanticipated input and output requirements; and,
- Integrating the system's data and information elements with a conceptual framework of the State/Federal VR Program that serves to identify the relationship between information and the management, planning, and evaluation decisions faced by administrators at various levels of the VR Program.

The objective was to complete the design and implementation of a computer-centered software capability which meshed well with the diverse perspectives of RSA, the 83 state agencies and the nearly 600 discretionary program grantees. The system design addressed, in detail, the following concerns.

- data needs of managers at different levels;
- data sources;
- data acquisition forms, and
- data uses, particularly as they relate to functions such as planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation functions.

In addition, the specification, development, testing and conveyance of software was designed to accomplish:

- data acquisition and validation;
- data base management;
- recurring reports;
- ad hoc retrieval and reporting;
- ad hoc statistical analyses;
- system access and security;
- office automation and telecommunications as appropriate.

Client Contact:

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Project Officer
Rehabilitation Services Admin.
Office of Special Education and
Rehabilitation Services
Department of Education
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Contract No. HEW 105-78-4012

U.S. Office of Education

**Assessment of Selected Resources for
Severely Handicapped Children and Youth**

Abt Associates conducted a study for the Office of Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation of the U.S. Office of Education, the major purpose of which was to describe, using the case study method, the characteristics, quality, impacts, and costs of services provided to severely mentally retarded, severely emotionally disturbed, deaf-blind and other severely handicapped clients age 21 and under, in 100 providers across the nation.

This project was conducted in three phases:

- Review of the literature and development of a state-of-the-art paper and annotated bibliography;
- Conduct a survey of 5,000 providers and development of data collection instruments for use in Phase III;
- Site visits to 100 providers, data analysis, and report writing.

Phase I consisted of an extensive review of the literature for the purpose of developing an annotated bibliography and state-of-the-art paper on research and services for severely handicapped children and youth.

Phase II included the development of data collection instruments for use during the third phase, and a survey of 5,000 providers of services to handicapped children across the nation. The survey was conducted for the purpose of constructing a sampling frame for selection of 100 providers who serve severely handicapped children.

Phase III of the study consisted of data collection, analysis and report writing. Each of the 100 providers in the final sample was visited by two Abt Associates field staff for approximately two days. During these visits, the Abt field staff conducted interviews with the program or institution director, selected ward, unit or classroom staff who are most knowledgeable about the services being offered to severely handicapped clients, and the budget director or other personnel most knowledgeable about the provider's budget and costs or services. In addition, one member of the field team observed severely handicapped clients throughout the facility. These data were analyzed by Abt Associates project staff and eight descriptive case studies were written to provide a composite picture of the characteristics, quality, impacts, and costs of provider services

to severely handicapped clients. No single provider was described, nor were providers within a particular state or region analyzed separately. Rather, providers were grouped for case study description on the basis by which they were selected for participation in the study, i.e., according to whether they offer day or residential services and the size of their severely handicapped population.

Client Contact: Robert Maroney
Office of Planning, Budgeting
and Evaluation
U.S. Office of Education
(202) 245-8877

Contract No.: OEC-0-73-7030

**U.S. Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare: Bureau of the Education
for the Handicapped**

**Preparation of Case Studies to Improve
Education of Handicapped Children**

This was a contract to assess, document, and disseminate information on 20 exemplary programs for the education of the handicapped in the areas of Early Childhood, Career Education, Full Services, and Manpower. The objective of this study was to prepare case studies on the exemplary programs which would assist agencies, operating personnel, and school personnel to improve and expand educational and education-related services to handicapped children. This involved the collection of data on 50 BEH funded projects, the selection of 20 exemplary programs for in-depth study, field instrumentation, and site visits. The field effort resulted in user-oriented case studies on each of the programs, emphasizing exemplary elements and suggestions regarding replication. Representatives from the various audiences to be addressed in the case studies were involved in the project in an advisory capacity to insure that the materials were relevant to their needs.

Client Contact: Miss Linda Levey
Project Officer
National Center for Educational
Communications, Contracts
and Grants Office
EDP Rm 4325
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(202) 755-7450

Department of Transportation:

Accessibility of the Washington,
D.C. Transit System

Abt Associates performed a contract to evaluate the accessibility of the D.C. transit system to the elderly and handicapped. After interviews with organizations knowledgeable about the aging and handicapped and with the operators and planners of the D.C. transit and Metro, Abt Associates interviewed a sample of 250 aging and handicapped. A photographic survey of existing and proposed systems was used to provide a realistic background for the interviews. Statistical analysis of the photographic survey and other interview data resulted in an identification of the travel barriers to the aging and handicapped. After the problems were specified, performance standards for equipment design and modification were prepared. Acquaintance with Metro and the D.C. Transit Co. was gained from this project.

Client Contact:

Dr. Ira Laster
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Office of Environment & Urban
Systems
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Washington, D.C. 20590
(202) 426-4396

Updating the Medical Criteria Used in the VA's Disability Rating Schedule

Genito-urinary and Endocrine Systems

Abt Associates conducted a series of physician panels to provide specific recommendations to the Department of Veterans Affairs for updating the medical criteria used in their Disability Rating Schedule. The schedule, which is used to determine an appropriate level of compensation and pension relative to the severity of a veteran's physical and mental impairment, was developed in 1945 and contains approximately 720 medical conditions organized into 14 body systems. Abt Associates was responsible for updating the medical criteria in the genito-urinary and endocrine systems.

Since the VA is authorized by law to periodically adjust the schedule "in accordance with experience," the physician panels were charged with updating the medical terminology used in the schedule, clarifying ambiguous impairments, making the schedule more consistent across diagnoses, deleting conditions that are no longer considered disabling due to technological advances, and adding disabling conditions that were not in the original schedule.

Physician panel members were chosen on the basis of their clinical expertise, knowledge regarding disease and disability nosology and terminology, and understanding of the military community and illness incompatible with service. Panel activities included homework assignments, a 1-day panel meeting, and review of the panel report prior to submission to the VA.

Abt Associates was responsible for recruiting the panel members, conducting the panel meetings including developing a consensus among the panel members for all recommended changes to the schedule, documenting all recommended changes and the rationale for the changes, and developing the project reports. The final reports from both systems will be published in the Federal Register for review and comment prior to making changes in the actual schedule and rating process.

Client Contact:

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Task Order Project Manager
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Veterans Benefits Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Updating the Medical Criteria Used in the VA's Disability Rating Schedule

Muscular, Respiratory, and Orthopedics Systems

Abt Associates conducted a second series of physician panels to provide specific recommendations to the Department of Veterans Affairs for updating the medical criteria in the muscular, respiratory, and orthopedics systems in the VA's Disability Rating Schedule.

Again, physician panel members were chosen on the basis of their clinical expertise, knowledge regarding disease and disability nosology and terminology, and understanding of the military community and illness incompatible with service. However, due to the complexity of the body systems being reviewed, the physician panels were larger than the original panels, and both the respiratory and orthopedics meetings were conducted over 2-days.

Abt Associates was responsible for recruiting the panel members, conducting the panel meetings, developing a consensus among the panel members for all recommended changes to the schedule, documenting all recommended changes and the rationale for the changes, and developing the project reports. The final reports from all three systems will be published in the Federal Register for review and comment prior to making changes in the actual schedule and rating process.

Client Contact:

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U.S. Office of Education
Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

**Assessment of the Adjustment of Deinstitutionalized Mentally
Retarded People to Community Life**

Abt Associates Inc. conducted a study for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to assess the community adjustment of 500 mentally retarded people who were released from ten institutions across the United States over a three year period. The major objectives of the study were:

- To describe the current deinstitutionalization efforts of ten residential institutions serving mentally retarded people;
- To assess the effectiveness of alternative deinstitutionalization procedures as measured by client adjustment to the community; and
- To provide recommendations for further research related to deinstitutionalization, to explore constraints on the deinstitutionalization process, and to consider the potential federal role in supporting such programs for released clients.

In order to achieve these objectives Abt Associates conducted a nationwide mail survey of 1,500 institutions serving mentally retarded people for the purpose of selecting ten institutions in at least five states, who are involved in deinstitutionalizing mentally retarded clients. From the appropriate group of selected institutions, Abt Associates field staff visited each institution for a two-day period to collect information on deinstitutionalization procedures, as well as the names and addresses of all mentally retarded clients between the ages of 6 and 40 released from the institution over the past three years and currently living in the community. These clients were then contacted to determine whether they were interested in participating in the study.

Five hundred deinstitutionalized clients and their families agreed to participate in the study and were scheduled for interviews by Abt Associates field supervisors. Family interviews took place over a six-week period and involved teams of family interviewers in each region surrounding the ten institutions involved in the study. Compilation of all data collected during the family interviews, as well as institutional information resulted in a three-volume final report as follows:

Volume I: Case Studies of the deinstitutionalization procedures
of ten institutions

Volume II: A study of the community adjustment of 500 deinstitutionalized
clients

Volume III: Research results and policy recommendations.

Another product of this study was the book:

Gollay, Elinor, Ruth Freedman, Marty Wyngaarden, and Norman R.
Kurtz. *Coming Back: The Community Experiences of Deinstitutionalized
Mentally Retarded People*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1978.

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Contract #: OEC-0-74-9183

U.S. Department of Education

Small Business Research Initiative

**Integrated Assessment and Skills Transfer:
Applications to Transition from School to Work**

This three-phase project was designed to assist disabled students in transition from school to work by providing two new microcomputer-based programs to rehabilitation specialists in the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Special Services Unit which annually evaluates and screens over 700 young handicapped persons seeking to leave school and enter the workplace.

These programs were designed to help rehabilitation counselors remove barriers to employment by providing timely and accurate information about the functional limitations of the students and by automatically searching occupational information data bases for listings of jobs which these students are able to perform. Phase I of this project involved: (1) installing both systems, (2) providing comprehensive and integrated training on their use, and (3) conducting both process and outcome evaluations to determine the impact of the systems on the quality and effectiveness of case management and success. Phase II expanded both installation and evaluation, while Wisconsin-supported Phase III involved state-wide implementation.

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Contract No. DOED 300-86-0082

U.S. Department of Education
National Institute for Handicapped Research

Functional Assessment in Vocational Rehabilitation:
Validation, Extension, and Application

Abt Associates conducted a three-year research project built upon earlier work conducted for the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The research focused on the utility of functional assessment in vocational rehabilitation settings and centered around four objectives:

- o Assembling the functional data gathered at the closure of cases opened under the RSA work which permitted the comprehensive functional assessment, functional change, caseload service, and costs and case outcomes.
- o Construction, and validation, of a Functional Assessment System, based on the Functional Assessment Inventory and the Life Functioning Index.
- o Providing for and testing the TIRR Benefit-Cost Model and the Arkansas Weighted Case Closure System.
- o Developing and field testing the application of functional assessment methodology in an automated vocational information system.

At the core of the research was a data base consisting of data from 1400 VR clients provided by 120 VR counselors in two state agencies. This longitudinal data base is unique in VR since it contains information at intake and closure, along with client characteristic, caseload services, cost, and counselor characteristic data.

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Department of Transportation

Study of the Needs of the Handicapped

A study was made of the transportation needs of the handicapped population of the United States, projected to 1985. This project required: a careful definition of this disadvantaged group by physical limitation and by travel demand characteristics; interview of a stratified sample of the handicapped; and an examination of the capability of existing transportation systems. All of this information was used to determine whether it is more cost-effective to develop a specialized handicapped transportation system or to modify the existing systems.

The needs of handicapped persons living in the Boston area were explored through innovative survey techniques. Among these were the use of simulation and a film presentation which were designed to elicit accurate responses in sensitive areas. Design guidelines were developed for both the improvement of public transportation design and operation, and for improvements in techniques of rehabilitation of the handicapped.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Care Financing Administration

Staff-Assisted Home Dialysis
Demonstration Project

Abt Associates Inc. (AAI) was awarded a contract from HCFA to design, implement, and evaluate a demonstration to pay for home dialysis aides to severely disabled End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patients. These patients, only a fraction of the ESRD population, are so disabled that they require ambulance transportation to dialysis centers several times each week. The evaluation will determine whether providing home aide services for this group is cost-effective for Medicare and whether it ensures patient safety.

By Congressional mandate, eligible patients must be eligible for Medicare under the ESRD program, have a medical condition that would be exacerbated by transportation to a dialysis facility, and have ambulance costs that are expected to exceed the cost of a paid home aide, among other criteria.

AAI will design a randomized demonstration and recruit and reach contractual agreements with dialysis providers and eligible ESRD patients. Once selected for the demonstration, patients will be assigned to either of two groups. The experimental group will receive in-home dialysis assistance from a paid home health aide trained in dialysis services, while the control group will continue to be transported to a dialysis facility for treatment. Both groups will be surveyed by telephone immediately after enrollment and again after the first year of the demonstration. The survey will focus on physical health, functional status, satisfaction with care, and history of dialysis treatment.

The evaluation will analyze secondary data sources as well as the survey results. A number of HCFA databases will provide information about patient demographics, ESRD entitlement dates, home health services, patient casemix, and Medicare costs. By monitoring dialysis providers, AAI will examine how dialysis facilities arranged for the home aide services and what qualifications and training these aides had.

The evaluation will address a number of issues, including:

- is home hemodialysis assistance a cost-effective alternative to ambulance transport? Is it provided safely and does it offer quality care?
- how many patients actually meet the strict eligibility criteria?
- are mandated reimbursement rates high enough to encourage provider participation and hire sufficiently qualified home aides?

AAI will present its findings in a report to Congress.

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Contract No. 500-87-0030 (9)
Period of Performance: 6/91-12/95

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

National Study of Higher Education Facilities and
Services for Handicapped Students

Abt Associates conducted a national study of higher education facilities and services for handicapped students under contract to the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. This project had three major aspects, the first being a mail survey of all institutions of higher education in the United States which determined their enrollment of handicapped students and if special facilities and services were provided to such students. These services included special supportive programs such as readers for visually impaired students, counseling, or scholarship and recruiting programs. The second component of the study was an in-depth survey of over 500 schools to obtain a detailed description of their programs and facilities. Finally, a review of other programs for handicapped students in higher education was conducted. This encompassed programs operated by the federal government as well as those operated by state or local governments and private charitable agencies.

The product of this effort was a directory of facilities and programs in higher education, *The College Guide for Students with Disabilities*. This Guide includes information on every responding school, listed alphabetically, and describes their facilities and services for handicapped students. The Guide, oriented to students and counselors, also includes a review of programs not associated with any particular school.

The *College Guide for Students with Disabilities* was published in soft cover by Abt Publications/Abt Books, with a hard cover library edition distributed by Westview Press of Boulder, Colorado.

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Contract #: OEC-0-74-9187

National Institute on Drug Abuse

AIDS Outreach to Pregnant Women and Their Children

Abt Associates Inc. currently holds a three-year contract from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to implement and evaluate outreach strategies and educational interventions for pregnant women at risk for HIV infection: IV drug users, partners of IV drug users and prostitutes. The two sites where the interventions are based are at one city hospital in Boston and one medical center in Los Angeles. The diversity of populations being served by these institutions, along with the HIV seroprevalence of the respective cities--and in particular their drug using population--make it a unique comparison in both outreach and effective service provision. The community-based outreach strategies and educational interventions will be measured and compared to other models. The health education and support groups are evaluated for changes in the clients' knowledge base related to AIDS and pregnancy issues, as well as changes in attitude and involvement in high-risk behavior.

The project objectives are: 1) To identify and recruit into the study pregnant women who are IV drug users, partners of IV drug users or prostitutes; 2) To create strategies to educate these pregnant women; 3) To make appropriate health promotion interventions available to them, and to evaluate the outcomes; 4) To make available information regarding AIDS and modes of transmission and to evaluate client behavioral changes; 5) To reduce transmission of HIV from IV drug users to their pregnant mates and/or their babies.

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Contract Number: 271-88-8254

Period of Performance: 9/30/88-5/29/921

State of Michigan
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Functional Assessment Rating System
Pilot Installation and Test

The Functional Assessment Rating System (FARS) is an interactive case management tool designed for use by rehabilitation counselors for conducting a comprehensive summary of case information based on professional assessment of functional strengths and limitations, and on comparative analyses with a data base of over 2500 rehabilitation clients.

FARS was custom designed for use by the Michigan Rehabilitation Services for use in two offices on a pilot basis.

A comprehensive process evaluation was conducted following training and a four-month trial period. The results indicated that FARS was extremely user-friendly, had low counselor burden, and made significant contributions to the comprehensive review of primary and secondary disabling conditions and to an assessment of the vocational handicap. A second phase, adding two additional offices and upgraded features, including a service planning module, is planned for Fall 1987.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Social Security Administration

Evaluation of Project NetWork.

For this contract, Abt is conducting a five-year evaluation of eight demonstration projects that test the use of case management and financial incentives as a means of increasing rehabilitation services and employment among recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The study will compare the effects of four alternative methods of case management for SSI/SSDI recipients: The SSA Case Manager Model, the Contractor Model, the Outstationing Model, and the SSA Referral Specialist Model. The unifying theme of the Project Network demonstration and this evaluation of it is to determine the relative efficacy of each of the four models in assisting disability beneficiaries to return to work. The study will also help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each model of case management for the SSI and SSDI programs, as well as consider issues involved in the successful implementation of the various models.

The study uses random assignment of 8,400 voluntary participants to treatment and control groups, plus a separate sample of 200,000 nonparticipants, to analyze program service delivery, client selection, impacts (on earnings, SSDI and SSI benefits, and other outcomes), and overall benefits and costs. Major tasks include implementation of random assignment, collection of baseline and followup survey data (including in-home interviews with SSI/SSDI beneficiaries), and preparation of baseline and final reports. Projected components of the analysis include: a process analysis of demonstration implementation and service delivery, an analysis of client selection, the main experimental impact study, examination of the effects of the demonstration waivers (of earnings ceilings), the benefit-cost analysis, and an optional study of beneficiaries age 18 to 24 with mental impairments. In addition to generating findings with major policy implications for the SSI/SSDI programs' implementation of an optimal case management model or models, this research is expected to illuminate a variety of ancillary issues concerning the target population and its responsiveness to the case management approach.

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Contract Number: 600-92-0108

Period of Performance: 06/30/92 - 12/31/97

U.S. Office of Education
Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

Identifying Strategies for Assisting LEAs and SEAs
to Meet Procedural Safeguards Afforded
Handicapped Children and Their Parents

This study considered two cornerstone provisions of procedural safeguards of P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973: notification and dispute settlement. For notification, we investigated the practices used by LEAs (local educational agencies) to notify parents about special education evaluation, placement, and programming decisions and parental response in terms of understanding of and involvement in these practices. The notification practices and parental responses in nine LEAs were described using an in-depth case study analysis of 20 diverse sets of parents in each LEA. Based upon these case analyses, particular elements of notification practices used by LEAs were identified that appeared to be promising for eliciting parental understanding, involvement, and support for the special education decisions related to their child. Technical assistance packages based upon these promising practices were developed. In addition to identifying, describing, and disseminating information on notification practices, Abt Associates also provided on-going technical assistance to the parents and to state and local instructive, supportive, and administrative personnel participating in the study.

Abt Associates developed for publication a catalogue of dispute settlement materials. This catalogue was developed based on an extensive search of materials available throughout the nation. Materials included in the catalogue were solicited from LEAs, SEAs (state education agencies), parent organizations, disability-related groups, law clinics, protection and advocacy groups, and other organizations. A long-range dissemination and distribution plan was developed to assure its wide-spread use.

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Contract #: 300-78-0558

State of Ohio
Rehabilitation Services Commission

Functional Assessment Rating System
Distributed Access in Multiuser Environment

The Functional Assessment Rating System (FARS) is an interactive case management tool designed for use by rehabilitation counselors for conducting a comprehensive summary of case information based on professional assessment of functional strengths and limitations, and on comparative analyses with a data base of over 2500 rehabilitation clients.

The installation of FARS in two pilot offices in Ohio required custom programming in Lanier Business Basic, installation on the Lanier multi-user office automation systems, and installation in the Bureau of Services and the Blind and Visually Impaired as one of the pilot sites. Technical analysis of the systems revealed highly successful its use in a multi-user office environment which is the model for rehabilitation office organizations.

A comprehensive process evaluation was conducted following statewide training and a four-month trial period. The results indicated that FARS was extremely user-friendly, had low counselor burden, and made significant contributions to the primary and secondary disabling conditions and to an assessment of the vocational handicap. Modifications for application to blind agencies was suggested.

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Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

**Feasibility Study for a Personal Assistance Services
Home and Community-Based (2176)
Medicaid Waiver Program**

This intense research project is being undertaken in two phases, first to assess the feasibility of the Commonwealth's applying to the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) for a waiver of Medicaid regulations that would allow provision of Attendant Care Program services through Medicaid via a parallel waiver Personal Assistance Services (PAS) Program. The intent is to replicate, with as few changes as necessary, the highly successful state-funded Attendant Care Program. Given that the action recommendation was in the affirmative and the Commonwealth decided to initiate the waiver application, the second phase involves Abt's preparation of the 2176 Medicaid waiver application for submission to HCFA. Upon its approval by HCFA, in-home personal assistance services to Medicaid-eligible Pennsylvanians with physical disabilities could use Medicaid funding, of which a significant percentage would be federal dollars.

The first task of the Feasibility Study was to conduct background research on Medicaid waiver PAS programs around the nation through computer literature searches, interviews with and profiles of exemplary state programs, and conferring with nationally recognized experts in PAS research. The experts on Pennsylvania's needs and preferences for a PAS program are the concerned constituencies within the Commonwealth: PAS consumers, potential consumers, disability rights advocates, PAS providers, and potential providers (and there is considerable overlap in membership among these groups). Eight focus groups for these various concerned constituencies were held at accessible locations across the state. At the same time discussions with HCFA continued, in order to ascertain HCFA's requirements and preferences for a successful 2176 Medicaid waiver application. The service delivery systems for the waiver PAS program will be designed by Abt in such a way as to make as few material changes in the Attendant Care Program as are consistent with HCFA's requirements.

The major declared HCFA criterion for a 2176 waiver program of any kind is that it must be at least as cost-effective as maintaining the same persons in a nursing home or other institutional setting. To prove this, the state must demonstrate that the total average annual per person Medicaid expenditures under the waiver (PAS costs, doctor bills, pharmacy bills, outpatient medical bills, inpatient medical bills) will not exceed the average annual per person Medicaid expenditures if the waiver were not in place (nursing home costs plus other medical bills). Nor can total agency expenditures be greater.

Documenting the potential for cost savings that common sense seems to dictate would result from a 2176 Medicaid waiver PAS program involves performing a cost-effectiveness comparison that required computerizing Attendant Care Program (ACP) records on Medicaid-eligible consumers to form a data base as a first step. Then other Medicaid health care claims records for these persons were obtained from computerized state Medical Assistance data and linked, person-for-person, with the ACP data. Average annual per person costs were computed and compared with the costs for people with similar problems in nursing homes and other institutions. Estimates of how many persons could leave nursing homes or avoid entry into nursing homes by living at home with a Medicaid waiver PAS program in place were derived in order to project the needs of a waiver PAS program in Pennsylvania and its potential utilization.

In order to get opinions, preferences, and other needed information (for example on nursing home eligibility) from current ACP consumers and those on the waiting list for ACP services, a large print direct mail survey questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 200 from those two groups. It was accompanied by a letter directing recipients to call an 800 line at Abt if they needed to dictate their responses to the questions because of mobility or other limitations. The 60-item survey instrument collected data on respondents' general physical and mental health, underlying medical conditions, independence in performing activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), needs for personal assistance by activity and time of day, supports and current care-givers, sources and levels of income, and (for consumers) level of satisfaction with the current Attendant Care Program. A registered nurse familiar with PA nursing home eligibility determination criteria reviewed these paper records to make proxy estimates of nursing home eligibility for the 170 respondents.

Data from the survey were used in conjunction with Medicaid claims records and Attendant Care Program cost and service delivery figures to permit these analyses:

- Projection of PAS needs for Medicaid-eligible Pennsylvanians with physical disabilities
- Cost-effectiveness of in-home PAS vis-a-vis nursing home or rehabilitation facility care
- Projection of costs for waiver PAS needs and determination of waiver cap levels.

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Period of Performance: 1 July 1993 - 30 August 1994

Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Public Health Service
Alcohol Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration
National Institute on Drug Abuse

AIDS Outreach to Female Prostitutes and Sexual
Partners of Intravenous Drug Abusers

For the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Abt Associates coordinated and evaluated a three-year demonstration AIDS outreach and education program for these two groups of high-risk women. These target populations are believed to be involved in most of the heterosexual and perinatal transmission of the AIDS virus occurring in the United States. The demonstration was implemented in three sites: Juarez, Mexico; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Bridgeport, Connecticut. In each site, the demonstration was conducted by a lead agency under subcontract to Abt Associates. A community coordinator oversaw the effort in each site, working closely with staff of the lead agency, local consultants, and a range of participating organizations including drug treatment programs, clinics, hospitals, health departments, and criminal justice agencies.

The project involved testing a range of outreach and education strategies. Outreach strategies include the following: working with drug treatment programs to reach the sexual partners of their clients; distributing materials and showing videos about the project in various clinics which serve the target populations, such as sexually transmitted diseases clinics, family planning clinics, and community health centers; outreach through criminal justice agencies such as police departments, probation/parole departments, and jails; direct outreach to sexual partners on the streets and in housing projects; and direct outreach to prostitutes in "stroll areas", bars, and houses of prostitution.

Intervention strategies tested included open group discussion meetings in neighborhoods and at participating organizations, closed support group sessions with small groups of women, and individual counselling. All women participating in the project were offered confidential HIV antibody testing and counselling, but participation in the intervention was not contingent upon agreement to be tested.

Educational messages presented to project participants focused on general health promotion, sexuality education, safer sex practices, urging intravenous drug users to cease IV use or adopt safer injection practices, and contraception/pregnancy issues. Educational strategies included personalizing the risk of HIV infection/AIDS to women and their children, negotiation of difficult behavior changes, empowerment of women to bring about change in achievable, step-by-step ways, and provision of ongoing encouragement and support in the struggle to make changes that would reduce the risks of HIV infection/AIDS to women and their children.

While Abt specified the basic model to be followed, each site had significant leeway in adapting the model to local needs and conditions. Indeed, there were variations in the specific outreach, intervention, and education strategies being implemented in the sites.

Abt Associates coordinated the demonstration across the three sites, providing technical assistance and communication, and conducting process and outcome evaluations of the sites' programs. The process evaluation was based on information collected from standard monitoring instruments developed by Abt as well as site visits by Abt staff. The outcome evaluation was based on interviews with participants at the beginning of the education program and again six months after its conclusion. These interviews utilized standard instruments developed by NIDA for all of its AIDS outreach contracts and grants.

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Contract Number: 271-88-8224

Period of Performance: 3/28/88 - 8/31/91

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services

**Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with
Severe Handicaps**

For the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Abt Associates conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of Pennsylvania citizens with severe disabilities. This assessment systematically identified Pennsylvania residents who are between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four who have severe disabilities. A severe disability is defined as a serious limitation of functional capacity having an impact on an individual's employability.

Within this population of individuals with severe disabilities is a group who is not employed but who desire employment. Many members of this group feel their disabilities now prevent them from being employed. The second objective of the assessment was to estimate the number of persons in this subgroup.

The third study objective was an analysis of demographic data on individuals with severe disabilities. Variables included disability, age, sex, race, and living arrangements.

Finally, the target population was surveyed to determine and categorize their vocational rehabilitation needs.

Data were collected through a telephone survey employing a random-digit-dialing sample of 150,000 telephone numbers. More than 54,000 Pennsylvania households were contacted during this survey.

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Contract Number: 007152

Period of Performance: 2/1/88 - 4/30/89

Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled

Methodology Development for a Benefit-Cost Analysis of the
Javits-Wagner O'Day (JWOD) Program

For this contract, Abt is developing a methodology for a benefit-cost study of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) program. The goal of the JWOD Act is to use the Federal procurement system to generate employment and training opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Act establishes a mandatory purchasing program for Federal Government entities to procure certain products and services specified by the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled from a nonprofit agency employing such individuals.

Abt staff will identify, assess, and resolve issues relevant to conducting an effective cost-benefit analysis of the JWOD program, as well as identify and develop methods to measure the major quantifiable and non-quantifiable costs and benefits of the JWOD program. Costs and benefits will be examined from the perspective of the federal government, JWOD employees, the federal agencies that contract through the JWOD program, and society at large. The research will explore data collection strategies and make recommendations regarding data collection instruments, laying the ground work for a benefit-cost study to be undertaken in the future.

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Contract Number: CP-93-01
Period of Performance: 10/1/93 - 6/30/94

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Rehabilitation Services Administration
Office of Human Development

An Evaluation of Rehabilitation Services Administration
Research and Training Center Program

The principle of evaluation is not only to construct indices which estimate the degree to which a program achieves its objectives, but also to provide some insights into the structures and processes which impede or facilitate achievement. In this evaluation, we (1) examined the extent to which Research and Training Centers (RTC) contributed to the goals of the Program, and (2) described the administrative practices of RTC and RSA which facilitated or impeded achievement.

The overall objective of this project was to develop policy and management recommendations which would facilitate the mission of RSA's Research and Training Center Programs. Generally speaking, this mission involved the cost-effective development of methodologically sound research relevant to rehabilitation and training designed to accelerate the absorption of research findings into the practice arena.

In evaluating RSA's Program, this project addressed several specific objectives:

- a detailed description of RSA's Special Centers Office;
- a detailed description of each Research and Training Center;
- an evaluation of the appropriateness of research projects representative of the RTC Program;
- an evaluation of the quality of training efforts representative of the RTC Program; and
- an examination of the influence of organizational structures and processes on the quality of research and training.

In general, the descriptive information was with reference to intra- and inter-organizational structures and processes, and was used: (1) to portray the scope of goals and organizational models found within RSA's RTC Program; and (2) to help account for any variability in the quality of research and training. Information was gathered from site visits to each RTC and to the Special Centers Office, and from secondary sources such as annual reports.

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Contract #: HEW-105-76-4109

U.S. Department of Education
Rehabilitation Services Administration
Office of Program Evaluation

Evaluation of Eligibility Determination in
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies

The purpose of this contract was to determine the root causes of eligibility determination problems in the State/Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The project specifically involved:

- State and Federal policy review with respect to the determination of eligibility of disabled persons for VR services;
- VR client case reviews and in-depth diagnosis of the decision-making process undertaken by VR counselors and supervisors;
- Surveys of VR counselors, supervisors, and administrators with respect to eligibility determination issues;
- Development of performance standard guidelines for use by RSA for setting eligibility policy;
- Development of strategies to be implemented by RSA to address issues of eligibility determination.

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Contract No. DOED 300-86-0119

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Rehabilitation Services Administration

Feasibility Study of Retirement and Health Insurance
for Blind Vendors

The Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare awarded Abt Associates Inc. a contract to study the feasibility of establishing a nationally-administered retirement and health insurance system for blind vending facility operators licensed by states under the provisions of the Randolph-Sheppard Act, as amended in 1974. The study included consideration of eligibility standards, amounts and sources of fund contributions, number of potential participants, total costs, and alternative forms of administration, including trust funds and revolving funds.

The feasibility and desirability of a retirement and health insurance system will, in large measure, be determined on the basis of proposed benefit plans that will be tested in a sample of states. This contract concluded with a report submitted to HEW. The contents of the report were summarized in an Information Memorandum which was disseminated throughout RSA and to all state agencies.

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Contract #: HEW-105-75-4100

Subcontract to Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc.
for the
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research
Evaluation of the HUD Supportive Housing
Programs for Persons with Disabilities

Abt Associates Inc. is the subcontractor to Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc. for the evaluation of three housing programs for low income persons who have special needs due to disabilities: Section 202 Direct Loan Program for the Elderly or Handicapped created under the Housing Act of 1959 and expanded to include non-elderly handicapped in 1964, Section 162 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, and Section 811 of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. The evaluation is designed to assess the effectiveness of the previous Section 202 and Section 162 programs, since 1978, in providing adequate housing and services for persons with disabilities and to assess the implications this past experience may have for future policy decisions on the Section 811 program.

The evaluation team will review the legislative history and regulations since Section 202 was expanded to include non-elderly disabled tenants, as well as the Congressional testimony that resulted in the passage of the Section 162 and 811 programs. Subsequently, the evaluation will conduct mailed and telephone interviews with 471 project sponsors, 331 building managers and approximately 1000 tenants of developments that house persons with disabilities. Site visits will also be conducted with 30 Section 202 and 162 developments.

Although Abt Associates Inc. is involved in all of the evaluation tasks, our primary responsibility pertains to the research design, sampling plan, collection of the tenant surveys, and database development.

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Contract Number: DU100C900005892

Period of Performance: 10/1/92 - 9/30/94

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research

Evaluation of the Shelter Plus Care Program
for Homeless Persons

Under contract to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Abt Associates and its subcontractor Quadell Consulting Corporation is conducting an evaluation of the Shelter Plus Care (S+C) program for severely disabled homeless persons living on the streets or in emergency shelters. The S+C program was authorized by the 1990 National Affordable Housing Act and approved November 28, 1990. This legislation amended Title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act to include the S+C program. The goal of this program is to provide housing and supportive services to homeless persons with serious mental illness (SMI), chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, or have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and related diseases. The S+C program is a competitive grant program under which HUD funds rental assistance for housing and the community matches the dollar value of the rental assistance with equal or greater dollars for supportive services intended to enable the S+C participants to live as independently and self-sufficiently as possible. In 1992 HUD announced 34 Round 1 grants to fund 16 applicants for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) projects and 18 applicants for Sponsor-based Rental Assistance (SRA) projects. In 1993, HUD plans to award \$300 million to an additional 130 applicants for SRO and SRA projects and two other components of the S+C Program: Tenant-based Rental Assistance (TRA) and Project-based Rental Assistance (PRA).

The evaluation will be conducted over two years and four months. Phase 1 will include interviews with agency staff, review of all funded applications for Rounds 1 and 2, and design of a participant outcome monitoring system (POMS) for each project to track S+C participants. During Phase 2, the project team will conduct a preliminary implementation assessment of the Rounds 1 and 2 S+C projects through intensive community visits with the SRO and SRA projects that are beginning to provide rental assistance and supportive services to disabled homeless individuals and their families.

The final report of the project, due in June 1995, will address three core issues: who participates in the S+C Program, what forms of supportive services are needed and at what cost, and what changes occur in the lives of participants.

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Contract Number: DU100C000005903
Period of Performance: 2/23/93 - 6/15/95

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Office of Education

Special Teens and Parent Study of the Impact of P.L. 94-142

This was a five-year longitudinal study of the impact of P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Law) on learning disabled adolescents and their parents. The study sought to address the immediate and long-term impact of five provisions of P.L. 94-142: protection in evaluation procedures; procedural and due process safeguards; least restrictive environment; parental involvement; and individualized educational programs.

Four areas of impact were investigated: personal attitudes of the student and family; social behaviors, interactions and peer acceptance of the student; educational experiences and attainments of the student; and economic costs and benefits to the student and family. The longitudinal design of the study permitted investigation of the impact of P.L. 94-142 on these four areas as students move from junior high school to high school and from high school to work or a post-secondary education program.

The study sampling design provided insight into the differential long-term impact of P.L. 94-142 on middle and low socio-economic status students and on students in different high school placements. The study sample consisted of 18 specific learning disabled students in a large suburban school system placed in a ninth grade special education resource class program. These students were selected from both middle and lower socio-economic backgrounds and represented three different anticipated high school placements -- regular program with no further special education services, regular programs with resource class support, and a special education vocational development program. Of the 18 students, six students and families were targeted for intensive study; the remaining 12 were studied less intensively and served as a reserve against attrition.

Information on the target students and families were collected throughout the school year using multiple sources and techniques of data collection. The students and parents were interviewed periodically; each student was observed in school and at work; and teachers and other school staff were asked about the students' behavior and progress. Parent/school conferences, including IEP review sessions also were observed. Background information from student records, continued periodic contact with the student and family and follow-up outcome data were collected from all 18 students.

The study provided the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped with detailed case study descriptions of the special education experiences encountered by specific learning disabled adolescents. The case studies provided a humanistic perspective and suggested possible explanations for statistical findings, as well as issues appropriate for further study.

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Contract Number: 300-78-0462

Period of Performance: 10/1/78 -

9/30/79

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
U.S. Department of Education

NIDRR ADA Technical Assistance Coordinator

This is a three-year project that involves facilitating, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the technical assistance activities of fifteen National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research grantees whose efforts comprise the NIDRR Technical Assistance Initiative for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990: ten regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs), three Materials Development Projects (MDPs--two on employment aspects, one on accessibility and public accommodation), and two National Training Projects (NTPs--a peer and family training network and an independent living center capacity-building project). There are a set of five project coordination activities that run concurrently for the duration of the contract:

- 1) **Obtaining and Distributing ADA Technical Assistance Materials to the DBTACs, NTPs, and MDPs.** Activities include preparation and updating of *A Selected Topical Bibliography on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, obtaining copies of new publications, maintaining a project library, arranging for bulk shipments of government agency publications, coordinating production and publication of NIDRR Initiative-generated publications, including alternative formats.
- 2) **Ensuring the Quality and Consistency of the Activities and Materials of the DBTACs, NTPs, and MDPs** through substantive and legal review and establishing a PC data base National ADA Resource Directory that includes an Expert Consultant Pool, as well as setting up an electronic bulletin board for grantee information sharing. An "ADA News Service" of generic newsletter material is being provided on the Project Enable electronic bulletin board with quarterly updates. A national toll-free information and referral number has been established, with calls routed electronically to the regional DBTAC responsible for the caller's area code. **(1-800-949-4ADA Voice/TDD)**
- 3) **Consultation on Technical and Legal Issues** of interest to all grantees that arise during the implementation of the ADA, including authoring or commissioning timely and topical "white papers." To date white papers have been prepared on Detectable Warnings for the Blind and the ADA Standing of Native American Tribes.
- 4) **Evaluation of Grantees** based on monthly performance data provided by grantees, involving construction of a project evaluation data base. These performance data are summarized quarterly and analyzed on a yearly basis as part of Abt's preparation of the Annual Report to Congress on the NIDRR ADA Technical Assistance Initiative, which also includes grantee project narratives and a summary narrative.

5) **Training and Information-Sharing Meetings of the Directors of the DBTACs, MDPs, and NTPs.** These semiannual meetings bring grantee Project Directors and other senior staff together with outside speakers and experts to share problems and best practice solutions, as well as ADA developments; ADA training is provided by other federal agencies like the Department of Justice, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Access Board, the Department of Transportation, and the Federal Communications Commission.

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Contract Number: HN910410

Period of Performance: 9/30/91 -

9/29/94

The World Bank

Economic Impact of Aids in Tanzania

The World Bank is conducting an intensive study of AIDS in Tanzania, including prevalence, prevention activities, work with the National AIDS Control Program, and a special study of Kagera Province, where prevalence is of epidemic proportions.

The World Bank has developed a macroeconomic model of the impact of AIDS on the country. This model incorporates effects on labor supply and productivity, changes in savings and spending on health care, and other economic impacts.

As part of this study, an Abt Associates economist travelled to Tanzania to assess the economic impact of AIDS. The economist collected information from several government agencies in Tanzania, and conducted a small survey of labor force impacts among major employers in the Dar Es Salaam area. These data will serve as input to the model to predict the economic impact of AIDS.

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**U.S. Department of Health, Education, and
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Developmental Disabilities Office

A Special Study of the Definition of Developmental Disabilities

Abt Associates Inc. conducted this study in response to the Congressional mandate in the Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-103) which calls for a careful reexamination of the current definition of "developmental disability." During the conduct of this study, Abt Associates acted as staff to a National Task Force on the Definition of Developmental Disabilities.

The study was conducted in four phases:

Phase I culminated in the first meeting of the National Task Force on the Definition of Developmental Disabilities. Major study activities included selection of the Task Force members and preparation of the background materials required by the Task Force prior to its first meeting. During the first meeting the Task Force identified and classified the wide range of issues which needed to be investigated and considered in determining the basis for an appropriate definition.

Phase II culminated in the second meeting of the National Task Force on the Definition of Developmental Disabilities. In preparation for this meeting Abt Associates staff developed issue papers based upon the specific topics generated by the Task Force during its first meeting. These papers were distributed to the Task Force members prior to the second meeting. During the second meeting of the Task Force, members discussed the issue papers, generated criteria for an appropriate definition of developmental disabilities, and identified definitions meeting the various criteria.

Phase III culminated in the third meeting of the National Task Force on the Definition of Developmental Disabilities. Abt Associates staff developed definition papers between the second and third Task Force meetings. These papers identified definitional criteria, possible alternative definitions which meet the criteria and the major programmatic service delivery and cost implications of each definition or set of definitional criteria. The definition papers were reviewed by a wide range of concerned individuals and organizations. The opinions and information obtained were integrated into the final definition papers. These papers were sent to the Task Force members prior to the third meeting. During this final meeting the Task Force reviewed and recommended a set of criteria for the definition of developmental disabilities (i.e., the "appropriate basis" for a definition), specific definitions meeting those criteria, the reasons for the selection, and the major implications of the selection. The deliberations

of the Task Force were compiled into a report to Congress containing the recommendations. Minority recommendations were identified as needed.

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Phase IV culminated in delivery of a report to Congress. Abt Associates developed the final report. Draft copies were circulated to all Task Force members for their review and approval.

The final report included (1) a summary of project activities; (2) Task Force recommendations, including minority reports, if any, regarding the appropriate basis for a definition of developmental disabilities and the specific language of the definition; (3) justification for the selected definition; and (4) recommendations regarding ongoing reassessments of the definition.

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Contract #: HEW-105-76-5004

Abt Associates Research of Canada Inc.

**The Development of Concepts for Small Business Enterprises
to be Operated by Handicapped Persons in Nova Scotia**

The purpose of this contract was to provide technical assistance to a community-based Board of Directors in its pursuit of ideas for establishing small, low capitalization business enterprises which would employ and be managed by disabled persons. The technical assistance specifically involved the preparation of a report under subcontract to Abt Associates Research of Canada based on:

- A survey of disabled persons: the nature and severity of their disabling conditions; their work interests and availability; and personal profile data that would reveal information regarding their employability (e.g., education, previous employment experiences); and
- An examination of local market characteristics that would affect the viability of given enterprises.

Findings were discussed with the community-based board in the interest of establishing priorities among the viable alternatives.

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Contract #: N/A

State of Wisconsin
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Functional Assessment Rating System
Office Aggregation and Forms Production

The Functional Assessment Rating System (FARS) is an interactive case management tool designed for use by rehabilitation counselors for conducting a comprehensive summary of case information based on professional assessment of functional strengths and limitations, and on comparative analyses with a data base of over 2500 rehabilitation clients.

Two special applications have been installed in Wisconsin. First, special purpose software designed to aggregate FARS data across a counselor's caseload, and then across caseloads for a field office, have been installed on a pilot basis and will be expanded statewide in 1986-1987. Second, FARS was custom designed for Wisconsin to produce the DVR-Y eligibility form which contains an automated word-processing function and produced required narrative summaries and the form to be signed and inserted in the files.

A comprehensive process evaluation was conducted following pilot-site training in two offices and a four-month trial period. The results indicated that FARS was extremely user-friendly, had low counselor burden, and made significant contributions to the comprehensive review of primary and secondary disabling conditions and to an assessment of the vocational handicap.

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State of Wyoming
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Functional Assessment Rating System
Statewide Installation

The Functional Assessment Rating System (FARS) is an interactive case management tool designed for use by rehabilitation counselors for conducting a comprehensive summary of case information based on professional assessment of functional strengths and limitations, and on comparative analyses with a data base of over 2500 rehabilitation clients.

FARS was custom designed for use by the Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for use, and represented the first statewide installation project. The program was custom tailored to be compatible with the automated case management system being installed in Wyoming. All VR counselors assess new cases at the point of eligibility determination and include the FARS hardcopy report as part of the Preliminary Diagnostic Study.

A comprehensive process evaluation was conducted following statewide training and a four-month trial period. The results indicated that FARS was extremely user-friendly, had low counselor burden, and made significant contributions to the comprehensive review of primary and secondary disabling conditions, and to an assessment of the vocational handicap.

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State of Wisconsin
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Phase II
Functional Assessment Rating System
Statewide Installation

The Functional Assessment Rating System (FARS) is an interactive case management tool designed for use by rehabilitation counselors for conducting a comprehensive summary of case information based on professional assessment of functional strengths and limitations, and on comparative analyses with a data base of over 2500 rehabilitation clients.

These special applications have been installed in Wisconsin. First, special purpose software designed to aggregate FARS data across a counselor's caseload, and then across caseloads for a field office, have been installed on a pilot basis and will be expanded statewide in 1986-1987. Second, FARS was custom designed for Wisconsin to produce the DVR-Y eligibility form which contains an automated word-processing function and produced required narrative summaries and the form to be signed and inserted in the files.

Finally, a Service Plan Development module was designed and implemented to allow automated linkage of functional limitation information to planned services and to automatically produce a service plan summary and the Individually Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP).

A plan for statewide implementation in Wisconsin has been developed and will be implemented in conjunction with equipment purchase and placement during 1987-1989.

Rehabilitation

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