

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-93-14
RSM-1050
DATE: April 15, 1993

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
RSA DISCRETIONARY GRANTEEES
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION
PROGRAMS (RRCEPS)
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: State Rehabilitation Services to OWCP Clients

BACKGROUND: State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies have had a long history of serving U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) clients under VR services agreements. Until 1977, OWCP utilized State VR agencies almost exclusively. Gradually since then, OWCP has relied increasingly on private rehabilitation sources. Most, if not all, State VR agencies are interested in serving OWCP clients and a number of them have recently requested assistance from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in revitalizing their relationships with OWCP. This coincides with a U.S. General Accounting Office report, dated February 28, 1992, on a study of the OWCP-VR program. The General Accounting Office expressed the belief that where States are able to handle OWCP cases it will be cost-effective for OWCP to return to using State VR counselors, and recommends that DOL/OWCP coordinate with RSA to facilitate increased use of State VR agencies.

CONTENT: RSA and DOL/OWCP have collaborated on the renewal of the traditional State VR agency-OWCP relationship and the development of two sets of material, one for State VR agencies and the other for OWCP Regional Offices.

The information is designed to promote coordination between these agencies so as to accomplish the mutual goal to increase the rehabilitation and restoration of OWCP clients to employment.

The attached materials provided for your use or reference are:

- I OWCP Bulletin
- II Fact Sheet on State VR Services
- III Directory of OWCP Regional Offices
- IV Model Agreement
- V VR Counselor Training Resource Book (Red Book)

The OWCP Regional Offices will receive the same materials as provided to the State VR agencies except that they will receive a Directory of State VR agencies instead of a Directory of OWCP Regional Offices, and they will not receive the Red Book because they already have it.

The OWCP Bulletin provides information on the history of the State VR agency-OWCP relationship, how the State VR agencies function (supplemented by the Fact Sheet on State VR services) and what actions the OWCP Regional Offices are to take in developing formal agreements with their respective State VR agencies. The State VR agency Director should take note of the action items contained in the OWCP Bulletin as to how these actions may impact on the State VR agency. Also, please note that action item 4 in the Bulletin is designed to assure that State VR counselors are adequately trained to effectively handle OWCP cases before referrals are made under an agreement. The RSA Regional Offices may be called upon to assist in arranging the above-described training and joint training of respective staffs, as appropriate.

The VR Counselor Training Resource Book (Red Book) serves several purposes, including:

1. to assist the State VR Directors in learning of the requirements of the OWCP; and,

2. to inform the State VR counselors of the standards that must be met in servicing OWCP clients and the coordination that is essential with OWCP counselors.

The attached model agreement is provided as a guide in developing an independent, joint agreement based on the realities that exist in each Region and each State.

These materials are being coordinated so that the information will reach the OWCP Regional Offices and State VR agencies at approximately the same time. The OWCP Regional Offices are instructed to contact the State VR agencies in their Region within 30 days following the receipt of the material. If the State VR Director does not hear from the OWCP Regional Office Director within the time prescribed, the State VR Director is urged to take the initiative in making contact with the OWCP Regional Office Director so that plans can be made to update or develop a new joint agreement for serving OWCP clients at the earliest possible time. A Directory of the OWCP Regional Directors is provided for your convenience.

A signed copy of any updated or new joint State VR agency-OWCP agreement, as well as any future revisions, should be forwarded, for reference purposes, to your RSA Regional Commissioner.

Payments received by State VR agencies from workers' compensation funds are to be treated as program income and cannot be used to meet any matching requirements.

CITATION: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
§101(a)(11), 34 CFR 361.19 and 34 CFR §80.25

EFFECTIVE DATE: Issue Date

EXPIRATION DATE: None

INQUIRIES: RSA Regional Commissioner

William L. Smith
Acting Commissioner, RSA

Attachments