

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM  
RSA-IM-95-06  
RSM-1250  
DATE: February 28, 1995

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

SUBJECT: Caseload Statistics, State Vocational Rehabilitation  
Agencies, Fiscal Year 1993

CONTENT: The accompanying report contains detailed data on  
caseload activity at the State agency level for FY 1993  
and historical trends nationally over many years. This  
is the first Caseload Statistics report to reflect the  
impact of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992  
which (a) required eligibility determinations to be  
made within 60 days and (b) established the presumption  
that applicants for rehabilitation services could  
benefit from them.

While these new features produced a dramatic  
programmatic movement of applicants for rehabilitation  
services to the active, or eligible, statuses, they  
also led to familiar statistical measurements taking on  
a dissimilar meaning from those in the past. Most  
particularly affected were the concepts of "acceptance  
rate", "rehabilitation rate" and "persons served".

Revisions to the reporting instrument from which  
caseload data are derived, the Quarterly Cumulative  
Caseload Report (Form RSA-113), have recently been  
promulgated (RSA-PD-95-03 of February 17, 1995) to  
enable RSA to redress the level of non-comparability of  
data with the past.

The 60-day requirement for determination of eligibility  
led to a rapid decline in the number of persons  
classified as applicants with a concomitant increase in  
the number counted as being in the active, or eligible,  
statuses. Applicants in State agency caseloads on  
September 30, 1993, for example, numbered some 96,500  
fewer than on the same date a year earlier, a decline  
of 34.4%, while those in the active statuses rose by  
nearly 82,000 in the same span of time, an increase of  
13.3%.

The presumption of benefit provision together with the 60-day requirement resulted in much higher numbers and proportions of individuals determined eligible for services. The number of newly eligible persons increased by nearly 84,000 to 430,269 (24.2%), the highest intake level in 16 years. In the previous ten years (FY 1983 to FY 1992), the newly eligible had stabilized at about 350,000 persons per year. The proportion of eligible applicants among the total whose eligibility was determined--the acceptance rate--exceeded 60% for the first time in 19 years.

In the midst of a rapidly changing caseload picture, State agencies were able to increase the number of persons vocationally rehabilitated in FY 1993 by 2,100 to 193,994, or 1.1% more than FY 1992. This was the first annual gain in four years. Among these rehabilitations were 138,290 persons with severe disabilities representing a gain of 4,500 persons, or 3.4% more than FY 1992. This, too, was the first increase in four years.

Overall, persons with severe disabilities increased in proportion throughout the entire caseload in FY 1993 to reach record levels now constituting well over 70% of all cases. The rise in this proportion has persisted in the face of the higher cost to rehabilitate persons with severe disabilities, typically about 40% or more than the cost for other persons, on the average.

The increase of 2,100 in the number of rehabilitated persons (1.1%), cited above, was coupled with an increase of 15,400 (11.1%) in those who were not rehabilitated. Together, these trends led to a decline in the rehabilitation rate, as traditionally calculated, to 55.7%, the lowest in many years. The rehabilitation rate is to be viewed with caution, however, since it is partially based on eligible persons for whom services were delayed and, likely, never delivered at all. The presumption of benefit feature in the 1992 Amendments led to an increase in the number of such persons in State agencies operating under order of selection priorities. These priorities are established by agencies not having the resources to serve every eligible person.

The large increase in the number of eligible persons led to 1,048,527 individuals being classified as "served", almost 100,000, or 10.5%, more than in FY 1992, the highest total in 13 years. Here again, though, an undetermined number of those now labelled "served" are persons for whom services were delayed, and possibly never delivered, because the individuals did not meet an agency's order of selection priorities.

National summaries cited here are the net effects of caseload activity in all State rehabilitation agencies and may not reflect trends in particular agencies.

Finally, I urge those agencies who contemplate making revisions to previously reported data for FY 1994, to act immediately so that final data for the year can be made available soon. Caseload statistics and trends are being closely monitored by RSA and others in the rehabilitation community concerned with the continuing impact of the 1992 Amendments on the State-Federal Program of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Fredric K. Schroeder  
Commissioner  
Rehabilitation Services Administration