

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-98-10
DATE: February 25, 1998

TO : STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
PROTECTION & ADVOCACY OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CHOICE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS
NATIONAL FACILITIES COALITION
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION
PROGRAMS
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: An Evaluation of Choice Demonstration Projects, Interim Report #2

CONTENT: Attached is a copy of the Executive Summary of the Second Interim Report on the Evaluation of the Choice Demonstration Projects (the First Interim Report was based on limited, initial site visit data and was produced for use by the Federal Government only). Title VIII of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1992, authorized grants to seven States and nonprofit agencies and organizations to increase client choice in the rehabilitation process, including the selection of providers of vocational rehabilitation services. Section 802(g)(7) of the legislation also authorized an evaluation of "the services provided, clients served, client outcomes obtained, implementation issues addressed, the cost effectiveness of the project, and the effects of increased choice on consumers and service providers" in the demonstration projects. In 1995, the U.S. Department of Education awarded a contract to InfoUse to conduct this evaluation.

State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies must provide individuals who are eligible for services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act with a major role in selecting their vocational goals, services and service providers. Section 100(a)(3)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act states that "Individuals with disabilities must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals and objectives and the vocational rehabilitation services they receive." A major purpose of the choice demonstration project evaluation study is to

identify promising practices that State VR agencies can use to enhance consumer choice in the VR service process.

InfoUse used various methods to study the demonstration projects including: 1.) collection of projects' computerized data, 2.) review of a randomly selected sample of consumers' files in each project to identify demographics, outcomes and details of service purchases, 3.) obtaining qualitative information using site visits, telephone contacts with project staff and other key informants, 4.) obtaining and reviewing other project materials used in the consumer orientation and service planning processes, and 5.) developing cost estimates based on annual expenditure reports.

The Interim Report provides detailed descriptions of the projects and selected promising choice practices; analyses of participant characteristics, vocational goals and services purchased; and estimates of project costs. A final report in the Summer of 1998 will also include updated project data, a report on program employment outcomes, input from service vendors and data on participant satisfaction.

The Executive Summary provides an overview of study findings to date. The promising practices cited in the Summary may have particular interest for State VR agencies as they seek to optimize consumer choice. The entire Interim Report is also available upon request. If you wish a copy of the Interim Report, please call Ms. Deborah Barnes at (202) 205-8299. You can also request a copy using the following internet address: Harold_Kay@ed.gov. If you have any questions concerning Executive Summary or the Interim Report, please call Dr. Harold Kay, Director of Evaluation, Rehabilitation Services Administration at (202) 205-9883.

Fredric K. Schroeder
Commissioner

Attachment

CC: NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING
COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEMS