

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND  
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES  
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM  
RSA-IM-98-13  
DATE: May 5, 1998

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)  
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)  
STATE REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCILS  
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
PROTECTION & ADVOCACY OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS  
PROGRAMS  
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS  
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
SERVICE PROGRAMS  
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: President's Executive Order for Increasing the Employment of Adults with  
Disabilities

CONTENT: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to alert vocational  
rehabilitation(VR)State agencies, rehabilitation professionals, advocates  
and other interested persons to the Executive Order signed by President  
Clinton on March 13, 1998. This Executive Order establishes a task force  
to develop strategies to increase the employment of adults with  
disabilities.

We recommend that the attached Executive Order be brought to the  
attention of your staff responsible for or interested in employment, job  
development and placement, and human resource development. It is our  
hope that the Executive Order brings renewed commitment to the goal of  
employment by VR counselors and supervisors, human resource  
development specialists, community-based rehabilitation service  
providers, administrators, researchers, educators and policy analysts in  
fulfilling the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, particularly,  
" ... to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment,  
economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration  
into society...

RSA-IM-98-13

The Executive Order has as its stated goal to increase the employment of adults with disabilities to a rate that is as close as possible to the employment rate of the general adult population and to support the goals articulated in the findings and purpose section of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It calls for the creation of a "National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities" ("Task Force") made up of the Secretaries of Labor, Education, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce, and Transportation, as well as the heads of the Social Security Administration, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. The Task Force will be chaired by the Secretary of Labor.

The purpose of the Task Force is to create a coordinated policy for bringing the employment rate of individuals with disabilities closer to the overall national employment rate. This policy would remove employment barriers in areas of civil rights, reasonable accommodation, health care, transportation, housing, long-term services and supports, child care, education, and vocational rehabilitation, among others. The Task Force will develop the policy through analysis of current programs administered by member agencies and will recommend changes to remove programmatic barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. In addition, the group will develop and recommend options to address the need for health care coverage and its role as a barrier to employment.

RSA will provide strong support to the staff assigned to the Executive Order. The RSA Employment Strategic Plan includes many references to the Executive Order and was written to ensure that RSA's efforts in the area of employment would complement, not duplicate, the work called for by President Clinton. We at RSA are enthusiastic about the commitment that is demonstrated by this document, and we encourage all interested parties to redouble their efforts regarding employment of adults with disabilities.

Additional copies of this publication may be obtained by contacting Ms. Jenn Rigger using the enclosed order form. If you have any questions or comments regarding the President's Executive Order, please call Jenn Rigger at (202) 260-2179, or via e-mail at [jenn\\_rigger@ed.gov](mailto:jenn_rigger@ed.gov).

Fredric K. Schroeder, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

Enclosures

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

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 13, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER

INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to increase the employment of adults with disabilities to a rate that is as close as possible to the employment rate of the general adult population and to support the goals articulated in the findings and purpose section of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of National, Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities.

(a) There is established the "National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities" ("Task Force"). The Task Force shall comprise the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commissioner of Social Security, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Transportation, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Chairperson of the National Council on Disability, the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and such other senior executive branch officials as may be determined by the Chair of the Task Force.

(b) The Secretary of Labor shall be the Chair of the Task Force; the Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall be the Vice Chair of the Task Force.

The purpose of the Task Force is to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population. The Task Force shall develop and recommend to the President, through the Chair of the Task Force, a coordinated Federal policy to reduce employment barriers for persons with disabilities. Policy recommendations may cover such areas as discrimination, reasonable accommodations, inadequate access to health care, lack of consumer-driven, long-term supports and services, transportation, accessible and integrated housing.

tele-communications, assistive technology, community services, child care, education, vocational rehabilitation, training services, job retention, on-the-job supports, and economic incentives to work. Specifically, the Task Force shall:

- (1) analyze the **existing** programs and policies of Task Force member agencies to determine what changes, modifications, and innovations may be necessary to remove barriers to **work** faced by people with disabilities;
  - (2) develop and recommend options to address health insurance coverage as a barrier to employment for people with disabilities;
  - (3) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze State and private disability systems (e.g., workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, private insurance, and State mental health and mental retardation systems) and their effect on Federal programs and employment of adults with disabilities;
  - (4) consider statistical and data analysis, cost data, research, and policy studies on public subsidies, employment, employment discrimination, and rates of return-to-work for individuals with disabilities;
  - (5) evaluate and, where appropriate, coordinate and collaborate on, research and demonstration priorities of Task Force member agencies related to employment of adults with disabilities;
  - (6) evaluate whether Federal studies related to employment and training can, and should, include a statistically significant sample of adults with disabilities;
  - (7) subject to the availability of appropriations, analyze youth programs related to employment (e.g., Employment and Training Administration programs, special education, vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work transition, vocational education, and Social Security Administration work incentives and other programs, as may be determined by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Task Force) and the outcomes of those programs for young people with disabilities;
  - (8) evaluate whether a single governmental entity or program should be established to provide computer and electronic accommodations for Federal employees with disabilities;
- 1
- (9) consult with the President's Committee on Mental Retardation on policies to increase the employment of people with mental retardation and cognitive disabilities; and
  - (10) recommend to the President any additional steps that can be taken to advance the employment of adults with disabilities, including legislative proposals, regulatory changes, and program and budget initiatives.

## D

- (d) (1) The members of the Task Force shall make the activities and initiatives set forth in this order a high priority within their respective agencies within the levels provided in the President's budget.
- (2) The Task Force shall issue its first report to the President by November 15, 1998. The Task Force shall issue a report to the President on November 15, 1999, November 15, 2000, and a final report on July 26, 2002, the 10th anniversary of the initial implementation of the employment provisions of the

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The reports shall describe the actions taken by, and progress of, each member of the Task Force in carrying out this order. The Task Force shall terminate 30 days after submitting its final report.

- (e) As used herein, an adult with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity.

## Sec. 2. Specific activities by Task Force members and other agencies.

- (a) To ensure that the Federal Government is a model employer of adults with disabilities, by November 15, 1998, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall submit to the Task Force a review of Federal Government personnel laws, regulations, and policies and, as appropriate, shall recommend or implement changes necessary to improve Federal employment policy for adults with disabilities. This review shall include personnel practices and actions such as: hiring, promotion, benefits, retirement, workers' compensation, retention, accessible facilities, job accommodations, layoffs, and reductions in force.
- (b) The Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work with the States and others to ensure that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act is carried out in accordance with section 504 of (the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, so that individuals with disabilities and their families can realize the full promise of welfare reform by having an equal opportunity for employment.
- (c) The Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to develop small business and entrepreneurial opportunities for adults with disabilities and strategies for assisting low-income adults, including those with disabilities to create small businesses and micro-enterprises. These same agencies, in consultation with the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, shall assess the impact of the Randolph-Sheppard Act vending program and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act on employment and small business opportunities for people with disabilities.
- (d) The Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development shall report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their examination of their programs to see if they can be used to create new work incentives and to remove barriers to work for adults with disabilities.
- (e) The Departments of Justice, Education, and Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Social Security Administration shall work together and report to the Task Force by November 15, 1998, on their work to propose remedies to the prevention of people with disabilities from successfully exercising their employment rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 because of the receipt of monetary benefits based on their disability and lack of gainful employment.

(f) The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor and the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce, in cooperation with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the National Council on Disability, and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities shall design and implement a statistically reliable and accurate method to measure the employment rate of adults with disabilities as soon as possible, but no later than the date of termination of the Task Force. Data derived from this methodology shall be published on as frequent a basis as possible.

(g) All executive agencies that are not members of the Task Force shall: (1) coordinate and cooperate with the Task Force. and (2) review their programs and policies to ensure that they are being conducted and delivered in a manner that facilitates and promotes the employment of adults with disabilities. Each agency shall file a report with the task Force on the results of its review on November 15, 1998.

Sec. 3. Cooperation. All efforts taken by executive departments and agencies under sections 1 and 2 of this order shall, as appropriate, further partnerships and cooperation with public and private sector employers, organizations that represent people with disabilities, organized labor, veteran service organizations, and State and local governments whenever such partnerships and cooperation are possible and would promote the employment and gainful economic activities of individuals with disabilities.

Sec. 4. Judicial Review. This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
March 13, 1998.