

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM  
RSA-IM-99-26  
DATE: June 11, 1999

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

SUBJECT: Request for Nominations for the Twenty-Sixth Institute on Rehabilitation  
Issues Prime Study Groups

CONTENT: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to request  
nominations for persons to serve as chairpersons and members on the 26<sup>th</sup>  
Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) prime study groups. The following  
three topics have been selected for study during the 26th IRI and assigned  
to the university coordinators indicated:

The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of a Successful  
Employment Outcome (Ms. Jeanne Miller, University of Arkansas);

Effective Strategies to Improve the Achievement of Employment for  
Individuals who are SSI/SSDI Participants (Dr. Daniel McAlees,  
University of Wisconsin at Stout); and,

Using the Internet as a Resource to the Work of the VR Counselor (Dr.  
Donald Dew, George Washington University).

Descriptions of the issues to be addressed in each of the three publications  
are attached to this memorandum.

The chairperson for a prime study group is usually a current employee of a State VR agency who has demonstrated leadership qualities, an ability to facilitate group discussions, good writing and editorial skills, and has served on previous IRI prime study groups. Both the chairperson and the prime study group members must make a commitment to attend three meetings for two to three days each, during which the topical issues are discussed and debated in great detail.

The group will be primarily made up of representatives from State VR agencies and will include a total of approximately 10-12 persons, including individuals who are recognized authorities on the issue under study and/or represent important consumer perspectives. The prime study group members define the issues in their topical area and write drafts of assigned chapters or sections. Their only compensation is reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses at the host university rate.

We are asking that nominations be submitted as follows:

1. RSA staff will nominate RSA Regional Office employees to serve as members of the prime study groups. One Regional Office employee will be selected for each of the three study groups, and this selection will then determine the RSA Regional Office city where the first two meetings of that study group will be held.
2. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) has requested that all State VR agency employees be nominated to them by the respective State VR agency directors. Individuals external to the State VR agencies should recommend specific individuals to the State VR agency director for their consideration. CSAVR will review the nominations and then forward their cumulative recommendations to RSA.
3. All other persons nominated external to both RSA and the State VR agencies may be nominated directly to RSA.

In submitting nominations, we encourage you to review the attached "Roles and Responsibilities for IRI Prime Study Group Members" with each individual before submitting his/her name. In addition, a brief justification in support of the nominee's participation must be submitted. We also ask that you ensure that each nominee has his/her supervisor's approval. Our goal is to select a representative sample of persons knowledgeable of the topics from both inside and outside the State-Federal VR program, and also to ensure participation of persons from minority backgrounds and persons with disabilities.

Only a small percentage of the total nominations received will be selected to serve on the prime study groups. During the 26<sup>th</sup> IRI Forum to be held in Washington, DC from May 8-9, 2000, the prime study group members will present their draft publications to a larger study group for review and comment, and will also be honored for their contribution.

Please discuss the topics with members of your staff and complete the attached nomination form. **Provide the names of persons recommended to be chairpersons and members of the prime study groups to the appropriate RSA or CSAVR contact person listed below by July 9.** During the following week, I will make the selections for the prime study groups, in consultation with the CSAVR president.

**Send Nominations for State VR Agency Employees to:**

Ms. Denise Placido, Commissioner  
Kentucky Department for the Blind  
209 St. Clair Street, P.O. Box 757  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-0757

E-MAIL: [Denise.Placido@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:Denise.Placido@mail.state.ky.us)  
TELEPHONE: (502) 564-4754  
FAX: (502) 564-2951  
TTY: (502) 564-4754

**Send Nominations for All Persons Not Employed by the State VR Agency to:**

Mr. Charles Sadler, VR Prog. Spec.  
Rehabilitation Services Admin.  
330 C Street, SW, Room 3216  
**Washington, DC 20020-2735**

E-MAIL: [charles\\_sadler@ed.gov](mailto:charles_sadler@ed.gov)  
TELEPHONE: (202) 205-9286  
FAX: (202) 205-9340  
TTY: (202) 205-9295

***Fred Schroeder*** (signed)

---

Fredric K. Schroeder, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

Attachment

**TOPICS TO BE STUDIED  
DURING THE  
TWENTY-SIXTH CYCLE OF THE  
INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES  
1999-2000**

**Topic One: THE FAMILY AS A CRITICAL PARTNER IN THE  
ACHIEVEMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME**

**Issues to be addressed in the publication:**

- ? Skill development on how to work effectively with the client's family, on a short-term basis, to improve vocational rehabilitation outcomes.
- ? Understand the unique aspects of various disabilities and their impact on the client's family and the family's role in the VR process.
- ? Recognize distinctive family issues when working with an ethnic minority client and how these issues impact on the VR process.
- ? Identify strategies to deal with family resistance to their involvement with the client in the VR process.
- ? How the utilization of the family enhances the VR adjustment goals for the client, especially for those who are mentally ill.
- ? How family values impact on VR service delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse consumers.
- ? Particular issues regarding young adults and the family contributions to the Individualized Education Plan, job supports and job development.
- ? Issues regarding the balance between parent advocacy and the client's informed choice.
- ? Collaborative efforts to facilitate employment opportunities for young adults prior to completion of high school (e.g. linking school districts with community service providers).
- ? Joint training opportunities for State VR agencies and parent centers (educating youth and families how to be informed consumers; educating VR counselors about the benefits of family involvement).
- ? Parent representation on the State Rehabilitation Councils.

**Intended audience:**

- ? VR counselors and related personnel who have input into the client's VR process;
- ? State VR agency administrators, HRD staff, and Field Service personnel; and,
- ? RRCEP staff.

**Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:**

- ? Effective utilization of the family can improve VR outcomes.
- ? Utilization of the client's family may expedite the achievement of VR goals for the client.
- ? Effective utilization has the potential of facilitating relapse prevention, especially for those who are mentally ill.

**Topic Two:                    EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE ACHIEVEMENT  
OF EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE SSI/SSDI  
PARTICIPANTS**

**Issues to be addressed in the publication:**

- ? Identify model projects/programs, which maximize utilization of SSA work incentives.
- ? Identify methodologies for maximum attainment of SSA reimbursement dollars.
- ? Develop strategies that will encourage SSA beneficiaries to progress from cash assistance to employment and independence.
- ? Identify strategies to develop community based information networks, which will assist both the VR counselor and the consumer in benefit planning and resource identification.
- ? Focus attention on young SSI/SSDI participants who are transitioning from school-to-work.

**Intended audience:**

- ? VR counselors and related personnel who have input into the client's VR process;
- ? State VR agency administrators, HRD staff, and Field Service personnel; and,
- ? RRCEP staff.

**Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:**

- ? Publicizing effective models/projects that maximize the use of SSA work incentives may improve the achievement of employment outcomes for SSI/SSDI participants.
- ? Improved employment outcomes for SSI/SSDI participants will result in increased reimbursements from the SSA to the State VR agency.
- ? Focusing on youthful SSI/SSDI participants may improve their employment rate.

**Topic Three: USING THE INTERNET AS A RESOURCE TO THE WORK OF THE VR COUNSELOR**

**Issues to be addressed in the publication:**

- ? Present a broad overview of the state of the art relative to current Internet resources: disability information web sites; employer information sites; job vacancies and leads; use of electronic resumes and other methods for submitting applications for employment.
- ? Describe the uses of the Internet to improve the performance of VR Counselors and to improve coordination with: other State, Federal and municipal agencies; service providers; employers; persons served by the VR agency; other professionals involved in service delivery (physicians, occupational and physical therapists, career development specialists, etc.).
- ? Describe the use of the Internet to better manage information for decision-making.
- ? Describe the use of the Internet to facilitate networking (means for obtaining input for State plans; importance of building and maintaining effective web and home pages with up-to-date information).
- ? Describe the improved accessibility of information to all counselors and consumers, e.g. the WIA Resource Rooms.
- ? Describe the use of the Internet for staff training, maintaining qualified VR counselors, use of distance learning techniques to maintain skills and certification.

**Intended audience:**

- ? VR Counselors, Administrators, Field Service Directors, and HRD staff;
- ? RRCEP staff; and,
- ? University personnel involved in the training of VR counselors.

**Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:**

- ? Effective use of the Internet will allow counselors and other VR professionals to work more effectively and efficiently.
- ? Technology will enable all recipients of services to overcome more obstacles to employment and open the door to better jobs.
- ? Tremendous source of job openings, and opportunities for training and skill enhancement.

- ? Internet access for individuals with disabilities provides current information on available resources to enhance informed choice. The range of information is diverse and includes availability of training resources, access to career counseling and other self-paced learning opportunities, as well as job openings and data pertaining to future labor market trends.
  
- ? The VR counselor and consumer will be able to communicate and share information more effectively by using the Internet.



## **Roles and Responsibilities For IRI Prime Study Group Members**

The following information is provided to persons who are either interested in nominating an individual to serve as a member or chairperson of an Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) prime study group (PSG), or who have been nominated and are now considering whether they are willing and able to agree to the requirements for participating in the IRI. A nomination form is included in this information in order to provide the RSA or CSAVR IRI coordinator with the name and other information for a person nominated to participate on an IRI PSG.

Persons nominating individuals to participate in the IRI should ensure that the nominees are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. In order to avoid misunderstandings regarding each participant's role and responsibilities in the IRI process, please review the information contained herein with each nominee.

**Purpose:** To research, write and publish an IRI document that provides a foundation for quality state-of-the-art training on a specific topic. RSA annually funds three Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RRCEP) at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, University of Arkansas and George Washington University to coordinate three IRI PSGs, and to convene the national IRI Forum in Washington. The IRI is not original research; the document is comprised of existent research applied to contemporary issues and challenges in the field of VR. Approximately 2500 to 3500 copies of each IRI publication are disseminated nationally to an audience of VR counselors, administrators, educators, researchers and trainers.

### **Skills Needed by All PSG Members:**

- 1) Knowledge of the topic.
- 2) Writing skills. This includes the ability to discuss the issue and then create and write (outlining, developing and drafting) a section or chapter of the document.
- 3) The ability to work as part of a team.

**Roles:** **University Coordinator** - Arranges all facets of the PSG meetings, such as: communicating meeting times and hotel arrangements to group members; providing travel and per diem; arranging teleconferences, if necessary; duplicating and editing the draft IRI documents; any other logistical support; and, publishing and disseminating the final IRI document.

**Chairperson** - Facilitates the PSG meetings and maintains group focus on the topical issues. Assigns writing assignments and membership to the

editorial committee that is responsible for editing the document after the national IRI Forum.

**RSA Representative** - Ensures that the group fulfills the charge presented by the RSA Commissioner and that the final publication complies with Federal law, regulations and policy.

**Time Commitment:** The IRI requires a one-year time commitment that includes three meetings of approximately two and a half days. **THE FIRST TWO MEETINGS MAY ENTAIL WEEKEND TRAVEL.** The first meeting is devoted to a discussion of the topic and all the issues surrounding it. The group is divided into 2-4 person writing teams who will then write the first draft of the chapters assigned to them between the first and second meeting.

The second meeting focuses on a review and critique of the draft. Between the second and third meetings the members of the PSG rewrite and refine their respective chapters into the final draft.

The third meeting is the annual National IRI Forum in Washington, DC, during which time an expanded group of individuals reviews the final draft publication and provides feedback for further improving the document. These recommendations are considered by the PSG editorial committee, who may meet in Washington, D.C. immediately following the Forum. The editorial committee is usually composed of 3-7 members of the PSG, including the chairperson and the university coordinator.

IRI PSG membership is an honor. It is a chance to work collaboratively with other professionals with knowledge and expertise on a given topic, and an opportunity to develop a publication useful in training VR professionals and in improving the integration of individuals with disabilities into mainstream society.

**INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES**  
**Nomination Form**

**1. Nominee Information:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone/TDD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. The nominee is an individual with a disability.**            \_\_\_\_\_ **Yes**            \_\_\_\_\_ **No**

**3. The following question is designed to assist us in assembling an IRI prime study group that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds. Answering this question is optional.**

**Race/Ethnic Status (Please check the most accurate answer)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ White
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black/African American
- \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- \_\_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**4. Please provide a brief justification for the nomination. The justification should describe the nominee's knowledge and expertise regarding the topic being studied, and most importantly, include specific references to the individual's ability to participate as part of a team in discussing the topic and in writing chapters of a publication. Explain why you feel that this individual would be an asset to the IRI Prime Study Group. If necessary, attach additional supportive documentation.**

**5. Nominator Information:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone/TDD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(The State VR agency director's signature is required for State VR agency nominees submitted to CSAVR)*

**PLEASE SEND THE NOMINATION TO THE APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUAL LISTED ON PAGE 3.**