

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-00-12
DATE: January 10, 2000

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

SUBJECT: Final Report: An Evaluation of the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) Program

CONTENT: Attached is a copy of the Final Report on *An Evaluation of the PAIR Program*, a descriptive study conducted by Westat under contract to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education. This study represents the first evaluation of the PAIR program since it became a formula grant program in 1994.

PAIR, authorized under section 509 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act), is mandated "to support a system in each State to protect the legal and human rights of eligible individuals with disabilities." As such, PAIR is required to be part of the protection and advocacy (P&A) system in each State. To be eligible for PAIR services, an individual must be ineligible for the Protection and Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities (PADD) program and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program; and the individual must need services that are beyond the scope of services offered by the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

This study focused on 11 objectives, among which included: identifying how PAIRs set their annual priorities and objectives; identifying the proportion of individuals who seek PAIR services whose concerns are not within the PAIR's priorities; describing how PAIRs evaluate the effectiveness of their systemic advocacy; determining whether PAIRs serve individuals who are eligible for other P&A programs; and identifying the allocation of staff time and resources to PAIR activities versus other P&A activities.

Westat conducted the study in two phases. In phase one, Westat staff reviewed documents submitted by RSA and the PAIR programs. These documents included copies of the PAIR annual report forms, PAIR application packages, which included each of the PAIR's annual priorities, and other information such as brochures and handouts submitted directly by the PAIR programs. The analysis of these data provided the basis for the selection of sites to be visited in phase two of the study.

In phase two, Westat visited nine States. The States chosen reflected the wide variability that characterizes the PAIR programs. The two primary criteria used to select the nine sites were the State affiliation of the PAIR program and the size of the State's PAIR allotment. During the three-day site visits, Westat interviewed PAIR and P&A staff, as well as a member of the P&A Board of Directors or PAIR Advisory Council if appropriate.

The site visits revealed wide variation in how the PAIRs operate. Although much of the information learned clearly was specific to the actual sites visited, some generalizations can be made. The study found that many P&As are reorganizing into "issue teams" rather than being organized the traditional way along funding streams. The study also found that P&As put forth significant effort to ensure that PAIRs serve only PAIR-eligible individuals.

If you have any questions concerning the Final Report, please call Dr. Harold Kay, Director of Evaluation, at 202-205-9883 or Roseann Eshbach at 202-205-9315.

Fredric K. Schroeder
Commissioner

Attachment

CC: NCIL
CSAVR
NAPAS