

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-00-34
DATE: August 30, 2000

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

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

CONTENT: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to request
nominations for persons to serve as members on the 27th Institute on
Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) prime study groups. The following three topics
and study group chairpersons have been selected for study during the 27th
IRI, and assigned to the university coordinators indicated:

1. Succession Planning in a Customer-Focused VR Environment. Mr. Robert Burns, Assistant Superintendent, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services will serve as chairperson, and Dr. Dan McAlees, University of Wisconsin-Stout, the university coordinator.
2. Effective Strategies for Improving Employment Outcomes for Persons with Kidney Failure. Mr. Charles LaRosa, Administrator, South Carolina Administration for Vocational Rehabilitation will serve as chairperson, and Ms. Jeanne Miller, University of Arkansas the university coordinator.
3. Providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services in a Workforce Environment. Mr. Thomas Jennings, Director, New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, will serve as chairperson, and Dr.

Donald Dew, The George Washington University, the university coordinator.

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 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 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 will 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 27th IRI Forum to be held in Washington, DC from May 7-8, 2001, 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 nominated as members of the prime study groups to the appropriate RSA or CSAVR contact person listed below by October 5, 2000.** You may send the form in via email, FAX or regular mail. During the following week, I will make the selections for the prime study groups, in consultation with the CSAVR president. The study groups will begin to meet in November.

We appreciate your continued support of the IRI.

Send Nominations for State VR Agency Employees to:

Mr. Joseph Owens, Exec. Director
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
P.O. Box 3776
Washington, DC 20007

E-MAIL: csavr@gte.net
TELEPHONE: (202) 638-4634
FAX: (202) 333-5881

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

Mr. Charles Sadler, VR Program Specialist
Rehabilitation Services Administration
330 C Street, S.W.
Room 3216
Washington, DC 20020-2735

E-MAIL: charles_sadler@ed.gov
TELEPHONE: (202) 205-9286
FAX: (202) 205-9340
TTY: 202) 205-9295

Fredric K. Schroeder, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Attachments

**TOPICS TO BE STUDIED
DURING THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH CYCLE OF THE
INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES
2000-2001**

Topic One: Succession Planning in a Customer-Focused VR Environment

Issues to be addressed in publication:

This topic is a follow-up to the document entitled "Improving Employment Outcomes Through VR Counselors who Meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Requirements" publication developed during the 25th IRI cycle, that follows-up the recommendation made by this study group to address the personnel crisis faced by the Public VR program due to the significant number of senior VR counselor and management staff who will be retiring during the next decade, and the impact that this will have on the national program, as well as each State VR agency.

1. Describe the changing role of the VR counselor, including the move away from being a gatekeeper and dispenser of services, toward a facilitator and change-agent in the lives of people with disabilities.
2. How does VR build capacity to maintain its leadership role in advocating for people with disabilities?
3. What is the state-of-the-art for "leadership development?" How can these new techniques assist in developing the competencies needed in the WIA environment, such as, collaborating with One-Stop System partners, and providing leadership to the State and local Workforce Investment Boards?
4. Describe strategies for meeting changing customer expectations, such as providing them with the information, resources and comprehensive services, while, concurrently, meeting the ever-changing employment needs of business.
5. Describe effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract, maintain and reward qualified rehabilitation professionals in all positions.
6. Describe the knowledge base and skills needed for present and future management.
7. What methods are effective in Identifying employees with management potential and interest?
8. Describe the "acceleration pool," a business incubator concept referring to the identification of potential capacity and supporting leadership development to meet the future needs of an organization (staff turnover and retirement).

9. What is the difference between leadership and management, and how is this distinction especially relevant to the future of the Public VR program (co-location of staff)?
10. Describe strategies for developing leadership potential and management knowledge and skills of Vocational Rehabilitation staff.
11. Where are the most effective private and public models for effective succession planning?
12. Identify strategies for the recruitment and retention of employees with significant disabilities and members of minority groups.

Intended audience:

1. State VR agency Administrators, HRD personnel, managers and VR counselors.
2. Rehabilitation Counseling educators.
3. Community rehabilitation program staff.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

1. Provide VR program administrators and HRD personnel with information to assist them in developing a workforce to meet the changing needs of people with disabilities, and the demands placed upon the VR program by WIA partners and employers.
2. Provide HRD personnel with a "users manual" to develop organizational capacity to recruit, retain and promote employees who are able to adapt to a demanding and rapidly changing work environment.
3. VR program staff will benefit from current information in this area in order to justify the need for maintaining the qualified staff necessary to improve VR agency performance in assisting people with disabilities to achieve employment.

Topic Two: Effective Strategies for Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Kidney Failure

Issues to be addressed:

1. Increasing knowledge of the innovations in medical care that enable people with kidney failure to be able to obtain and maintain employment.

2. Establishing and maintaining partnerships between medical treatment personnel and VR staff in order to improve employment outcomes.
3. Identifying barriers that interfere with access to VR by persons with kidney failure.
4. Developing strategies to educate people with kidney failure and potential referral sources to increase participation of people with kidney failure in the Public VR program.
5. Identifying model programs that effectively promote rehabilitation of larger numbers of people with kidney failure.
6. Providing technical assistance to special education programs to help adolescents with kidney failure to transition from school-to-work.
7. Expanding VR services to help individuals with progressive kidney disease who are on dialysis to maintain employment, and to help kidney transplant recipients return more quickly to productive

Intended Audience:

1. State VR agency HRD personnel, managers and VR counselors.
2. Rehabilitation Counseling educators.
3. Community rehabilitation program staff.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

1. VR counselors would better understand the VR potential of people with kidney failure.
2. VR personnel, renal treatment personnel, and advocacy group members would learn skills to work collaboratively to help people with kidney failure identify realistic and achievable VR goals.
3. Up-to-date information in this area will enhance the VR program eligibility determination process, improve VR service delivery, and increase the achievement of employment outcomes for people with kidney failure.

Topic Three: Providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services in a Workforce Environment

Issues to be addressed:

1. Legislative history of the Public VR program and the Workforce Investment Act. Underlying principles of the Rehabilitation Act: Individualization of assessment of eligibility, vocational assessment, and vocational planning; consumer choice in selecting

the vocational objective, VR services, VR service providers, and methods to purchase services; consumer rights; confidentiality; and, qualified VR staff.

2. Basic principles of the Workforce Investment Act: seamless system; one-stop location; meeting the labor demands of the local employers; and, streamlining services to jobseekers.
3. Elements of Title I of WIA - Describe the governance structure: the membership, authority and functions of the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards (Boards). Overview of the Workforce Investment System: the partners in the system; the system as a One-Stop Center and as a "virtual" One-Stop Center; services provided in the Workforce System (core and intensive services and training); mandated partner services; and, job seekers targeted by the WIA.
4. The Public VR Program in the Workforce System: Membership on State and Local Boards; mandated VR services required of the State VR agency as a One-Stop partner; providing VR services in a One-Stop Center and a "virtual" One-Stop Center; and, "informed choice" in the workforce system.
5. Financial Participation of the State VR agency in the Workforce System - Describe the participation in the costs of the State and Local Boards, and the operations of the One-Stop Center and "virtual One-Stop Center. Describe the financial participation of the VR agency in core and intensive services and training provided by the One-Stop system. What is the financial participation of the VR agency in "universal services?" Describe how costs are allocated in the One-Stop System, including: what costs are chargeable to the State VR program? What are the personnel, consumer and space occupancy ratio methods for allocating costs? Describe the cost allocation plan.
6. Partnering in the Workforce System - Describe methods for: interagency staff training; inter-agency consulting on common cases; simplifying the determination of eligibility for all partner agencies; and, development of a common language for VR and WIA.
7. The Memorandum of Understanding - Describe the following: the content of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); how the MOU can be used to develop cooperative working relationships with the other partners; how to develop successful MOUs; and, examples of effective MOUs (internet sites may be referenced).
8. Evaluating the Success of Providing VR Services in the Workforce System - Using the Rehabilitation Act's "Standards and Indicators" to measure the success of the State VR agencies, and the WIA title I standards for measuring the success of the State workforce systems. Describe the "synergy," if any, that exists between the two systems in measuring program performance. What are the findings contained in the "longitudinal Study" of the Public VR program and do they indicate program success? The ultimate measure of success for people with disabilities served within the workforce system can, in part, be assessed by positive responses to the following questions: will people with

disabilities obtain jobs more easily? Obtain jobs paying higher wages? Obtain jobs with benefits? Obtain jobs with career advancement opportunities?

9. How VR Success in the Workforce System Will Meet Future Workforce Needs - Increased sensitization of the workforce system and employers to the needs of people with disabilities will improve their integration into mainstream employment (see 25th IRI publication entitled "Meeting Future Workforce Needs").

Intended audience:

1. State VR agency Administrators, HRD personnel, managers and VR counselors.
2. Rehabilitation Counseling educators.
3. Community rehabilitation program staff.
4. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration staff.
5. Personnel from partner agencies and programs working in the One-Stop System.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

1. Provide VR program administrators with information to assist them in partnering in the One-Stop System to improve the achievement of employment by people with disabilities.
2. Provide VR HRD personnel with information to assist them in training State VR agency staff in the new skills needs to become successful partners in the One-Stop System.
3. Provide VR program personnel and One-Stop System staff with information to better understand each other's mission and legislative responsibilities in order to improve service delivery to all people with disabilities seeking employment.
4. One-Stop System partners will benefit from the technical information pertaining to the Public VR program contained in this document to improve the overall implementation of the One-Stop System.

IRI Prime Study Group Members - Roles and Responsibilities

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, DC 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.

27th 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.