

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-01-37
DATE: July 17, 2001

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-Eighth 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 28th Institute on
Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) prime study groups. The following three topics
have been selected for study during the 28th IRI.

1. *“Investing in the Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Productive Careers”*
CSAVR Chairperson - Carl Brown, Tennessee Division of
Rehabilitation Services
University Coordinator - Jeanne Miller, University of Arkansas
2. *“Welfare-to-Work for Individuals with Disabilities”*
CSAVR Chairperson – Diana Huerta, Colorado Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation
University Coordinator - Dan McAlees, University of Wisconsin-Stout
3. *“Distance Education: Opportunities and Issues for the Public
Vocational Rehabilitation Program”*
CSAVR Chairperson – John Wyvill, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
University Coordinator - 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 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 nominees employed by CSAVR member agencies be nominated to them by the respective State VR agency directors. CSAVR will review the nominations and then forward their cumulative recommendations to RSA.
3. All other persons nominated external to both RSA and the CSAVR member 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 28th IRI Forum to be held

in Washington, DC from May 5-7, 2002, 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 August 24, 2001.** You may send the form in via email, FAX or regular mail. The study groups will begin to meet in November.

We appreciate your continued support of the IRI.

Send Nominations for CSAVR Member 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

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

Send Nominations for All Persons Not Employed by the CSAVR Member State VR Agencies 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
TELEPHONE: (202) 205-9286
FAX: (202) 205-9340
TTY: (202) 205-9295

Mark E. Shoob,
Deputy Commissioner Attachments

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 grantees 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 then assigned chapters to be written.

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.

28th INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES

Nomination Form

Nominee Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone/TDD: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

The nominee is an individual with a disability. Yes No

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: _____

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, use additional space or attach supportive documentation.

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)

**The deadline for receipt of the nomination forms is
August 24, 2001.**

**Topics Selected by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Planning Committee on May 6,
2001, for Study During the 28th IRI Cycle**

Topic 1

“Investing in the Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Productive Careers”

Issues to be addressed in publication:

- An overview of transition planning and services
 - Define population and age group
 - Legislative requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA); the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act); the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); as well as pertinent legislation applying to mental health, developmental disabilities and juvenile justice
 - Interagency collaboration as a key component of the laws, including a focus of understanding roles and responsibilities

- Strategies for maximizing self-empowerment and informed choice

- Transition planning
 - Consultation and technical assistance
 - Vocational evaluation, exploration and work experience
 - Community networking and negotiations
 - Coordinating the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
 - Post-secondary education choices
 - Career opportunities, including Supported Employment Programs and other employment initiatives
 - Family involvement

- VR participation on the WIA Youth Councils
 - Strategies to become a member
 - Benefits of serving on Youth Councils

- Innovative and effective strategies
 - State infrastructure
 - Funding strategies
 - Models of inter-agency collaboration
 - Effective cooperative agreements between VR, Special Education and other agencies and programs

- Importance of interagency partnerships and services beyond VR and Special Education, particularly: Developmental Disabilities; Mental Health; Juvenile Justice; and Children’s Health Funds.

- Implications for human resource development

Intended audience:

VR counselors, counselor supervisors, transition school-to-work personnel, HRD personnel, educators, other State VR agency training staff, members of the State Rehabilitation Council, persons involved in the transition of youth with disabilities from school-to-work, youth with disabilities and their families, and parent training program staff.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

By addressing systemic issues between the education system and VR system, a greater number of youth with disabilities will successfully transition to meaningful careers. This publication will increase opportunities for the empowerment and choices of youth with disabilities. The increased knowledge of effective practices and legislative requirements will improve collaboration between the education and VR systems, and enhance career outcomes of youth with disabilities.

Topic 2***“Welfare-to-Work for Individuals with Disabilities”*****Issues to be addressed in publication:**

In some States, VR has powerful partnerships between itself, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Welfare-to-Work (W-t-W) programs. In many other States, the partnerships are in their infancy, if they exist at all. There are several challenges to developing efficient and effective partnerships. A significant number of the people remaining on the TANF rolls are individuals with disabilities who can benefit from the provision of VR services to assist them in achieving employment. The document will review the issues and provide alternatives for improving employment. Issues to be reviewed in the document include the following:

- Screening and assessment: The potential roles for VR and other partners in the early stages of the transition process for those who are believed to have an undiagnosed disability.
- Linking VR, TANF, and W-t-W: The means by which partnerships are formed and fostered, through cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding, shared organizational structures, co-location of service personnel, etc.
- Linking individuals with appropriate Department of Transportation programs: The lack of transportation to-and-from work is a significant impediment to obtaining and maintaining employment for this population.
- Conflicting programmatic requirements: The strategies used by States to address the conflicting statutory requirements of the various programs, such as time-limited benefits, work-first requirements, eligibility determinations, and order-of-selection requirements, among others.
- VR and other program staff in-service training: The development of expertise among VR professionals to deal with the issues facing transitioning recipients. Cross-training of TANF

and W-t-W staff on the basics of addressing the unique needs of individuals with disabilities is also important.

- Strategies for maximizing individual potential for self-sufficiency among TANF/W-t-W recipients.

Intended audience:

The audience for this document would be VR, TANF and W-t-W program staff, as well as VR's other constituents/partners, such as Community Rehabilitation, Supported Employment and Independent Living Program personnel.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

First, early identification of those individuals in need of specialized services, supports, or accommodations which may facilitate their entry or return to work can eliminate or significantly reduce the need for "hit-or-miss" efforts in a work-first model. Second, effective partnerships ensure a seamless model of service delivery, speeding transitions and helping to ensure that the consumer has a positive response to his/her experience.

Topic 3

"Distance Education: Opportunities and Issues for the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program"

Issues to be addressed in publication:

- How to build capacity in both the universities and the Public VR program.
- What are the issues related to how the State is interpreting the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements?
- How can distance education be implemented in a manner that does not sacrifice the rigorous model maintained by the traditional programs?
- What have the educators learned about distance learning that can help to guide the development of this model for the VR program?
- How can the university-based programs be changed to provide distance-learning opportunities, and how will this impact on their current course offerings?
- How are degree and continuing education programs best managed?
- What are the real costs of implementing a distance-learning program, and can the public VR program afford the costs?
- How can distance learning be employed to improve the skills of VR professionals employed by the Community Rehabilitation Programs?
- How can the scope of current training efforts be expanded beyond focusing on the VR counselor and include other VR professionals?
- What benefits does this approach have for the consumers of VR services?
- What are the effective models for evaluating the effectiveness of distance education programs?
- In particular, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of teaching counseling at a distance?

- Who owns the distance learning training materials created under the RSA grants with Federal and State funds?
- What are best ways to share, store and ensure that the most up-to-date materials are being used?

Intended audience:

State VR agency managers and HRD personnel; Rehabilitation Counseling educators; and, community rehabilitation program staff.

Potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:

Improving the skills of VR professionals will result in improved service delivery and the achievement of employment outcomes for persons served by the VR program. Effective distance learning may assist the VR profession to attract and retain highly qualified personnel.