

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-03-02
DATE: October 21, 2002

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

SUBJECT: Dissemination of the publication entitled: "Distance Education:
Opportunities and Issues for Public Vocational Rehabilitation Programs,"
developed by the Twenty-Eighth Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI).

CONTENT: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to transmit the
enclosed publication to vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals,
advocates, and other stakeholders in the public VR program. This
publication was developed by individuals representing various State VR
programs, the Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs
(RRCEP), Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and other
professionals interested in the development and use of distance education
in vocational rehabilitation. Dr. Donald W. Dew, the Director of the
RRCEP III at The George Washington University, served as the university
coordinator for the study group.

This document is meant to be a user's guide for developing, initiating, and
participating in distance education in rehabilitation. The developments
and trends described in this document identify the potential opportunities,
challenges, and implications regarding the effective use and application of
distance education in public vocational rehabilitation programs.

Distance education offers several advantages for preservice, in-service, continuing education, and certification training. These advantages include a learner-focus format, flexibility regarding the time and place of study, as well as the ease-of-access to useful resources. Clearly, distance education offers the public vocational rehabilitation profession a unique tool to train and teach VR counselors the skills necessary to provide high-quality services to consumers.

IRI publications are widely used by VR counselors and supervisors, human resource development specialists, consumers, 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, inclusion, and integration into society...."

An important part of RSA's mission is to provide training and technical assistance to State VR agencies on the problems facing rehabilitation service providers, and to disseminate and promote the utilization of knowledge resulting from current research. Through the IRI, high priority training needs are responded to expeditiously, and the study findings on a specific topic are quickly transposed into useful and usable training materials and publications.

Copies of this publication may be obtained by contacting the IRI university coordinator, Dr. Donald W. Dew at:

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RSA Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program III
2011 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 300
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(202) 973-1550
E-mail: dondew@gwu.edu

The publication may also be viewed and downloaded at the RRCEP III web site located at: www.gwu.edu/~rrcep

If you have any questions or comments regarding the IRI, please contact Mr. Charles Sadler, RSA IRI Coordinator, at (202) 205-9286 [voice], (800) 877-8339 [Federal Relay Service], (202) 205-9340 [FAX], or via E-mail at Charles.Sadler@ed.gov.

Joanne Wilson
Commissioner

Attachment

cc: Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
National Organization of Rehabilitation Partners