

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

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM  
RSA-IM-03-04  
DATE: November 5, 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 LONG-TERM TRAINING PROJECTS  
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: Dissemination of the publication entitled: "Succession Planning: Building a Successful Organization in a Dynamic Environment," 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 importance of succession planning in maintaining a qualified and well-trained workforce in the public VR program. Jean Radtke, served as the university coordinator and editor for the IRI study group.

The intent of this document is to assist state VR directors, administrators, human resource development (HRD) coordinators, counselors, and consumers in the development of an effective and comprehensive succession plan, based on a State VR agency's organizational mission, values, and overall strategic plans. Succession planning is a *critical*, ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing

talent to ensure the leadership continuity for all key positions in an organization. The Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD) initiatives developed in part to improve standards and overall outcomes of public VR programs, should be seen as the foundation for the development of effective succession planning.

Because the public VR program's CSPD initiatives have created an enhanced atmosphere of professionalism, the qualifications of VR professionals are increasing. Increased professional qualifications make VR counselors more marketable to a wide array of employers in the public and private sector, increasing competition for this skilled group of professionals. These continuing trends will inevitably, affect every level of the profession of vocational rehabilitation. In addition, the public VR system is currently facing significant turnover nationally through attrition and retirement of staff. This projected turnover is expected to take a very heavy toll on the ranks of line staff and leadership at a time when the public VR program is facing multiple challenges. In order to maintain its leadership position, the public VR system must aggressively respond to these challenges by developing and implementing comprehensive strategic plans, which provide for the continual development of staff.

IRI publications are widely used by VR counselors and supervisors, HRD 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 and editor, Jean Radtke at:

The Continuing Education Center  
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
214 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
(715) 232-2236  
E-mail: [radtkej@uwstout.edu](mailto:radtkej@uwstout.edu)

The publication may also be viewed and downloaded at the Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute's web site located at:  
[www.rtc.uwstout.edu](http://www.rtc.uwstout.edu).

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](mailto:Charles.Sadler@ed.gov).

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Joanne Wilson  
Commissioner

Attachment

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