

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202-2800**

**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-10-02
DATE: March 2, 2010**

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES
STATE ELECTED COMMITTEES OF BLIND VENDORS
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
CENTERS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLIND MERCHANTS
RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDORS OF AMERICA
BLIND ENTREPRENEURS ALLIANCE

SUBJECT: Announcement of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's 2010
Randolph-Sheppard National Training and Leadership Conference

CONTENT: The purpose of this information memorandum is to provide details regarding the 2010 Randolph-Sheppard National Training and Leadership Conference sponsored by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and scheduled for June 9 – 12, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Crystal City, located at 2799 Jefferson Davis Highway in Arlington, Virginia. Joining RSA in the planning and implementation of the national Randolph-Sheppard conference are representatives from the Blind Entrepreneurs' Alliance, the National Association of Blind Merchants, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America and the George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education (GWU/CRCRE), which is serving as the conference coordinator.

It has been a decade since the last national Randolph-Sheppard training conference, which was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, and there have been many significant program developments as well as turnovers in state licensing agency staff and elected committee representatives. In addition, the federal landscape has changed with the infusion of several new property managing officials and the introduction of challenging and far-reaching initiatives. The purpose of this conference is to bring Randolph-Sheppard stakeholders together with a goal of developing leadership skills, educating participants on promising practices and creating an

environment for the exchange of ideas that will help shape the future of the Randolph-Sheppard program. Anticipated outcomes include:


1. Participants will gain a full understanding of the *Randolph-Sheppard Act* and corresponding regulations and the complexities of effectively administering the program at the state and federal levels.
2. State licensing agencies and blind vendors will learn about promising practices leading to successful outcomes that can be replicated in their own programs and businesses.
3. Participants will have an opportunity to view and learn about new products, technology and equipment that can improve their sales and operation in their Randolph-Sheppard vending facilities.
4. Management and leadership techniques and skills will be enhanced, resulting in benefits to state programs on multiple levels.
5. Federal property managing officials and state licensing agency personnel will develop a better understanding of each others' roles and responsibilities and how best to meet their respective needs while maintaining the integrity of the *Randolph-Sheppard Act*.
6. RSA will benefit from dialogue with all stakeholders, including blind vendors, state agencies, federal property managing officials, suppliers and others.
7. Work groups will generate specific recommendations and action steps designed to guide and transform the Randolph-Sheppard program as it moves forward in the future.

I am pleased to announce that RSA will provide stipend support (transportation, lodging and registration) for a minimum of two participants from each state licensing agency, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The stipends will support the state administrator for the Randolph-Sheppard program and the chairperson of the Elected Committee of Blind Vendors for the state. The state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency director will be responsible for determining stipend recipients or alternate designees. A letter will be forthcoming from GWU to state VR directors with instructions for submitting and registering the stipend nominees.

All other participants will be charged a registration fee of \$125 if registration is completed by May 1, 2010, and \$175 if registration is completed after May 1, 2010. Registration information and conference updates are available at <http://www.regonline.com/randolphsheppard>, or you may call Lindsay Hill at 202-973-1550 or e-mail her at lmhill@gwmail.gwu.edu if you require additional information or assistance. The hotel room rates are \$149 per night plus tax, and reservations should be made by May 18, 2010, directly with the hotel by calling 402-592-6464 or 1-888-421-1442. Please specify that you are making room reservations for the national Randolph-Sheppard conference.

The 2010 National Randolph-Sheppard Training and Leadership Conference promises to be an exceptional training experience that will appeal to a diverse audience of stakeholders. In addition to pre-conference workshops, general and break-out sessions, a women's breakfast, dynamic speakers, and a reception, there will be an industry trade show sponsored by the National Association of Blind Merchants. I invite you to be a part of this outstanding opportunity to learn and contribute to the future success of the Randolph-Sheppard program nationwide. Please reserve the dates of June 9 – 12, 2010, on your calendar today. Together we can change the employment outlook for blind entrepreneurs across our nation.

If you have comments or suggestions that you would like to share with RSA or need additional information about the 2010 Randolph-Sheppard National Training and Leadership Conference, please contact Suzanne Mitchell on my staff at 202-245-7454 or suzanne.mitchell@ed.gov.



Lynnae M. Rutledge
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Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration

cc: Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
National Council of State Agencies for the Blind