

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
RSA-IM-91-03
DATE: October 16, 1990

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
RSA DISCRETIONARY GRANTEES
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: EXEMPLARY PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AND
APPROACHES TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Rehabilitation Services Administration established an Operational Plan for FY 1990 which included an objective for increasing competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. One of the activities under this objective was to identify programs, projects, and practices which exemplify successful approaches to increasing competitive employment opportunities. Several months ago, RSA invited the Directors of State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and RSA-funded Projects with Industry to nominate projects and practices which they considered to be exemplary with the potential for replication. Fifty-four nominations were received. These nominated programs and projects were reviewed by a work group consisting of RSA staff and outside consultants. The programs and projects were evaluated and ranked based upon established criteria such as:

- Program philosophy, including emphasis on competitive placements in the community, consumer involvement, and individualized services;
- Accomplishment of goals and objectives, including population served, placement statistics, and success rate;
- Innovative approach, including employer services and/or supports, employer involvement, and linkages with public and private agencies and resources; and
- Potential for replication, including an interest on the part of program or project staff to serve in a technical assistance capacity to other programs.

The following five programs were identified as exhibiting exemplary approaches based upon the above criteria. Many other programs were also identified as having the potential to significantly increase competitive employment opportunities. The six exemplary programs represent the in-house efforts of two State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, two Project with Industries, and two unique approaches implemented by nonprofit organizations for specific disability groups.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS - FY 1990

"Computer Training Program" -- South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department,
Columbia, South Carolina

"Ladders to Success Programs" -- Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Columbus, Ohio

"Project with Industry - Local/National and Project with Industry Jobs" -- Human Resources
Center, Albertson, New York

"Project with Industry" -- Electronic Industries Foundation, Washington, D. C.

"Job Path Program" -- Vera Institute of Justice, New York, New York

Attached are brief descriptions of each of these programs and projects. Please feel free to contact the identified representatives for further information. All of the individuals identified in the attachment have indicated an interest in serving as technical advisors and consultants to any program interested in replicating the approaches described.

I hope that the sharing of this information will encourage other programs and projects to implement innovative approaches to increase competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services
Administration

Attachment