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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2007**

REPORT ON FEDERAL ACTIVITIES
UNDER THE *REHABILITATION ACT*
OF 1973, AS AMENDED

REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2007

REPORT ON FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

UNDER THE *REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973*, AS AMENDED

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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January 2012

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Term
ABA	<i>Architectural Barriers Act</i>
ADA	<i>Americans with Disabilities Act</i>
AIVRS	American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ARRT	Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training
AT	Assistive Technology
ATSC	Advanced Television Systems Committee
BAC	Business Advisory Council
BEP	Business Enterprise Program
CAP	Client Assistance Program
CBVI	Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHIEF	Craig Hospital Inventory of Environmental Factors
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CM	Common Measure
CRD	Civil Rights Division
CSPD	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
DBTAC	Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center
DD Act	<i>Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act</i>
DOL	Department of Labor
DRRP	Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects
DSU	Designated State Unit
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FIP	Field-Initiated Projects
FY	Fiscal Year
GPRA	<i>Government Performance and Results Act</i>
GSA	General Services Administration
ICDR	Interagency Committee on Disability Research
IL	Independent Living
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
IRI	Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
KDU	Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization
MS	Multiple Sclerosis

Acronym	Full Term
NAMSFVR	National Alliance for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Vocational Rehabilitation
NCD	National Council on Disability
NCRTM	National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
NIDRR	National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
NVRTAC	National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OFCCP	Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
P&A	Protection and Advocacy
PAAT	Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology
PAIR	Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights
PART	Program Assessment Rating Tool
PWI	Projects With Industry
RERC	Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
RESNA	Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
RRTC	Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SBEC	State Board for Educator Certification
SBIR	Small Business Innovative Research
SCI	Spinal Cord Injury
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SILC	Statewide Independent Living Council
SILS	State Independent Living Services
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
UK	United Kingdom
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIA	<i>Workforce Investment Act</i>
WISCI	Walking Index for Spinal Cord Injury

FOREWORD

The *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended (*Rehabilitation Act*), provides the statutory authority for programs and activities that assist individuals with disabilities in the pursuit of gainful employment, independence, self-sufficiency and full integration into community life.

This report is intended to provide a description of accomplishments and progress made under the *Rehabilitation Act* during fiscal year (FY) 2007 (October 2006 through September 2007). To that end, the report identifies major activities that occurred during that fiscal year and the status of those activities during that specific time period.

The report provides a description of the activities of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), a component of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education. RSA is the principal agency for carrying out Titles I, III, VI and VII, as well as specified portions of Title V of the *Rehabilitation Act*. RSA has responsibility for preparing and submitting this report to the president and Congress under Section 13 of the *Rehabilitation Act*.

The *Rehabilitation Act* also authorizes research activities that are administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the work of the National Council on Disability (NCD), and includes a variety of provisions focused on rights, advocacy and protections for individuals with disabilities. A description of those activities is provided in this report.

THE *REHABILITATION ACT*
AN OVERVIEW

THE *REHABILITATION ACT*: AN OVERVIEW

Federal interest and involvement in rehabilitation issues and policy date initially from the enactment of the *Smith-Fess Act of 1920*. The *Smith-Fess Act* marked the beginning of a federal and state partnership in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Although the law was passed shortly after the end of World War I, its provisions were specifically directed at the rehabilitation needs of persons who were industrially disabled (due to accidents in factories) rather than those of disabled veterans.

A major event in the history of the federal rehabilitation program was the passage of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended (the *Rehabilitation Act*). The *Rehabilitation Act* provides the statutory authority for programs and activities that assist individuals with disabilities¹ in the pursuit of gainful employment, independence, self-sufficiency, and full integration into community life. Under the *Rehabilitation Act*, the following federal agencies and entities are charged with administering a wide variety of programs and activities: the departments of Education, Labor and Justice, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, and the National Council on Disability.

The U.S. Department of Education has primary responsibility for administering the *Rehabilitation Act*. The Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is the administrative entity responsible for oversight of the programs under the *Rehabilitation Act* that are funded through the Department. Within OSERS, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) share responsibility for carrying out the administration of those programs. RSA is the principal agency for carrying out titles I, III, VI and VII, as well as specified portions of Title V of the *Rehabilitation Act*. NIDRR is responsible for administering Title II of the *Rehabilitation Act*. (See fig. 1 for title names.)

Figure 1. The *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as Amended, by Its Various Titles

Title	Name
I	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
II	Research and Training
III	Professional Development and Special Projects and Demonstrations
IV	National Council on Disability
V	Rights and Advocacy
VI	Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities
VII	Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living

¹ An individual with a disability is defined, for purposes of programs funded under the *Rehabilitation Act*, at Section 7(20) of the act (see Definition of "Individual with a Disability" as listed in Section 7(20) of the *Rehabilitation Act*, p. 101).

RSA administers grant programs that provide direct support for vocational rehabilitation (VR), independent living, and individual advocacy and assistance. The agency also supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel trained in providing VR and other services. RSA also provides training grants to upgrade the skills and credentials of employed personnel.

In addition, RSA conducts model demonstrations and systems-change projects to improve services provided under the *Rehabilitation Act*, evaluates programs to assess their effectiveness, and identifies best practices. Finally, RSA conducts monitoring, provides technical assistance, and disseminates information to public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations to facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in employment and in the community.

By far, the largest program administered by RSA is the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, also known as the “Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants Program” (hereinafter referred to as the “VR program”). This program funds state VR agencies to provide employment-related services for individuals with disabilities so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

For more than 85 years, the VR program has helped individuals with physical disabilities² not injured as a result of military service to prepare for and enter into the workforce. Nationwide, the VR program serves more than 1 million people with disabilities each year. More than 91 percent of the people who use state VR services have significant physical or mental disabilities that seriously limit one or more functional capacities. These individuals often require multiple services over an extended period of time. For them, VR services are indispensable to their becoming employed and reducing their reliance on public support.

Under Title II of the *Rehabilitation Act*, NIDRR conducts comprehensive and coordinated programs of research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities. NIDRR-funded programs and activities are designed to promote employment, independent living, maintenance of health and function, full inclusion and integration into society, and the transfer of rehabilitation technology to individuals with disabilities. The intent is to improve the economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities and the effectiveness of programs and services authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*.

Toward that goal, NIDRR supports rehabilitation research and development, demonstration projects, and related activities, including the training of persons who provide rehabilitation services or who conduct rehabilitation research. In addition, NIDRR supports projects to disseminate and promote the use of information concerning developments in rehabilitation procedures, methods, and devices. Information is provided to rehabilitation professionals, persons with disabilities, and their representatives. NIDRR also supports data analyses on the demographics of disability and provides that

² The *Civilian Vocational Rehabilitation Act*, passed by Congress in 1920, defined vocational rehabilitation (VR) as a program for physical disabilities. Mental disabilities were not part of the VR program until 1943.

information to policymakers, administrators, and other relevant groups. Awards are competitive, with applications reviewed by panels of experts, including rehabilitation professionals, rehabilitation researchers, and persons with disabilities.

The *Rehabilitation Act* has been a driving force behind major changes that have since affected the lives of millions of individuals with disabilities in this country. The passage of the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)* was the most recent reauthorization of the *Rehabilitation Act*. This report, covering FY 2007, describes all of the major programs and activities authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act* and the success of the federal government in carrying out the purposes and policies outlined in the *Rehabilitation Act*.

**PROGRAMS UNDER
THE *REHABILITATION ACT***

PROGRAMS UNDER THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

Through partnerships with other federal and nonfederal agencies, RSA directly funds or supports a wide variety of programs, initiatives, or activities that are authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*. For the purpose of this report, these programs, initiatives, and activities are organized into five major areas: Employment Programs; Independent Living and Community Integration; Technical Assistance, Training, and Support; Evaluation, Research, and Information Dissemination; and Advocacy and Enforcement. Within each area, the report provides a description of the discrete program, initiative, or activity. Each description includes a budget allocation for FY 2007 and a report of major outcomes and accomplishments. Programs, organized by these areas, are:

Employment Programs

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
- Supported Employment Services Program
- American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
- Demonstration and Training Program
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program
- Projects With Industry
- Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program (also known as the Business Enterprise Program)

Independent Living and Community Integration

- State Independent Living Services Program
- Centers for Independent Living Program
- Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
- Recreational Programs

Technical Assistance, Training, and Support

- Program Improvement
- Capacity Building for Traditionally Underserved Populations
- Rehabilitation Training Program
- Institute on Rehabilitation Issues

Evaluation, Research, and Information Dissemination

- Program Evaluation
- Information Clearinghouse
- National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

Advocacy and Enforcement

- Client Assistance Program
- Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights Program
- Employment of People With Disabilities
- Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
- Electronic and Information Technology
- Employment Under Federal Contracts
- Nondiscrimination in Programs That Receive Federal Financial Assistance
- National Council on Disability

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

RSA administers seven programs that assist individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes³. Two of these programs, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (VR program) and the Supported Employment Services Program, are state formula grant programs. The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Demonstration and Training, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, and the Projects With Industry programs are discretionary grant programs that make competitive awards for up to a five-year period. RSA also provides oversight of the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program (also known as the Business Enterprise Program) operated by state VR agencies for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Each of these programs is described below.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM Authorized Under Sections 100–111 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

Through the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, RSA provides grants to states to operate a VR program as an integral part of a coordinated, statewide workforce investment system. The program is designed to provide VR services to eligible individuals with disabilities so that they may achieve an employment outcome that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

**Vocational Rehabilitation
Services Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$2,802,716,000**

The federal government covers 78.7 percent of the program's costs through financial assistance to the states⁴ for program services and administration. Federal funds are transferred to the states based on a statutory formula in Section 8 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. The formula takes into consideration a state's population and per capita income. To match the federal funds allotted to the states for the VR program, states expended \$833,809,272 of their own funds.

Each state designates a state agency to administer the VR program. The *Rehabilitation Act* provides flexibility for a state to have two state VR agencies—one for individuals who are blind and one for individuals with other types of disabilities. All 56 states—50 U.S. states, D.C., Puerto Rico and the territories—have VR agencies; however, 24 of

³ "Employment outcome means (according to the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(16)), with respect to an individual, entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market; supported employment; or any other type of employment in an integrated setting, including self-employment, telecommuting or business ownership, that is consistent with an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice."

⁴ "States" in this publication refers to each of the states of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, according to the *Rehabilitation Act*, Section 7(32).

those entities also have separate agencies serving blind or visually impaired individuals, for a total of 80 state VR agencies

The *Rehabilitation Act* also provides flexibility to the states with respect to the organizational positioning of the VR program within the state structure. The VR program can be located in one of two types of state agencies—one that is primarily concerned with VR or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, or an agency that is *not* primarily concerned with VR or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. For the latter, the *Rehabilitation Act* requires the agency to have a designated state VR unit that is primarily concerned with VR or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Of the 80 VR agencies, 25 are primarily concerned with VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Of these, 10 are consumer-controlled agencies. Of the 55 agencies that are not primarily concerned with VR or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the VR program is located in 12 education agencies, 14 labor-workforce agencies, and 28 human services-welfare agencies. For American Samoa, Section 101(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the *Rehabilitation Act* identifies the governor's office as the VR agency.

The VR program is committed to providing services to individuals with significant disabilities⁵ and assisting consumers to achieve high-quality employment outcomes. RSA, in its relationships with the states, has continued to emphasize the priorities of high-quality employment outcomes and increased services to individuals with significant disabilities. Helping state agencies achieve positive employment outcomes for the people with disabilities they serve requires a robust system of collaboration, monitoring, and state improvement plans that address identified needs and goals.

In the RSA operational structure, the State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division (SMPID) has responsibility for monitoring state VR agencies. SMPID staff and personnel are assigned to state teams that work collaboratively with consumers, providers, state agencies, and any other interested parties to implement a continuous performance-based monitoring process that identifies areas for program improvement, areas of noncompliance, and promising practices. Each state is assigned a liaison to serve as its single point of contact. Division staff persons are also assigned to units to perform specific functions that support the work of the state teams. The functional units are VR, independent living, technical assistance, fiscal, and data collection and analysis.

⁵ The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(31) defines an individual with a significant disability as “an individual with a disability:

- (i) Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- (ii) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
- (iii) Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.”

In FY 2007, RSA conducted on-site monitoring reviews of Titles VI and VII Part B programs in 17 states, including at 23 VR agencies. The reviews were done to assess program compliance and performance as well as to fulfill the requirements of Sections 107(a), 706(c) and 723(h) of the *Rehabilitation Act*. All remaining states will be reviewed through FY 2010. In addition to conducting periodic on-site monitoring, RSA issues reports for all state agencies in accordance with Section 107(a).

Focus areas for the monitoring reviews were individually tailored for the agency under review. RSA also identified promising practices and models that can be shared with all states when appropriate. While only RSA staff conducted the monitoring activities, the review process included collaboration with key state agency staff, as well as with other stakeholders. Input was solicited from the state rehabilitation councils (SRCs), statewide independent living councils (SILCs), client assistance programs, consumer groups, service providers, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

On Sept. 1, 2007, RSA issued reports on the results of FY 2007 monitoring. The reports included the goals developed with each agency to improve performance as well as the strategies and technical assistance necessary to achieve the goals.

To provide VR agencies, disability advocates, VR consumers and service providers, and other VR stakeholders with information on the performance of the federal and state VR programs, RSA developed a process for publishing an annual review report for each of the 80 state VR agencies. The reports are written in nontechnical language for the general public and are available at www.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/performance.html through the RSA Management Information System. Annual review reports with FY 2006 information were issued shortly after the end of FY 2007. Based on data submitted to RSA by the state VR agencies, an annual review report includes the following information about each state VR agency:

- State goals and priorities;
- Individuals in the VR program;
- Program outcomes;
- Agency staffing patterns;
- Financial data;
- Compliance with standards and indicators;
- State policies and procedures, and guidance materials issued by the agency;
- Activities conducted by the SRC or independent commission; and
- Status of appeals.

Social Security Reimbursement

During FY 2007, state VR agencies received a total of \$90,263,129 in reimbursements from the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the rehabilitation of 8,238 individuals

with disabilities. For a VR agency to receive these reimbursements, the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiary or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient must perform paid employment at a level of earnings high enough to be terminated from receipt of his or her SSDI or SSI benefits.

Program Performance

Over the years, RSA has used basic performance data, or some variation, to evaluate the effectiveness of state VR agencies. In FY 2000, RSA developed two evaluation standards and performance indicators for each evaluation standard as the criteria by which the effectiveness of the VR program would be assessed. The two standards establish performance benchmarks for employment outcomes under the VR program and the access of minorities to the services of the state VR agencies.

Evaluation Standard 1 focuses on employment outcomes achieved by individuals with disabilities subsequent to the receipt of services from a state VR agency, with particular emphasis on individuals who achieved competitive⁶ employment. The standard has six performance indicators, each with a required minimum performance level to meet the indicator. For agencies that exclusively serve individuals with blindness or visual impairments, calculations for each performance indicator are based on aggregated data for the current and previous years, i.e., two years of data. And for VR agencies serving all disability populations excluding those with visual impairments or blindness, or VR agencies serving all disability populations, the calculations are based on data from the current year only, except for Performance Indicator 1.1, which requires comparative data for both years.

Three of the six performance indicators have been designated as "primary indicators" since they reflect the key VR program priority of empowering individuals with disabilities, particularly those with significant disabilities, to achieve high-quality employment outcomes. High-quality employment outcomes include employment in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis and for which individuals with disabilities are compensated in terms of the customary wage (but not less than the minimum wage) and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work carried out by individuals without disabilities.

Listed below are each of the six performance indicators identified in Standard 1 as found in the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.84. Also listed are the minimum performance level for success on each indicator as required by 34 CFR 361.86, and the number of state VR agencies that met the minimum level for FY 2007. The three primary performance indicators are highlighted by an asterisk (*).

⁶ The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(11) define competitive employment as "work:
(i) in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
(ii) For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled."

Performance Indicator 1.1

The number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exited the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

Minimum Required Performance Level: Performance in the current period must equal or exceed performance in the previous period.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 80 state VR agencies, 52 met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Performance Indicator 1.2

Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

Minimum Required Performance Level: For agencies serving only individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9 percent; for other agencies the level is 55.8 percent.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 24 agencies serving only individuals who are blind, 15 or 63 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level. Of the 56 other agencies, 46 or 82 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Performance Indicator 1.3 *

Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self- or Business Enterprise Program (BEP) employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

Minimum Required Performance Level: For agencies serving only individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4 percent; for other agencies the level is 72.6 percent.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 24 agencies serving only individuals who are blind, 23 or 96 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level. Of the 56 other agencies, 54 or 96 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Performance Indicator 1.4*

Of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self- or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

Minimum Required Performance Level: For agencies serving only individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0 percent; for other agencies the level is 62.4 percent.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 24 agencies serving only individuals who are blind, all 24 met or exceeded the minimum required performance level. Of the 56 other agencies, 55 or 98 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Performance Indicator 1.5 *

The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self- or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio vis a vis the state's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the state who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on state average annual pay for the most recent available year, U.S. Department of Labor 2007).

Minimum Required Performance Level: For agencies serving only individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59; for other agencies the level is a ratio of .52.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 24 agencies serving only individuals who are blind, 20 or 83 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level. No state wage data exists for three of the 56 other agencies (Guam, Northern Marianas and American Samoa). Of the remaining 53 agencies, 33 or 62 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Performance Indicator 1.6

Of all individuals who exit the VR program and enter into competitive, self- or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they applied for VR services.

Minimum Required Performance Level: For agencies serving only individuals who are blind, the level is an arithmetic difference of 30.4; for other agencies, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0.

Fiscal Year 2007 Performance: Of the 24 agencies serving only individuals who are blind, 18 or 75 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level. Of the 56 other agencies, 47 or 84 percent met or exceeded the minimum required performance level.

Table I on the following page summarizes the FY 2007 performance of the 80 state VR agencies on the performance indicators for Evaluation Standard 1. For an agency to "pass" Evaluation Standard 1, it must meet or exceed at least four of the six performance indicators, including two of the three "primary" performance indicators. For FY 2007, of the 80 state VR agencies, 17 or 21 percent passed all six performance indicators, 38 or 47.5 percent passed five of the performance indicators, and 22 or 27.5 percent passed four of the performance indicators. In total, 77 agencies or 96 percent passed Evaluation Standard 1. The three agencies or 4 percent that failed Evaluation Standard 1 include two agencies that serve all disability populations excluding those with visual impairments or blindness (North Carolina and Washington) and one agency that serves all disability populations (American Samoa).

Table 1. Performance of the 80 State VR Agencies on Evaluation Standard 1, by Performance Indicators and Type of Agency: Fiscal Year 2007

Performance Indicators	General and Combined VR Agencies ^a		VR Agencies Serving Blind Individuals ^b	
	Pass ^c	Fail	Pass	Fail
1.1 Change in Total Employment Outcomes^d	38	18	14	10
1.2 Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services	46	10	15	9
1.3 Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment^e*	54	2	23	1
1.4 Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities*	55	1	24	0
1.5 Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage*	33**	20**	20	4
1.6 Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application^f	47	9	18	6

(*) Primary indicator

(**) Since no state wage data exists for Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa, Indicator 1.5 could not be computed for these VR agencies.

^a Separate agencies in certain states serving all individuals with disabilities except those who are blind (general agencies) and agencies in other states serving all individuals with disabilities (combined agencies).

^b Separate agencies in certain states providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired individuals.

^c To pass standard 1, agencies must pass at least four of the six performance indicators and two of the three primary performance indicators.

^d The number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the current performance period compared with the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the previous performance period.

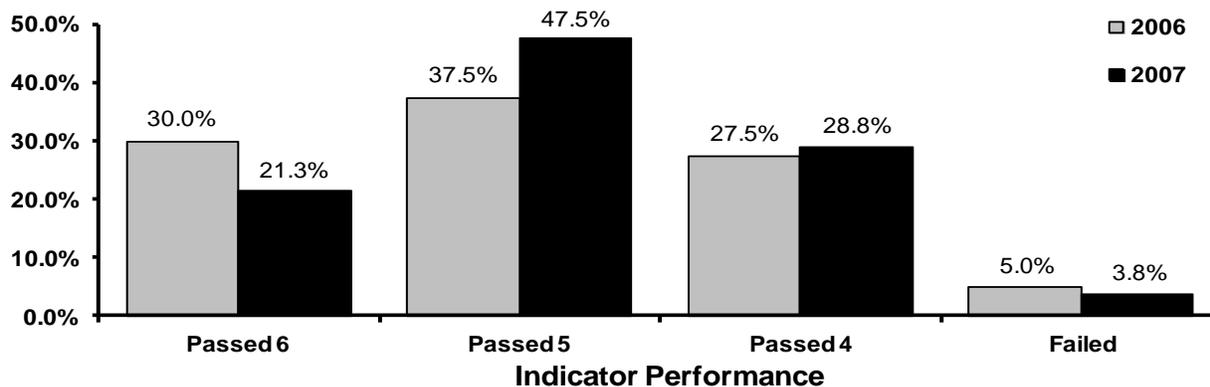
^e Percentage of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved competitive, self- or BEP employment in an integrated setting with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

^f Time frame from application for VR services to exiting the program with competitive employment.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

Figure 2 compares overall agency performance for FYs 2006 and 2007 for Evaluation Standard 1.

Figure 2. Overall State VR Agency Performance for Evaluation Standard 1: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007



Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

Evaluation Standard 2 focuses on equal access to VR services by individuals from a minority background. For purposes of this standard, the term "individuals from a minority background" means individuals who report their race and ethnicity in any of the following categories: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; or Hispanic or Latino. For this standard, there is but one indicator (34 CFR 361.82 and 361.84).

Performance Indicator 2.1

The service rate⁷ for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio in comparison with the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from nonminority backgrounds.

Minimum Required All agencies must attain a ratio level of at least .80.

Performance Level:

If an agency does not meet the minimum required performance level, or if an agency had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exit the VR program during the reporting period, the agency must describe the policies it has adopted or will adopt and the steps it has taken or will take to ensure that individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds have equal access to VR.

⁷ For purposes of calculating this indicator, the numerator for the service rate is the number of individuals whose service records are closed after they receive services under an IPE whether or not they achieved an employment outcome; the denominator is the number of all individuals whose records are closed after they apply for services whether or not they had an IPE.

**Fiscal Year 2007
Performance:**

Of the 80 state VR agencies, 69 agencies either passed Evaluation Standard 2 or had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exit the VR program during the reporting period. Nine of the 11 agencies that did not meet the required performance level for Evaluation Standard 2 included five agencies that serve all disability populations or disability populations other than individuals excluding those with visual impairments or blindness (Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, and Nebraska) and four agencies that serve all disability populations (District of Columbia, North Dakota, Northern Marianas, and Wisconsin). The other agencies that did not meet the required performance level for Evaluation Standard 2 were agencies that exclusively served individuals who are blind or have visual impairments (New York and Missouri).

Table 2 summarizes the FY 2007 performance of the 80 state VR agencies on the performance indicator for Evaluation Standard 2.

Table 2. Performance of the 80 State VR Agencies on Evaluation Standard 2, by Performance Factors and Type of Agency: Fiscal Year 2007

Performance Factors	General and Combined VR Agencies	VR Agencies Serving Blind Individuals
Ratio of .80 or Higher	44	8
Ratio of Less than .80	9	2
Fewer than 100 Individuals From Minority Backgrounds Exiting the State VR Program	3	14

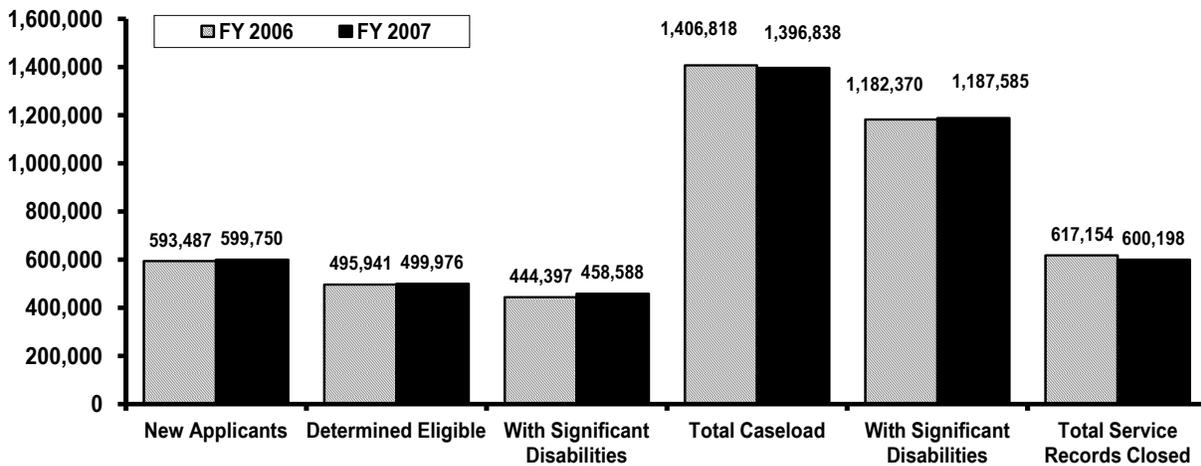
Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

A state-by-state breakdown of FY 2007 VR agency performance for both evaluation standards 1 and 2 is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Key Performance Data:

Figure 3 compares statistical information from fiscal years 2006 and 2007 on a variety of key indices for the VR program. In FY 2007, 599,750 individuals with disabilities applied for VR services. Of this number, 510,167 (85 percent of the applicants) were determined eligible to participate in the VR program. Of the individuals determined eligible for VR services, 468,707 (92 percent) had significant disabilities.

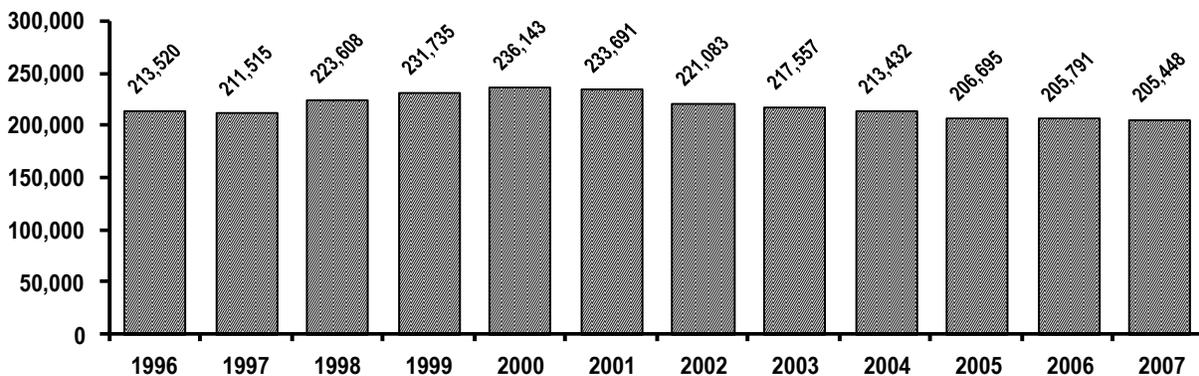
Figure 3. Key VR Program Indices, by Numbers Served: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007



Source: USED/RSA 2007a.

During FY 2007, approximately 1.4 million individuals were involved in the public vocational rehabilitation process, actively pursuing the achievement of their employment aspirations and choices. Additionally, of the 966,914 receiving services under an IPE, 891,994 (92 percent) were individuals with significant disabilities.

Figure 4. Number of VR Program Participants Achieving Employment Outcomes: Fiscal Years 1996–2007



Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

Figure 4 above shows the number of individuals who achieved employment outcomes after receiving VR services for each fiscal year from 1996 through 2007. In FY 2007, there were 205,448 individuals who achieved an employment outcome, down from 236,143 in FY 2000. The declines beginning in FY 2001 are judged to be the result of

several factors that have had an impact on the VR program. Some of these contributing factors are:

- Significant decreases in employment outcomes in four states—Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas—from 2004 to 2006.
- The elimination in FY 2001 of extended employment⁸ as an allowable employment outcome under the VR program. (Immediately prior to the date for the implementation of this new policy, state VR agencies reported that 7,359 persons had achieved an employment outcome in extended employment.)
- RSA policies that encourage VR agencies to serve individuals with significant disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities⁹, and that focus efforts on assisting these individuals to achieve high-quality employment outcomes that are consistent with their aspirations and informed choices.
- Reduction in state matching funds for VR federal funds and the difficulties experienced by several states in satisfying their maintenance of effort requirements.
- VR agencies' implementation of an order of selection. (Agencies operating under an order of selection must give priority to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, thus reducing the pool of individuals who can be served.)
- Increases in costs of services, such as tuition, that reduce the availability of resources for individuals with disabilities for other services that lead to employment outcomes.

The success of individuals with significant disabilities in achieving employment outcomes is reflected in the data provided in Table 3 on the next page. The number of individuals with significant disabilities who exited the VR program after receiving VR services and achieving employment increased each fiscal year from 1995 through 2001. While this trend was halted in FY 2002 for the reasons cited above, the number of individuals with significant disabilities as a percentage of all individuals achieving employment outcomes increased annually from FY 1995 through FY 2006. In FY 1995, individuals with significant disabilities represented just 76 percent of all individuals with disabilities who obtained employment after receiving VR services. In FY 2007, 91.7 percent of individuals who obtained jobs after receiving VR services had significant disabilities.

⁸ "Extended employment" is defined as work in a nonintegrated or sheltered setting for a public or private nonprofit agency or organization that provides compensation in accordance with the *Fair Labor Standards Act*. See 34 CFR 361.5(b)(19). Although extended employment is no longer an allowable employment outcome under the VR program, state VR agencies may continue to serve eligible individuals who choose to continue to train or otherwise prepare for competitive employment in an extended employment setting. If the individual through informed choice chooses to remain in extended employment, the VR agency may not consider this outcome as meeting the definition of employment outcome for the purposes of the VR program.

⁹ An individual with a most significant disability means an individual with a significant disability who meets the designated state unit's criteria for an individual with a most significant disability. These criteria must be consistent with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.36(d)(1) and (2) of the program regulations.

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Individuals With and Without Significant Disabilities Obtaining Employment After Exiting a VR Program: Fiscal Years 1995–2007

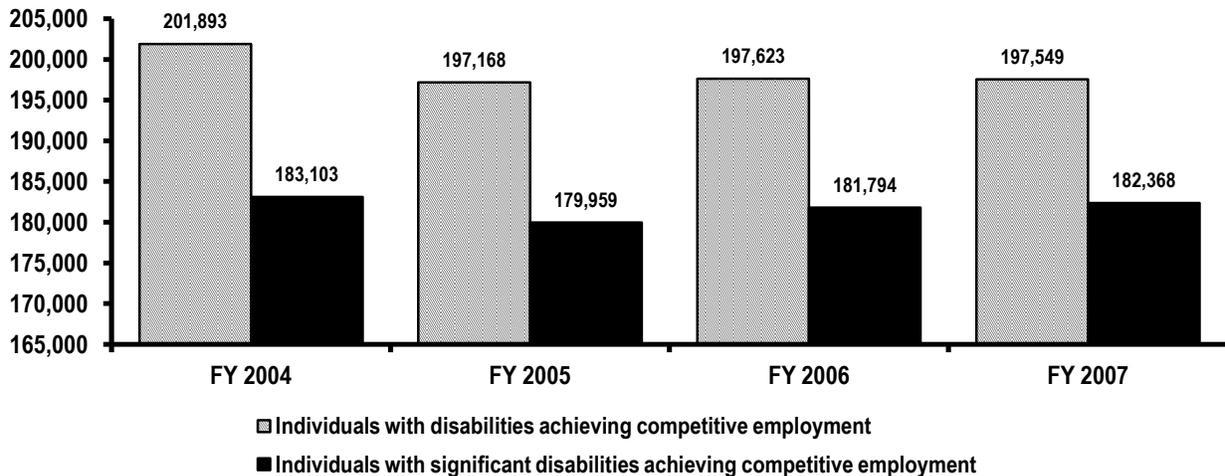
Fiscal Year	Number of Individuals With Significant Disabilities*	Number of Individuals Without Significant Disabilities	Percentage With Significant Disabilities
1995	159,138	50,371	76.0
1996	165,686	47,834	77.6
1997	168,422	43,093	79.6
1998	184,651	38,957	82.6
1999	196,827	34,908	84.9
2000	205,444	30,699	87.0
2001	205,706	27,985	88.0
2002	196,286	24,799	88.8
2003	195,787	21,770	90.0
2004	193,695	19,737	90.8
2005	189,207	17,488	91.5
2006	189,709	16,082	92.2
2007	188,399	17,049	91.7

*The program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(31) defines an individual with a significant disability as “an individual with a disability:
 (i) Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
 (ii) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
 (iii) Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.”

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

Figure 5 on the following page shows there was a small decrease (2.3 percent) in the total number of individuals with competitive employment outcomes between FY 2004 and FY 2005. The same trend was evident in the number of competitive employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities (1.7 percent). Between FY 2006 and FY 2007, there was a slight decrease in the total number of individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome (less than 1 percent) and an increase in the number of individuals with significant disabilities achieving competitive employment (5.2 percent).

Figure 5. Number of VR Program Participants Achieving Competitive Employment*, by Disability Level: Fiscal Years 2004–07



* See footnote 6 for definition of competitive employment.

** See footnote 5 for definition of an individual with a significant disability.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a.

An important aspect of employment for anyone, particularly individuals with disabilities, is employer-provided medical benefits. In FY 2007, almost 134,000 individuals with disabilities obtained competitive jobs with medical benefits, and of that number, approximately 125,600 had significant disabilities.

A more detailed state-by-state breakdown of VR grant awards and employment of people with disabilities for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 is provided in Appendix B of this report. Additional information is also available by calling the RSA State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division (SMPID) Data Collection and Analysis Unit at 202-245-7598 or by visiting the RSA website at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/research.html>.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

The VR program was one of the first programs in the Department to be assessed using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). The program was reviewed in early FY 2003 and received an overall rating of “Adequate.” The PART assessment noted that the *Longitudinal Study of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program* (RTI 1992) indicated that the program had been successful in achieving positive results. Data from this longitudinal study showed benefits to program participants, particularly in terms of improvements in employment and earning status. Results from this study also indicated that VR consumers remained employed over a sustained period of time. The assessment pinpointed a number of areas needing improvement, including the development of long-term goals and the use and timeliness of performance data.

At the time the PART assessment was conducted, RSA had not begun the process of developing long-term goals for its programs. The PART review noted that the VR program had performance goals that focused on outcomes and meaningfully reflected the purpose of the program, but they were not ambitious long-term performance goals. Since that time, RSA has revised the program's annual goals and adopted two long-term measures related to the percentage of combined and general VR agencies assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve employment and the percentage of these agencies assisting individuals to achieve competitive employment. Targets for these long-term measures have been established through FY 2012. In FY 2007, 82.1 percent (46 out of 56) of the general and combined agencies assisted at least 55.8 percent of individuals receiving services to achieve employment, significantly exceeding the target of 71 percent for this long-term measure. In addition, 96.4 percent of these agencies assisted at least 85 percent of individuals achieving employment to achieve competitive employment, meeting the target of 96 percent for this second long-term measure.

In FY 2006, RSA also established three efficiency measures: the cost per participant, the cost per employment outcome, and the consumer expenditure rate. Furthermore, RSA is working to assist states in collecting the data necessary for implementing the Job Training Common Measures, which aid in measuring outcomes across federal job training and employment programs.

The PART assessment acknowledged that the agency regularly collects credible performance information. RSA uses evaluation standards and performance indicators to increase state accountability while conducting monitoring of state programs and providing them with technical assistance. However, the PART identified the following concerns about the performance data: (1) use of the performance data in managing the overall program; (2) delays in the receipt and reporting of the data, including its accessibility to the public; (3) wide variation in individual state agency performance; and (4) use of the data to increase federal accountability.

RSA's weakness in using performance information to manage the overall program was due largely to untimely data. As a result, RSA is working to both improve the timeliness of its VR data and to promote the use of the data for program improvement by RSA and the state VR agencies funded under this program. RSA has made significant progress in making the data it collects from state VR agencies available sooner to consumers and their families, public administrators, and researchers. By automating data submission and improving the data editing process, RSA's data since FY 2005 have been available by four months after the close of the fiscal year, continuing the significant improvement in this area over previous years. Improving the timeliness of data has enhanced RSA's ability to improve program management and monitoring.

In addition to posting on the Department's website the performance of state agencies on the program's standards and indicators, RSA has developed detailed data tables and outcome reports that are being used by both program staff and state VR agencies to manage the program. RSA revised its VR program measures to address the wide variation in individual state agency performance. The measures now focus on the

percentage of agencies that meet an established criterion rather than overall program averages. Finally, in FY 2007, RSA continued the development of a long-term plan focused on using data together with strategic interventions to increase employment outcomes, particularly high-quality employment outcomes.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM **Authorized Under Sections 621–628 of the *Rehabilitation Act***

The Supported Employment Services Program implements an approach to the rehabilitation of persons with the most significant disabilities that has been proven effective and enjoys wide support. The concept of supported employment was developed to assist in the transition of persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities into a work setting through the use of on-site job coaches and other supports. By federal regulation, state VR agencies must provide ongoing support services needed by individuals with the most significant disabilities to maintain supported employment. Such supports may include monitoring at the work site, from the time of job placement until transition to extended services.¹⁰

**Supported Employment
Services Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$29,700,000**

Under the program, state VR agencies collaborate with appropriate public and private nonprofit organizations to provide supported employment services. State VR agencies provide eligible individuals with disabilities time-limited services for a period not to exceed 18 months, unless a longer period to achieve job stabilization has been established in the IPE. Once this period has ended, the state VR agency must arrange for extended services to be provided by other appropriate state agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources for the duration of that employment. Supported employment placements are achieved when the short-term VR services are augmented with extended services from other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations.

An individual's potential need for supported employment must be considered as part of the assessment to determine eligibility for the VR program. The requirements pertaining to individuals with an employment goal of supported employment are the same in both the Title I VR program and the Title VI-B Supported Employment Services Program. A state VR agency may support an individual's supported employment services solely with VR program (Title I) grant funds, or it may fund the cost of supported employment services in whole or in part with Supported Employment Services (Title VI-B) grant funds. Title VI-B supported employment funds may be used only to provide supported employment services and are essentially used to supplement Title I funds.

¹⁰ "Extended services" is defined in the program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(20) as "ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment and that are provided by a state agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part and 34 CFR Part 363 after an individual with a most significant disability has made the transition from support provided by the designated state unit."

Data from the *FY 2007 RSA-911 Case Service Report* (RSA-911) (USED/RSA 2007a) show that a total of 38,027 individuals whose cases were closed that year after receiving services had a goal on their IPE of supported employment at some time during their participation in the VR program. Fifty-three percent of those individuals received at least some support for their supported employment services from Title VI-B funds. These numbers do not include those individuals who were still receiving supported employment services at the close of the fiscal year.

Approximately 22,713 individuals, or about 60 percent of the total individuals with a supported employment goal (including those funded solely by Title I and those that received some Title VI-B support), achieved an employment outcome. Of those, 9,435 received funding for supported employment services solely under the Title I VR program and 13,278 received partial funding for supported employment services through the Title I VR program, with the remainder of their funding coming from the Title VI-B supplement.

FY 2007 data also show that 70 percent (or 9,278) of the 13,278 individuals who received some funding for supported employment services through the Title VI-B program and who achieved an employment outcome, obtained a supported employment outcome. Of those who obtained a supported employment outcome, 8,773 or 95 percent were in competitive employment. In FY 2007, the mean hourly wage for individuals with supported employment outcomes who had achieved competitive employment was \$7.58.

Some individuals who have an initial goal of supported employment achieve an employment outcome other than a supported employment outcome. Of those individuals who received some funding for supported employment services through the Title VI-B program and who obtained other types of employment outcomes, 29.1 percent were employed in an integrated setting without supports and 1 percent were self-employed, or employed in a state VR agency, or in a managed BEP program, or were a homemaker or unpaid family worker.

As state VR agencies serve an increasing number of individuals with significant disabilities, the number receiving supported employment services will likely continue to increase. The prevalence of supported employment outcomes in the VR program illustrates its acceptance as a viable rehabilitation alternative. Consistent with this finding, the administration's budget requests to Congress for FYs 2002 through 2007 included the consolidation of Title VI-B funding into the broader Title I program.

The *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)* indicator for the Supported Employment Services Program assesses the effectiveness of state agency efforts to increase the competitive employment outcomes of individuals with the most significant disabilities who have received supported employment services. Individuals in supported employment can achieve competitive employment (with wages at or above minimum wage), although not all individuals in supported employment do achieve these competitive wages. RSA is encouraging state agencies to help individuals with

disabilities in supported employment to achieve competitive employment outcomes. The measure is the percentage of individuals with a supported employment outcome goal achieving an employment outcome that obtains competitive employment. In FYs 2002 through 2004, state VR agencies far surpassed their performance targets of 77 to 78 percent for this measure. As a result, targets for 2005 through 2007 were raised from 78 percent to 93 percent. In FY 2005, 92.6 percent of the individuals with a supported employment goal achieved a competitive employment outcome. In FY 2006, the 93 percent performance target was exceeded, with 93.9 percent achieving a competitive employment outcome. In FY 2007, the performance target was again exceeded, with 94.2 percent achieving a competitive employment outcome.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

During FY 2007, the Supported Employment Services Program established under Title VI-B was assessed using the PART process. The PART assessment found that the program had helped address the need for supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities, but that it duplicated activities that could be provided through the VR program. The PART results indicated that supported employment was now an integral part of the VR program and it was no longer necessary to maintain a separate supplementary grant program.

RSA uses an annual measure to assess the percentage of individuals who received supported employment services and obtained employment that earned the minimum wage or higher during a specified time period. Based on data obtained from the RSA 911 for FY 2007, 94.2 percent of individuals who received supported employment services and obtained employment were determined to earn wages equal or higher than the federal minimum wage, thus exceeding the target of 93 percent.

As noted through the PART process, program data and evaluations showed that the outcomes of individuals who receive supported employment services compared favorably to other VR consumers with significant disabilities.

The following actions to improve the performance of the program were recommended as a result of the PART assessment:

- Work with Congress to eliminate the Supported Employment Services Program and integrate necessary state plan provisions into the state plan provisions of the VR grant program; monitor Supported Employment Services Program performance. (NOTE: It is true that through the PART process conducted in FY 2007, OMB recommended that the Department takes steps to eliminate the supported employment program and in fact presidential budgets developed by the current and previous administrations have not funded this program. However, Congress has never taken such action and the supported employment program continues to receive funding each year. Therefore, it is necessary for RSA to appropriately manage and oversee the program in keeping with the other

recommendations made by OMB as a result of the PART. This language cannot be changed as it reflects the terms of the recommendations from OMB.)

- Develop additional measures—including a long-term measure—that adequately assess the impact of the program, collect efficiency measure data, and set targets.
- Improve use and transparency of national and state data to manage and improve the program.

AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 121 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) Program provides grants to governing bodies of Indian tribes located on federal and state reservations (and consortia of such governing bodies) to deliver VR services to American Indians with disabilities who live on or near such federal or state reservations. The term “reservation” includes Indian reservations, public domain Indian allotments, former Indian reservations in Oklahoma, and land held by incorporated Native groups, regional corporations, and village corporations under the provisions of the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*.

**American Indian Vocational
Rehabilitation Services Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$34,444,000**

**Table 4. American Indian VR Services Program
Number of Grants and Funding Amounts:
Fiscal Years 1999–2007**

Fiscal Year	Total Grants	Funding Amount
1999	53	\$17,243,871
2000	64	\$23,343,067
2001	66	\$23,986,113
2002	69	\$25,552,272
2003	69	\$28,398,635
2004	70	\$30,762,517
2005	72	\$31,964,316
2006	73	\$32,999,370
2007	74	\$34,409,233

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007b.

Awards are made through competitive applications for a period of up to five years to provide a broad range of VR services, including, where appropriate, services traditionally used by Indian tribes. These services assist American Indians with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Applicants assure that the broad scope of rehabilitation services provided will be, to the maximum extent feasible, comparable—in the manner and level of quality provided—to the rehabilitation services provided by the state VR agencies.

The AIVRS program is supported through funds reserved by the RSA commissioner from funds allocated under Section 110, Title I, Part B, of the *Rehabilitation Act*. As table 4 shows, the program has grown in the last several years as a result of increases in the minimum amount of funds required to be reserved for the program.

The number of grantees funded increased from 53 in FY 1999 to 74 in FY 2007. The funding for each award (both new and continuation) also increased. The average award size in FY 1997 was about \$290,000, and over \$400,000 in FY 2007, about a 38 percent increase. Established projects that recompile for new grants often request higher levels of funding because they have increased their capacity to effectively serve more individuals with disabilities. In addition, the 1998 amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* extended the grant period from three to five years, providing more program stability. An evaluation of the program showed that experienced grantees were more efficient and effective and continued to demonstrate significant improvements in their performance. The *GPRA* program goal is to improve employment outcomes of American Indians with disabilities that live on or near reservations by providing effective tribal VR services. Program outcome data extrapolated from the AIVRS annual program performance database, in response to *GPRA*, are shown in table 5.

Table 5. Number of Individuals Served, Exiting and Achieving Employment Through the American Indian VR Services Program, Fiscal Years 1997–2007

Fiscal Year	Number Served	Total Number Exiting after Receiving Services	Number Achieving Employment
1997	2,617	819	530
1998	3,243	1,047	598
1999	3,186	1,109	678
2000	4,148	1,530	951
2001	4,473	1,683	1,088
2002	5,003	2,047	1,311
2003	5,105	2,200	1,452
2004	5,681	2,005	1,238
2005	6,245	2,375	1,573
2006	5,829	2,339	1,576
2007	6,592	2,494	1,663

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007b.

As table 5 shows, the number of American Indians with disabilities who achieved an employment outcome increased from 1,576 in FY 2006 to 1,663 in FY 2007. This large increase may have been due to the fact that 92 percent of the projects operating that year were continuations. In FY 2007, 66.7 percent of American Indians with disabilities who received services and exited the program achieved an employment outcome. Although there is fluctuation from year to year, this percentage was about 66 percent for the last three years reported here.

Technical assistance to the tribal VR projects is provided by a variety of sources, including: RSA, state VR agencies, Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs, NIDRR and its grantees, and the capacity-building grantees funded under Section 21 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. Tribal VR projects, for example,

are building strong relationships with state VR agencies. These relationships, in turn, are promoting cross-training in which state VR agencies are sharing techniques of VR service delivery with tribal VR staff members. Tribal project staff persons also are sharing techniques on delivering VR services designed for diverse cultures with state VR agency staff members. As another example, the technical assistance network sponsors annual conferences for the AIVRS projects that focus on training and networking. Other grantees funded under the *Rehabilitation Act* participate in the

conferences as both trainers and learners, further promoting strong partnerships within the program and among RSA grantees.

RSA continues to monitor tribal VR projects but has changed its monitoring strategy to include conducting on-site reviews and providing self-assessment tools. These tools are designed to assist tribal projects with identifying issues and needs requiring training and technical assistance.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

The AIVRS program was assessed in 2004 using the PART and received an overall rating of "Adequate." Certain aspects of the program, however, were identified as needing improvement. RSA is undertaking the following activities to address these concerns:

1. *Examine reporting inconsistencies.* The implementation of the AIVRS annual performance reporting form on the RSA Management and Information System (MIS) Database has assisted RSA in providing project data effectively and consistently. The FY 2007 data were examined for reporting inconsistencies, and guidance was provided to grantees to ensure accurate reporting. The MIS database was upgraded to clarify data collection elements and provide a customer-friendly presentation. Through monthly teleconferences with grantees and distribution of correspondence, RSA staff provides guidance on data entry into this collection instrument.
2. *Develop an implementation strategy for collecting the necessary data to support the administration's job training common measures initiative and establish specific performance targets.* The Department conducted a study to assess the capacity of grantees to collect and report unemployment insurance (UI) wage records for implementation of the common measures. The 2005 draft final report documented significant barriers to implementing the job training measures in the AIVRS program, including grantees access to UI records and capacity to collect and report the data. The final report from the study included a recommendation that the AIVRS program seek supplemental data elements to address the common measures.
3. *Implement an outcome efficiency measure.* The Department has established two efficiency measures for the AIVRS program that examine the cost per employment outcome and cost per participant. The cost per outcome measure examines the percentage of projects whose average annual cost per employment outcome is no more than \$35,000. Under this measure, the cost per employment outcome is calculated by dividing a project's total federal grant by the number of employment outcomes reported. The baseline performance level for this efficiency measure, 64 percent, was established using FY 2006 data. In FY 2007, 73.60 percent of projects met the \$35,000 criterion for this measure, far exceeding the baseline level.

The cost per participant measure examines the percentage of projects whose average annual cost per participant is no more than \$10,000. Under this measure, the average cost per participant is calculated by dividing the project's total federal grant by the number of participants served under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The baseline performance level for this measure, 78 percent, was established using FY 2007 data.

4. *Improve use and transparency of project data to manage and improve the program.* RSA staff evaluated and modified how national performance and project-level data are displayed in order to improve public transparency. This information is available through the RSA MIS database.

DEMONSTRATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 303 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The Demonstration and Training Program provides competitive grants to—and authorizes RSA to enter into contracts with—eligible entities to expand and improve the provision of rehabilitation and other services authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*. The grants and contracts are to further the purposes and policies of the *Rehabilitation Act* and to support activities that increase the provision, extent, availability, scope and quality of rehabilitation services under the *Rehabilitation Act*, including related research and evaluation activities.

**Demonstration and
Training Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$8,756,260**

Sections 303(a), (c) and (d) of the *Rehabilitation Act* authorize demonstration projects designed specifically to increase client choice in the rehabilitation process, make information and training available to parents of individuals with disabilities, and provide Braille training.

Section 303(b) of the *Rehabilitation Act* authorizes the support of projects that provide activities to demonstrate and implement methods of service delivery for individuals with disabilities and includes activities such as technical assistance, systems change, special studies and evaluation, and the dissemination and utilization of project findings. Entities eligible for grants under Section 303(b) include state VR agencies, community rehabilitation programs, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, or other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations. Competitions may be limited to one or more type of entity. The program supports projects for up to 60 months. During that period, many projects provide comprehensive services that may demonstrate the application of innovative procedures that could lead to the successful achievement of employment outcomes.

Section 303(b) projects develop strategies that enhance the delivery of rehabilitation services by community-based programs and state VR agencies to meet the needs of underserved populations or underserved areas. Projects have been successful in

creating intensive outreach and rehabilitation support systems, including benefits counseling, career development and job placement assistance.

Although special demonstration project types vary, the objective for a majority of the projects is to provide comprehensive services for individuals with disabilities that lead to successful employment outcomes. In prior years, the program used the following common measures to evaluate these projects:

- Projects will be judged to have successfully implemented strategies that contribute to the expansion of services for the employment of individuals with disabilities according to:
 - 1) The percentage of individuals served and placed into employment by the projects; and
 - 2) The increase in referrals of individuals to or from VR agencies and subsequent expansion of service provision due to the impact of interactions, presentations and information made to and by state VR agencies.

Some projects funded under this authority, however, do not relate directly to employment of individuals with disabilities. For example, some projects focus on Braille training. Others focus on training parents of youths with disabilities. While these projects will ultimately affect employment and entry into the VR program, such outcomes may occur only indirectly or many years after the project ends. For this reason, the program changed its outcome measure to the following:

- Projects will be judged to have successfully implemented strategies that contribute to the expansion of services for the employment of individuals with disabilities according to the percentage of projects that met their goals and objectives as established in their original applications.

Using this measure allows each project to be included in any evaluation of the Demonstration and Training Program. Program outcome data using this measure have been collected on projects that ended after FY 2005.

In FY 2007, RSA funded six new grants for projects that demonstrated the use of promising practices in collaborative transition planning and service delivery to improve the postsecondary education and employment outcomes of youths with disabilities. Grantees are implementing a model transition program designed to improve post-school outcomes of students with disabilities. To do this, grantees are using local interagency transition teams and implementing a coordinated set of promising practices and strategies.

In FY 2007, RSA supported the last year of funding of five model demonstration projects designed to improve the literacy and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. These projects assessed whether certain specific literacy services

could raise literacy levels and, consequently, the earnings of individuals with disabilities compared to individuals who received the usual VR services. The projects' final reports indicated a preference for the Wilson Reading System. The continued use of this literacy tool, however, is highly dependent on continued state funding and support from vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Funding for seven parent information and training grants was renewed. The technical assistance center that supports them also received continuation grants. These centers provide training and information to enable individuals with disabilities, their advocates, authorized representatives, and family and caregivers to participate more effectively with professionals who can help them address vocational, independent living and rehabilitation challenges.

Nine model demonstration projects—Mentoring for Transition-Age Youths and Young Adults with Disabilities—were continued. The projects must demonstrate research-based mentoring models that are effective in increasing meaningful community integration, postsecondary education and employment outcomes.

Two Braille training grants received continuation funding. These projects provide training to youths and adults who are blind and build the capacity of service providers who work with those individuals.

Twenty Access-to-Telework grants that were provided funding in FY 2003 continue to be monitored through the Demonstration and Training Program. These projects provide support for alternative financing mechanisms with the goal of expanding telework opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Projects are designed to continue until there are no longer any funds available and all outstanding loans have been repaid.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

The RSA Demonstration and Training Program was assessed in 2005 using the PART and received an overall rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The following summarizes the deficiencies identified and activities planned to improve performance:

Deficiencies:

1. The program does not have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purposes of the program. As a result, RSA developed a new efficiency measure to determine the percentage of demonstration projects that are successful in meeting project goals, as determined by examination of project applications and final reports.
2. The program does not have ambitious target time frames for its long-term measures. Baselines are being established for the new efficiency measure.

3. Independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality are not conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need.
4. Budget requests are not explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and resource needs are not presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget.
5. The program has not taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies.
6. The agency does not regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key partners to be used to manage the program and improve performance.
7. The program does not have procedures (e.g., competitive sourcing and cost comparisons, information technology improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost-effective program execution.
8. The program has not taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies.
9. Grants are not awarded based on a clear competitive process that includes a qualified assessment of merit.
10. The program does not collect grantee performance data on an annual basis and make it available to the public in a transparent and meaningful manner.
11. The program has not demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals.
12. The program (including program partners) does not achieve its annual performance goals.
13. The program does not demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost-effectiveness in achieving program goals each year.
14. The performance of the program does not compare favorably to other programs, including government, private, and others with similar purposes and goals.
15. Independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality do not indicate that the program is effective and achieving results.

Planned Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive plan (including a plan for program evaluation) that will establish procedures for identifying multiyear initiatives and annual priority areas.
- Develop long-term measures; examine current annual measures to determine whether they should be maintained or revised in line with the comprehensive plan.
- Develop procedures for the review of grantee data, progress and final reports to improve program performance.
- Resolve outstanding issues with the web-based data collection instrument so that it is operating correctly for both grantees and RSA.

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS PROGRAM **Authorized Under Section 304 of the *Rehabilitation Act***

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) Program makes comprehensive VR services available to migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities. Projects under the program develop innovative methods for reaching and serving this population.

Emphasis is given in these projects to doing outreach to migrant camps, providing bilingual rehabilitation counseling to this population, and coordinating VR services with services from other sources. Projects provide VR services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and to members of their families when such services will contribute to the rehabilitation of the worker with a disability. The goal of the MSFW Program is to ensure that eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities receive rehabilitation services and increased employment opportunities.

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities and their families are faced with many obstacles in securing employment. They are in need of highly individualized services to meet specific employment needs. The significant barriers to securing employment are: language, culturally diverse backgrounds, and relocation from state to state, making tracking individuals difficult, if not impossible.

The MSFW program is administered in coordination with other programs serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including those under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, Section 330 of the *Public Health Service Act*, the *Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act*, and *WIA*. In addition, RSA participates as a member of the Federal Migrant Interagency Committee to share information and develop strategies to improve the coordination and delivery of services to this population.

**Migrant and Seasonal
Farmworkers Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$2,278,980**

Projects funded in FY 2007 trained migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities to develop other skills that can be applied outside the agricultural area to increase their prospects for entering new occupations. In addition, projects under this program worked directly with employers to create opportunities for on-the-job training and job placement.

The GPRA performance indicator for this program is based upon the *RSA-911 Case Service Report*, which collects data on the number of individuals whose cases are closed from state VR agencies each fiscal year. One element in the system reports on the number of persons who also participated in a MSFW project at some time during their VR program. This is the data element used to calculate the performance measure for this program. The GPRA indicator for this program is:

“Individuals who achieve employment outcomes: Within project-funded states, the percentage of migrant or seasonal farmworkers with disabilities served by VR and the projects who achieve employment outcomes is higher than those who do not access the project.”

Thirteen projects funded under this program in FY 2007 served a total of 280 individuals who were also served by the VR Program. The projects placed a total of 172 individuals into competitive employment, a 61.4 percent placement rate. During this same time period, the VR program in those states that had a MSFW project served an additional 68 migrant and seasonal farmworkers who did not participate in a project funded under this program. In addition, it placed a total of 27 individuals into competitive employment, a 39.7 percent placement rate. Therefore, the GPRA indicator was met in FY 2007.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

This program was first assessed using the PART in 2007 and received a rating of “Results Not Demonstrated” because the program did not have adequate data that would permit an assessment of the performance of the program.

As a result of the PART findings, RSA developed an improvement plan in which RSA agreed to:

- 1) Publish a tailored annual reporting form for use by grantees in reporting uniform data;
- 2) Annually review and analyze MSFW grantee data and RSA-911 data on migrant and seasonal farmworkers to ensure accuracy and to eliminate incorrect reporting by VR agencies without MSFW projects;
- 3) Calculate and analyze the efficiency measure data (cost per employment outcome) at the grantee level in order to establish targets;
- 4) Improve oversight and monitoring through teleconference reviews and on-site monitoring visits;

- 5) Use monitoring findings to improve program management and technical assistance; and
- 6) Make data available to the public.

RSA began to implement the improvement plan by developing and publishing in the *Federal Register* in March 2007 an annual reporting form for use by the MSFW grantees that included eight new long-term performance measures to provide RSA more data to determine whether the MSFW Program was operating effectively and efficiently. However in May 2007, after the 60-day public comment period, the Department decided that a separate reporting form was not needed because the already existing generic reporting form for the Department could be used to collect the additional necessary data for the MSFW Program. RSA advised MSFW grantees in September 2007 of the new performance measures and directed them to start collecting the data on October 1, 2007, in order to report the data for FY 2008.

The number of grants awarded under the MSFW Program from FYs 2000–07 is shown in table 6.

Fiscal Year	Continuation Grants	New Grants	Total Grants
2000	10	4	14
2001	11	4	15
2002	11	4	15
2003	13	1	14
2004	13	0	13
2005	9	4	13
2006	9	3	12
2007	8 plus 2*	3	13

*Two (2) of the grants that were to end in FY 2006 were granted one-year extensions to operate in FY 2007.

Source: RSA Annual Performance Report

PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY

Authorized Under Section 611–612 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The Projects With Industry (PWI) program creates and expands job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the participation of business and industry in the VR process. PWI projects promote the involvement of business and private industry

**Projects With Industry
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$19,537,650**

through business advisory councils (BACs) that identify jobs and careers available in the community and provide advice on the appropriate skills and training for program participants. BACs are required to identify job and career availability within the community, consistent with the current and projected local employment opportunities identified by the local workforce investment board for the community under *WIA*.

PWI grants are made to a variety of agencies and organizations, including businesses and industrial corporations, community rehabilitation programs, labor organizations, trade associations, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, designated state units and foundations. Grants are awarded for either a three- or five-year period, and the federal share may not exceed 80 percent of the total cost of a project. In making awards under this program, the secretary of education considers the equitable distribution of projects among the states.

PWI grantees must provide to RSA an annual evaluation of project operations in accordance with established program evaluation standards and performance indicators. Specifically, Appendix A to the program regulations at 34 CFR 379 established seven standards to evaluate the performance of a PWI grant.

Evaluation Standard 1: The primary objective of the project must be to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment. The activities carried out by the project must support the accomplishment of this objective.

Evaluation Standard 2: The project must serve individuals with disabilities that impair their capacity to obtain competitive employment. In selecting persons to receive services, priority must be given to individuals with significant disabilities.

Evaluation Standard 3: The project must ensure the provision of services that will assist in the placement of individuals with disabilities.

Evaluation Standard 4: Funds must be used to achieve the project's primary objective at minimum cost to the federal government.

Evaluation Standard 5: The project's advisory council must provide policy guidance and assistance in the conduct of the project.

Evaluation Standard 6: Working relationships, including partnerships, must be established with agencies and organizations to expand the project's capacity to meet its objectives.

Evaluation Standard 7: The project must obtain positive results in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment.

RSA established five compliance indicators designed to measure the effectiveness of individual grants; these compliance indicators are found in the program regulations at 34 CFR 379.53. A grantee must meet the minimum performance levels on the two

“primary” program compliance indicators and any two of the three “secondary” compliance indicators identified below.

Compliance Indicator 1 (Primary): Placement rate. (A minimum of 55 percent of individuals served by the project during FY 2007 must be placed into competitive employment.)

Compliance Indicator 2 (Primary): Change in earnings. (Based upon hours worked, projects must have an average increase in earnings of at least \$125 a week per individual placed in competitive employment or \$100 per week for those projects in which at least 75 percent of individuals placed into competitive employment are working fewer than 30 hours per week.)

Compliance Indicator 3 (Secondary): Percent placed who have significant disabilities. (At least 50 percent of individuals served by the project who are placed into competitive employment are individuals who have significant disabilities.)

Compliance Indicator 4 (Secondary): Percent placed who were previously unemployed. (At least 50 percent of individuals who are placed into competitive employment are individuals who were continuously unemployed for at least six months at the time of project entry.)

Compliance Indicator 5 (Secondary): Average cost per placement. (The actual average cost per placement of individuals served by the project does not exceed 115 percent of the projected average cost per placement in the grantee’s application.)

Three of the compliance indicators also serve as the program’s measures established pursuant to *GPRA*. These measures, including FY 2007 performance results based on the reports of 73 grantees, are provided below.

- **Placement Rate** of individuals with disabilities into competitive employment. The placement rate for FY 2007 was 63 percent.
- **Change in earnings** of individuals who are placed in competitive employment. In FY 2007, the change in earnings of individuals who were placed in competitive employment averaged \$269 per week.
- **Average cost per placement.** For each individual grant, the actual average cost per placement does not exceed 115 percent of the projected average cost per placement in the grantee’s application. In FY 2007 the average cost per placement was \$3,483.

To receive continuation funding for the third and subsequent years, PWI grantees must demonstrate compliance with the standards and indicators by submitting data for the most recent complete fiscal year. If a grantee does not demonstrate compliance on the basis of the previous fiscal year's data, the grantee has an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the standards by submitting data from the first six months of the current fiscal year.

In FY 2007, all of the projects were in the second year of their three-year grant period. At the end of FY 2007, approximately 5 percent of the 73 projects failed the compliance indicators. The failure rate was significantly lower for FY 2007 than for FY 2006, when approximately 33 percent of the projects failed to meet the compliance indicators and subsequently did not receive continuation awards. As a result, \$2,245,030 of the FY 2007 appropriation was transferred to the Demonstration and Training Program. The significant decrease in the number of projects that failed to meet the indicators for FY 2007 can be attributed to the fact that all of the grantees were in their second year of reporting. As evidenced in previous grant cycles, projects generally show improved performance during a grant cycle, having established project operations and a greater understanding of program performance requirements.

Table 7 presents selected performance information for the PWI program for FYs 2006 and 2007. In FY 2007, there were 73 projects in operation, six fewer than in FY 2006. The 73 PWI projects operating and reporting data in FY 2007 placed 63 percent of the 8,518 individuals served into competitive employment. Approximately 88 percent of the individuals served had significant disabilities and 91 percent of those were placed in employment. Approximately 70 percent of individuals served were unemployed six months or more prior to program entry and 75 percent of those were placed in employment. In FY 2007, the employment placement rate for individuals with significant disabilities was 65 percent.

Table 7. Projects With Industry Program Outcomes, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

Fiscal Year	2006	2007
Total projects reporting	79	73
Total persons served	7,512	8,518
New persons served	8,148	7,325
Persons served with significant disabilities	6,482	7,466
Percentage served with significant disabilities	86%	88%
Persons served who were unemployed six months or more	5,694	5,961
Percentage served who were unemployed six months or more	76%	70%
Total persons placed in employment	4,189	5,346
Percentage of total persons placed in employment	56%	63%
Persons placed with significant disabilities	3,628	4,842
Percentage of individuals with significant disabilities placed in employment	87%	91%
Persons placed who were unemployed six months or more in employment	3,215	4,006
Percentage of previously unemployed individuals placed in employment	77%	75%
Placement rate of individuals with significant disabilities	56%	65%
Placement rate of previously unemployed individuals	56%	67%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007d.

In FY 2004, the Department assessed the PWI program using the PART. The program received an “Adequate” rating, but the PART assessment cited that many of the program’s activities were redundant with allowable activities under the VR program. Although the program is generally successful in meeting its performance goals, the PART assessment found that these results are undermined by inaccuracies found in the data collected and reported by grantees and by highly variable grantee performance.

As a result of the PART findings, RSA: (1) implemented a plan to improve grantee data collection and reporting by providing technical assistance to grantees on the program in the form of group teleconference calls and technical assistance documents; (2) revised the program measures to be comparable with other job training programs; (3) improved the use and transparency of project data to manage and improve the program, including posting summary analyses and key data on the Department’s website; and (4) developed and implemented a plan to meet the program’s statutory requirement for on-site compliance reviews.

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDING FACILITY PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 103(b)(1) of the *Rehabilitation Act and the Randolph-Sheppard Act*

Section 103(b)(1) of the *Rehabilitation Act* states that VR services, when provided to groups, can include management, supervision and other services to improve businesses operated by significantly disabled individuals. State VR agencies, therefore, are authorized to use funds under the VR program to support the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program, which is authorized under the *Randolph-Sheppard Act*. The intent of the *Randolph-Sheppard Act* was to enhance employment opportunities for blind individuals who are trained and licensed to operate vending facilities.

Supported by a combination of RSA program funds, state appropriations, federal vending machine income and levied set-asides from vendors, the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program (also known as the BEP) provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on federal and other property. The program recruits qualified individuals who are blind, trains them on the management and operation of small business enterprises, and then licenses qualified blind vendors to operate the facilities.

At the outset, the program placed sundry stands in the lobbies of federal office buildings and post offices selling such items as newspapers, magazines, candies and tobacco products. Through the years, the program has grown and broadened from federal locations to also include state, county, municipal, and private installations as well as interstate highway rest areas. Operations have expanded to include military mess halls, cafeterias, snack bars, miscellaneous shops and facilities comprising vending machines.

RSA administers the *Randolph-Sheppard Act* in accordance with the goals of providing blind individuals with remunerative employment, enlarging the economic opportunities of blind persons and encouraging blind individuals to strive to become self-supporting. To this end, RSA has established standards and performance indicators to encourage state agencies to increase average earnings of individuals in the program.

The data contained in table 8 were obtained from the Report of Vending Facility Program, Form RSA-15, for FY 2007. The total gross income for the program was \$713.2 million in FY 2007, compared to \$692.2 million in FY 2006, a 3.0 percent increase. The total earnings of all vendors were \$116.3 million in FY 2007 and \$115.7 million in FY 2006, an increase of 0.5 percent. The national average annual earnings of vendors decreased 0.44 percent to \$46,753 in FY 2007 from \$46,963 the previous year. The number of vendors in FY 2007 was 2,545 compared to 2,575 in FY 2006, a decrease of 30 vendors. There were 3,031 vending facilities in FY 2007 and 3,040 the previous year, a decrease of nine facilities.

**Table 8. Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program Outcomes:
Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007**

	2006	2007
Income and Earnings		
Gross Income	\$692,152,876	\$713,175,716
Vendor Earnings	\$115,701,361	\$116,264,699
Average Earnings	\$46,963	\$46,753
Number of Vendors		
Federal Locations	894	888
Nonfederal Locations	1,681	1,657
Total Vendors	2,575	2,545
Number of Vending Facilities		
Federal Locations	1,069	1,070
Nonfederal Locations	1,971	1,961
Total Facilities	3,040	3,031
Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007e.		

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The purpose of the independent living (IL) programs is to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities and to integrate these individuals into the mainstream of American society. Title VII of the *Rehabilitation Act* authorizes financial assistance to provide, expand, and improve IL services; to develop and support statewide networks of centers for independent living (CILs); and to improve working relationships among state IL programs, CILs, statewide independent living councils (SILCs), other programs authorized by the *Rehabilitation Act*, and other federal, state, local and nongovernmental programs.

STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROGRAM Authorized Under Title VII, Chapter I, Part B of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The State Independent Living Services (SILS) Program provides formula grants, based on population, to states for the purpose of funding, directly and/or through grant or contractual arrangements, one or more of the following activities:

**State Independent Living
Services Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$22,587,840**

1. Supporting the operation of SILCs;
2. Demonstrating ways to expand and improve IL services;
3. Providing IL services;
4. Supporting the operation of CILs;
5. Increasing the capacity of public or nonprofit organizations and other entities to develop comprehensive approaches or systems for providing IL services;
6. Conducting studies and analyses, developing model policies and procedures, and presenting information, approaches, strategies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations to federal, state, and local policymakers to enhance IL services;
7. Training service providers and individuals with disabilities on the IL philosophy; and
8. Providing outreach to populations that are unserved or underserved by IL programs, including minority groups and urban and rural populations.

To be eligible for financial assistance, states are required to establish a SILC and to submit a state plan for independent living jointly developed and signed by the chairperson of the SILC and the director of the designated state unit (DSU). States participating in this program must match every \$9 of federal funds with \$1 in nonfederal cash or in-kind resources in the year for which the federal funds are appropriated.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

RSA continues to implement the SILS program's performance and accountability improvement plan, in response to OMB's PART recommendations. The plan includes: new outcomes-based annual and long-term performance measures; a revised annual performance data collection instrument (Section 704 Report) that incorporates the outcomes-based performance measures; and a new monitoring protocol to maximize DSU and SILC performance and accountability, consistent with federal statutory and regulatory requirements. FY 2007 was the second year for which RSA was able to collect SILS program data based on the new performance measures.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM **Authorized Under Title VII, Chapter I, Part C of the *Rehabilitation Act***

The Centers for Independent Living (CIL) Program provides grants to consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability¹¹, nonresidential, private nonprofit agencies for the provision of IL services to individuals with significant disabilities. At a

**Centers for Independent
Living Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$74,638,080**

minimum, centers funded by the program are required to provide the following IL core services: information and referral; IL skills training; peer counseling; and individual and systems advocacy. Centers also may provide the following services, among others: psychological counseling; assistance in securing housing or shelter; personal assistance services; transportation referral and assistance; physical therapy; mobility training; rehabilitation technology; recreation; and other services necessary to improve the ability of individuals with significant disabilities to function independently in the family or community and/or to continue in employment.

The *Rehabilitation Act* establishes a set of standards and assurances that eligible centers are required to meet. In order to continue receiving CIL program funding, centers must demonstrate minimum compliance with the following evaluation standards: promotion of the IL philosophy; provision of IL services on a cross-disability basis; support for the development and achievement of IL goals chosen by the consumer; efforts to increase the availability of quality community options for IL; provision of IL core

¹¹ Cross-disability means (according to the program regulations at 34 CFR 364.4), "with respect to a CIL, that a center provides IL services to individuals representing a range of significant disabilities and does not require the presence of one or more specific significant disabilities before determining that an individual is eligible for IL services."

Table 9. Centers for Independent Living Program Accomplishments: Fiscal Year 2007

In FY 2007, CILs nationwide served over 196,745 individuals with significant disabilities. A few examples of their beneficial impact on individuals follows:

- 2,924 individuals were relocated from nursing homes or other institutions to community-based living arrangements;
- 42,957 individuals received assistive technology or rehabilitation services;
- 68,686 individuals received IL skills training and life skills training;
- 51,590 individuals received IL services related to securing housing or shelter;
- 22,396 individuals received services related to transportation; and
- 57,692 individuals received personal assistance services.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007f.

services; community capacity-building activities and resource development activities to secure other funding sources.

A population-based formula determines the total funding available for discretionary grants to centers in each state. Subject to the availability of appropriations, the commissioner is required to fund existing centers at the same level of funding they received the prior fiscal year and to provide them with a cost-of-living increase. Funding for new centers in a state is awarded on a competitive basis, based on the state's priority designation of unserved or underserved areas and the availability of funds within the state. In FY 2007, there were 336 CILs operating nationwide that received funds under this program.

CILs are required to submit an annual performance report that tracks sources, amounts, and allocation of funds; numbers and demographic breakdowns of consumers served; services rendered and consumer outcomes achieved; and major accomplishments, challenges, opportunities, and other IL program activities within the state.

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

RSA continues to implement the CIL program's performance and accountability improvement plan, in response to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) PART recommendations. The plan includes: new outcomes-based annual and long-term performance measures; a revised annual performance data collection instrument (Section 704 Report) that incorporates the outcomes-based performance measures; and a new monitoring protocol to maximize CILs' performance and accountability, consistent with federal statutory and regulatory requirements. FY 2007 was the second year for which RSA was able to collect CIL program data based on the new performance measures.

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind **Authorized Under Title VII, Chapter 2 of the *Rehabilitation Act***

The Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program delivers IL services to individuals who are 55 years of age or older and whose significant visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to attain but for whom IL goals are feasible. These services assist older individuals who are blind in coping with activities of daily living and increasing their functional independence by providing: adaptive aids and services; orientation and mobility training; training in communication skills and Braille instruction; information and referral services; peer counseling; and individual advocacy instruction. Through such services, the OIB program extends independence and quality of life for older Americans while offering alternatives to costly long-term institutionalization and care.

**Independent Living Services for
Older Individuals Who Are Blind
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$32,894,730**

The *Rehabilitation Act* provides that, in any fiscal year in which appropriations to this program exceed \$13 million, grants will be made on a formula basis rather than on a discretionary basis. Since FY 2000, formula grants have been made to state agencies for the blind or, in states that have no such agency, to state VR agencies. States participating in this program must match every \$9 of federal funds with \$1 in nonfederal cash or in-kind resources in the year for which the federal funds are appropriated.

In addition to federal funding under Title VII, Chapter 2, the OIB program benefited from increased nonfederal support. In FY 2007, the average nonfederal source of funding and in-kind support per state was \$294,501, 6 percent more than in FY 2006. This funding promotes the sustainability of the state-operated programs nationwide and builds the capacity of states to address the vastly growing numbers of older individuals with blindness and visual impairment. Approximately one in six individuals over 65 experience age-related vision loss.

The OIB program continued to see an increase in services delivered to consumers that have severe or multiple disabilities in addition to a significant visual impairment. In FY 2007, some 58,064 older individuals nationwide benefited from the IL services provided through this program, down 11 percent from the 65,017 served in FY 2006.

To maximize program performance and accountability, RSA has developed new outcomes-based performance indicators. These indicators will help RSA to track the percentage of consumers reporting increased independence and community integration, and to provide the necessary recommendations and technical assistance to achieve continuous improvements in the OIB program.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 305 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The Recreational Program for individuals with disabilities is authorized under Section 305 of the *Rehabilitation Act* and implemented by the program regulations in 34 CFR Part 369. The goal for the program is to provide recreational activities and related experiences for individuals with disabilities that can be expected to aid in their employment, mobility, independence, socialization, and community integration.

**Recreational Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$2,517,570**

The program awards discretionary grants on a competitive basis to states, public agencies, and private nonprofit organizations, including institutions of higher education. When possible and appropriate, projects funded under this program must provide recreational activities for individuals with disabilities in settings with peers without disabilities.

Grants are available for up to three years. The federal share of the costs of the Recreational Program is 100 percent for the first year, 75 percent for the second year and 50 percent for the third. Projects funded under this program authority are required to provide a nonfederal match (cash or in-kind contribution or both) for year two, at 25 percent of year-one federal funding, and for year three, at 50 percent of year-one federal funding.

The chart below shows the number of new and continuation recreational grants funded over a five-year period, as well as the total of the two.

Table 10. Number of Recreational Program Continuation and New Grant Awards: Fiscal Years 2003–07

Fiscal Year	Continuation Awards	New Awards	Total Awards
2003	16	8	24
2004	18	8	26
2005	16	9	25
2006	17	8	25
2007	17	9	26

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007f.

A key objective for the Recreational Program is to sustain the activities initiated by the grant after federal funding ceases. Grantees must describe in their applications the manner in which the program will be continued after federal funding has ended. The latest data available relative to this objective come from grants that were closed from FYs 2003–05 and tracked one year later. These data indicate that at least 79 percent of the projects closed during this period continued in operation after federal funding ended.

The connection between recreational activities and the creation of employment opportunities is evident in the kinds of projects funded in FY 2007.

1. *RecWorks!* is an innovative and collaborative project between two Alaskan CILs: Southeast Alaska Independent Living (*SAIL*) and the Kenai Peninsula Independent Living Center (*ILC*). After a decade and a half of providing nontraditional IL services, and inclusive recreation and vocational services, these two outstanding state and nationally recognized programs produced *RecWorks!*.

This project will take the positive outcomes earned from recreation and leadership development and use them as building blocks towards employment. Both *SAIL* and *ILC* have firsthand experience in witnessing the positive changes in motivation, socialization, and self-confidence in participants during and after recreational experiences. Such dramatic and positive change cannot be taught but can be observed, captured, and incorporated into other aspects of life.

Over three years, *RecWorks!* will provide individualized and comprehensive leadership development to a minimum of 50 persons with significant disabilities. The ultimate goal for each participant is successful employment. Eligible participants in Southeast Alaska or the Kenai Peninsula will be graduating high school seniors or youths aged 18–22 who have a significant disability or adults who are newly disabled or unsuccessful at securing employment since becoming disabled.

Participants will be individuals referred by their vocational providers or schools or be current customers of their CIL. Using the Discovery Process, recognized as a best practice by the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, participants will complete IL, recreation plans, and individual plans for employment to identify their needs and interests. *RecWorks!* staff will work with each participant to ensure his or her IL needs are met and that all services are consumer-driven.

2. For 40 years, Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA) has provided sports rehabilitation and recreation programs and services to people with disabilities as a springboard to an active and healthy lifestyle. Founded in 1967 by disabled Vietnam veterans, DS/USA now offers a nationwide sports education and rehabilitation program to anyone with a permanent disability. Activities are year-round in over 20 adaptive winter and summer sports, including snow skiing, snow boarding, water skiing, scuba diving, sailing, cycling, track and field, golf, kayaking, wheelchair tennis, and more.

Using sports and recreation as a strategy to build future success, DS/USA is developing its Youth Sports Mentoring Program. These adult mentors provide guidance and incentives to introduce these youths to a sport or physical activity that will help develop their skills and interest. Two groups of special mentors have been trained, including “Wounded Warriors,” a group of returning soldiers who were disabled fighting in the war in Iraq, and elite Paralympic athletes.

The Youth Sports Mentoring Program will identify active adults who provide positive role models to work directly as mentors to youths with disabilities. The primary goal is to help these young people develop sports skills and higher levels of fitness, which will build confidence and independence as they transition from school to adult life. The objectives include: providing growth opportunities through adaptive sports training; expanding resources to youths with disabilities at the local chapter level for ongoing assistance and support; and using sports as a mechanism for forming strong and lasting mentoring relationships. Objectives also include forming community partnerships with long-standing mentoring groups, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, for continuing training, referrals, and program collaboration in an inclusive environment conducive to long-term growth.

Mentoring relationships will create lasting social, educational, and employment outcomes for youths with disabilities who are involved in the project. To this end, youths with disabilities are expected to demonstrate healthier physical development, greater self-reliance and independence, and improved self-confidence as they participate in community-centered programs. This will lead to greater chances to further their future educational and employment goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT

RSA operates and provides funding for a number of programs that support the central work of the VR program. These support programs frequently are discretionary programs that have been established to provide funding for addressing new and emerging needs of individuals with disabilities. They may, for example, provide technical assistance for more efficient management of service provision, open opportunities for previously underserved populations, initiate partnerships with the business community, and help establish an atmosphere of independence and self-confidence among individuals with disabilities that fosters competitive employment. They include training efforts designed to qualify new personnel and expand the knowledge and skills of current professionals through recurrent training, continuing education, and professional development.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Authorized Under Section 12 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

Program Improvement funds allocated under Section 12 are used to support activities that increase program effectiveness, improve accountability, and enhance RSA's ability to address issues of national significance in achieving the purposes of the *Rehabilitation Act*. Program funds are awarded through grants and contracts and may be used to procure expertise to provide short-term training and technical instruction; conduct special projects and demonstrations; develop, collect, prepare, publish, and disseminate educational or informational materials; and carry out monitoring and evaluation activities.

**Program Improvement
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$835,000**

Under this section of the *Rehabilitation Act*, the RSA commissioner is authorized to provide technical assistance and consultative services to public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations, including assistance to enable such agencies and organizations to facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities.

During FY 2007, Section 12 funds were used to support technical assistance and program improvement projects, including the continuation of four projects initiated in previous years and one new project. Continuing projects initiated in FY 2006 include: developing and implementing a Web-based dissemination and technical assistance resource; enhancing the capacity of SRCs to fulfill their mandated responsibilities; and implementing an outreach initiative to encourage stronger collaboration between prospective employers, trade organizations, and state VR agencies. Section 12 funds were also used to continue ongoing assistance in developing and implementing strategies for enhancing performance management.

Continuing Projects

- **Enhancing performance measurement:** Weakness in the transparency and use of project data was a common finding in the PART reviews of RSA's discretionary grant programs. In fiscal year 2005, the Department awarded a contract to assist RSA in developing its capacity to effectively use the performance data it collects to manage and improve program performance at the national and grantee levels. The plan developed by the contractor primarily focused on enhancing the capabilities of RSA staff to more effectively use the data collected from program grantees. The contractor provided technical assistance, and developed protocols and other guidance materials to enhance the skills of RSA staff to analyze and interpret data. In addition, the contractor developed a PART tracking system for RSA to use in monitoring progress on all recommendations for follow-up activities and reports for all VR programs that had been through the PART review process with OMB.
- **Web-based technical assistance resource:** The Department awarded a contract in fiscal year 2006 to develop a Web-based technical assistance resource (Dissemination and Technical Assistance Resource) that would provide broader access to a wide variety of vocational rehabilitation and independent living program resources. Upon completion of the working prototype of the Web-based resource, RSA sought input from prospective users, both internal to RSA and external grantees and stakeholders. The input was then used to make revisions to the Web-based resource.
- **Developing the Capacity of SRCs:** The SRC can play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the State VR Services program. The purpose of this project is to both enhance SRCs' effectiveness in improving State VR programs and increase opportunities for high-quality outcomes for individuals with disabilities. In FY 2007, RSA used Section 12 funds to coordinate and conduct three national SRC forums to demonstrate the features of the online training series developed through this project in FY 2006 and to provide a forum for the exchange of information and practices among SRCs.
- **Employer outreach and VR collaboration:** The goal of the employer outreach and collaboration project is to promote partnerships between employers and state VR agencies that will increase job placements for individuals with disabilities. Section 12 funds were used to coordinate a series of nationwide informational forums targeting employers in industries such as health care, technology, banking and finance, and hospitality-food service. Funds were also used to disseminate materials to prospective employers to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities.

New Project

In FY 2007, Section 12 funds were used to initiate a project to assist state VR agencies and SRCs in conducting their comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), as required under Section 101(a)(15)(i) of the *Rehabilitation Act*. Funds were also used to develop goals and priorities based on the CSNA. State VR agencies and SRCs are required to conduct a CSNA on a triennial basis that identifies the VR needs of individuals residing in the state. The assessment must describe the VR needs of:

1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment;
2. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved and underserved by the VR program; and
3. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

In addition, the CSNA must include an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

Section 101(a)(15) also requires the state VR agencies and SRCs to develop goals and priorities based on the results of the CSNA to carry out their VR program during the period in which the annual state plan is in effect and strategies the state will use to implement the goals and priorities. Finally, the state VR agencies and SRCs must submit an annual report to RSA that includes an evaluation of the extent to which the state's goals and priorities were achieved and, if not achieved, the factors that impeded their achievement.

In reviewing FY 2007 state plan submissions, RSA determined that CSNAs did not yield data sufficient to inform the development of goals and priorities. Many CSNAs did not address all of the required elements, and more importantly, even those CSNAs that did address them did not yield sufficient information on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the state. State VR agencies and SRCs indicated they did not have sufficient expertise to carry out the CSNA and asked RSA to provide them with technical assistance. To respond to this request, RSA awarded a contract to develop a systemic approach to conducting the CSNA that could be tailored to individual state VR agencies. Under the contract, training and technical assistance would also be provided along with instructional materials.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Authorized Under Section 21 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

Section 21 requires RSA and NIDRR to reserve 1 percent of funds appropriated each year for programs under titles II, III, VI, and VII to make awards to minority entities and Indian tribes to carry out activities under the *Rehabilitation Act*. A portion of those funds will also be used by state, public, or private nonprofit agencies to support capacity-building projects that provide outreach and technical assistance to minority entities and American Indian tribes, promoting their participation in activities under the act. In FY 2007, \$2,291,038 was reserved from programs administered by RSA under Titles III, VI, and VII for these purposes.

**Capacity Building for Traditionally
Underserved Populations
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$3,361,038**

The 1998 amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* define minority entities as historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education, American Indian tribal colleges or universities, and other institutions of higher learning whose minority student enrollment is at least 50 percent. Capacity-building projects are designed to expand the service-providing capabilities of these entities and increase their participation in activities funded under the *Rehabilitation Act*. Training and technical assistance activities funded under the *Rehabilitation Act* may include training on the mission of RSA, RSA-funded programs, disability legislation, and other pertinent subjects to increase awareness of RSA and its programs.

In FY 2007, RSA awarded 11 continuation grants under the RSA rehabilitation capacity-building program for traditionally underserved populations in two priority areas. The two priority areas were: (Priority 1) Establishing New Rehabilitation Training Programs (CFDA 84.315C), and (Priority 2) Capacity-Building for Minority Entities (CFDA 84.315D). Six grants were awarded under Priority 1 and five under Priority 2. In terms of minority-serving institutions receiving these grants, two grants were awarded to Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education, four grants were awarded to three historically black universities, and one grant was awarded to a Pacific Island university.

In addition, two supplements were awarded to a capacity-building project in FY 2007. One supplement funded a research project designed to measure changes in minority access to VR services after the implementation of Section 21 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. Data is now being collected for this research activity. The other supplement carried out the leadership initiative. This initiative consists of a four-day training conference and community-based leadership activities. Training was provided to 21 participants through a nomination and selection process. Nominations were sent to approximately 790 organizations involved in disability legislation, IL, civil rights, service delivery to individuals, and parent groups. Key components of the training included the delivery of six modules developed by a nationally recognized group of training professionals. The

training modules included disability legislation, group building and dynamics, group facilitation, networking, identification of community resources, disability awareness, diversity awareness, grant development, and grant management.

Completion of the training modules was followed by the development of a personal action plan. The plans are based on the interest of the trainee. Trainees are required, as a condition of their selection, to work on projects to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities within their respective communities. The projects include community education and awareness, and access to transportation, housing, and technology, as well as other areas of interest and need for people with disabilities.

Trainees are also exposed to a variety of leaders from the disability field who serve as guest speakers and consultants. The National Leadership Training Institute gives participants the many tools they need to effectively advocate within their communities and improve the inclusion of people with disabilities.

REHABILITATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 302 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Training Program is to ensure that skilled personnel are available to serve the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities assisted through VR, supported employment, and IL

**Rehabilitation Training Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$38,437,740**

programs. To that end, the program supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel trained in providing rehabilitation services.

Grants and contracts under this program authority pay all or part of the cost of conducting training programs. Awards are made to states, public and private nonprofit agencies, and organizations, including institutions of higher education, and can be made in any of 31 long-term training fields. In addition, awards are made for continuing education, short-term training, experimental and innovative training, and training interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and persons who are deaf-blind. These training programs vary in terms of content, methodology, and audience.

The long-term training program supports academic training grants that must direct 75 percent of the funds to trainee scholarships. The statute requires trainees who receive assistance to either work two years for every year of assistance in public or private nonprofit rehabilitation agencies or related agencies, including professional corporations or professional practice groups that have service arrangements with a state agency, or repay the assistance they received. Grant recipients under the long-term training program are required to build closer relationships between training institutions and state VR agencies; promote careers in VR; identify potential employers who would meet the trainee's payback requirements; and ensure that data on the employment of students are accurate.

In FY 2007, RSA funded eight new projects in four different long-term training areas, as well as eight undergraduate rehabilitation programs and three community rehabilitation continuing education programs. These are described below.

Of the funds appropriated for the Rehabilitation Training Program, 15 percent must be used to support in-service training. Seventy-seven state agencies continued to receive funding for in-service training under new awards made in FY 2005. These grants assist state VR agencies in the training of their staff consistent with the state's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD).

RSA awarded three new Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) grants to train staff based at community rehabilitation programs. These training grants will help staff maintain and upgrade their skills and responsiveness to the needs of people with disabilities.

RSA continued funding of 253 training grants. These grants cover an array of areas, including 147 long-term training or scholarship grants; 21 RCEPs to support state VR agencies and their partners; three grants to support the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, which presents current thinking and state-of-the-art knowledge on important rehabilitation topics; six grants to provide quality educational opportunities for interpreters at all skill levels; and three other specialty training grants. Together, these awards support the public rehabilitation system by recruiting and training well-qualified staff and by maintaining and upgrading their skills once they begin working in the system.

Under Title I of the *Rehabilitation Act*, each state is required to develop a CSPD. Some of the CSPD requirements include: establishing procedures to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified staff for the state agency; assessing personnel needs and making projections for future needs; and addressing current and projected personnel training needs. States are further required to develop and maintain policies and procedures for job-specific personnel standards that are consistent with national or state-approved certification, licensure, and registration requirements or, in the absence of these requirements, other state personnel requirements for comparable positions. If a state's current personnel do not meet the highest requirements for personnel standards, the CSPD must identify the steps the state will take to upgrade the qualifications of its staff, through retraining or hiring. Funds under the VR program may also be used to comply with these requirements.

In FY 2007, RSA awarded \$2,274,820 in CSPD grants to help retrain VR counselors to comply with the state degree standard. During FY 2007, the Rehabilitation Training Program made 77 in-service training awards to state VR agencies totaling \$5,528,123 to assist efforts to train VR staff nationwide. The Rehabilitation Training Program continued to play a critical role in helping state VR agencies develop and implement their CSPD standards for hiring and training qualified rehabilitation professionals in their respective states.

The Rehabilitation Training Program continues its efforts in leading universities and state VR agencies to increase the pool of qualified VR counselors available to state agencies. For example, it funded an evaluation of the responsiveness of the training program to VR needs, with a special goal of meeting the workforce development needs of the VR system by spring 2008. Results indicate that the supply of rehabilitation counselors is insufficient to meet the expected personnel needs of state VR agencies. While this is largely due to the “aging-out” of the current counselor ranks, the study also points to low wages and a lack of awareness of the rehabilitation profession among young people. The study recommends efforts to recruit more students into rehabilitation professions and training programs and efforts to recruit graduates of training programs into state VR agencies. RSA is exploring some of those recommendations.

The Rehabilitation Training Program also sponsors an annual conference of educators and state agencies to discuss human resource issues and solutions. Topic of the Rehabilitation Educator’s Conference, held in Arlington, Va., Oct. 13–16, 2007, was “Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining Rehabilitation Professionals: A Multi-Generational Challenge.” The Rehabilitation Training Program also sponsored a three-day forum for new state VR administrators, directors of state VR agencies for the blind, tribal VR agency directors, chief deputies, and SRC chairpersons. The forum was designed to ensure that rehabilitation executives have the content and leadership skills to meet the challenges of the state VR system.

GPRA Performance Indicators:

The Rehabilitation Training Program has two objectives and seven indicators upon which grantees report. Summaries of data on these indicators appear below.

Objective a: *To provide graduates who work within the VR system to help individuals with disabilities achieve their goals.*

Indicator 1: *Percentage Working: The percentage of master’s-level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through acceptable employment.*

In FY 2007, 85.13 percent of master’s-level counseling graduates reported fulfilling their payback requirements through acceptable employment, falling slightly short of the target of 85.97 percent.

Indicator 2: *Percentage Working: The percentage of master’s-level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through employment in state VR agencies.*

In FY 2007, the percentage of master’s-level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through employment in state VR agencies dropped to 48.96 percent from the 53.54 percent reported in

FY 2006. The target is to have 100 percent of RSA scholars working in state VR settings.

Indicator 3 *The cost per master's-level RSA-supported rehabilitation counseling graduate.*

The FY 2007 cost per master's-level RSA graduate was \$14,734, up from \$10,962 in 2006. This increase reflects a change in the calculation of the cost so that the number of graduates is divided by the total amount of the awards made for this purpose, not just the amount given to the students.

Indicator 4 *Numbers Trained: The number of RSA-supported scholarships.*

The number of scholars supported by RSA scholarships increased from 2,062 in FY 2006 to 2,564 in FY 2007, exceeding the target number of 2,254.

Indicator 5: *Numbers Graduated: The number of RSA-supported scholars who graduate.*

The number of graduates reported to RSA increased from 786 in FY 2006 to 1,000 in FY 2007.

Indicator 6: *Percentage Working: The percentage of graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through acceptable employment will increase annually.*

In FY 2007, the percentage of graduates fulfilling their obligation through acceptable employment decreased compared to FY 2006 (80 percent for FY 2007 and 86 percent for FY 2006).

Objective b: *Maintain and upgrade the knowledge and skills of personnel currently employed in the public VR system.*

Indicator 1. *Qualified Personnel: The percentage of currently employed state VR agency counselors who meet their state's CSPD standard will increase annually.*

The percentage of staff who met their state's standard remained roughly stable from FY 2005 to FY 2007—73 percent in FY 2005, 71 percent in FY 2006, and 76 percent in FY 2007. These figures reflect continued efforts by RSA to increase counselor qualifications in state VR agencies despite high rates of turnover in state VR agencies as staff retire.

Indicator 2. Qualified Personnel: The percentage of public VR training participants who report an improvement in their knowledge and skills acquisition.

Data are not available for FY 2007.

Allocations

The allocation of rehabilitation training grant funds for FY 2007 is shown in Table 11 below. Funds will be used to provide critical training and professional development for counselors while addressing the overall personnel shortfall impacted by retirements.

Table 11. Rehabilitation Training Programs, by Number of Grants and Funding Amounts: Fiscal Year 2007

	Number of Awards FY 2007	Grant Amount
Long-Term Training		
Rehabilitation Counseling	69	\$9,661,760
Rehabilitation Administration	3	\$299,995
Rehabilitation Engineering	4	\$384,712
Vocational Evaluation-Adjustment	8	\$799,820
Rehabilitation of Mentally Ill	6	\$541,922
Rehabilitation Psychology	2	\$199,475
Undergraduate Education	19	\$1,424,419
Rehabilitation of the Blind	15	\$1,499,613
Rehabilitation of the Deaf	10	\$998,758
Job Development-Placement	9	\$896,910
CSPD Priority	12	\$2,274,820
Long-Term Training Totals	157	\$18,982,204
Short-Term Training		
Short-Term Training	2	\$449,993
Institute for Rehabilitation Issues	3	\$190,000
In-Service Training	77	\$5,528,123
Interpreter Training	6	\$2,093,316
Clearinghouse	1	\$300,000
RCEP: General & CRP	24	\$10,070,423
Totals	113	\$18,431,855
GRAND TOTALS	270	\$37,414,059

Source: U.S. Department of Education 2007f

Program Assessment Rating Tool Results

The Rehabilitation Training Program was assessed in 2006 using the PART and received an overall rating of "Adequate." A few deficiencies were identified and activities to improve performance are summarized below.

Deficiencies:

1. Budget requests are not explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and the resource needs are not presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget.
2. The program does not have procedures (e.g., competitive sourcing and cost comparisons, information technology improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution.
3. The program does not collect grantee performance data on an annual basis and make it available to the public in a transparent and meaningful manner.
4. Only to a small extent has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals.
5. Only to a small extent has the program (including program partners) achieved its annual performance goals.
6. The program does not demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year.
7. Only to a small extent do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results.

Planned Actions:

- Determine whether the Rehabilitation Training Program should be restructured in order to address emerging needs.
- Use existing outcome data to improve program management and direct priorities.
- Take significant steps to improve the accuracy of information on payback and numbers of counselors who met their CSPD standard.
- Make data on payback and numbers of counselors who met their CSPD standard available to the public.
- Calculate and analyze the efficiency measure data (cost per graduate) at the grantee level to establish targets and identify potential candidates for technical

assistance. In 2007 RSA staff began looking at ways to more accurately calculate this efficiency measure and plans to establish new baseline targets in 2008.

INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES

The Rehabilitation Training Program supports an Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) annual activity that funds efforts by the University of Arkansas and George Washington University to coordinate separate study groups comprising VR program experts from all facets of the VR program who come together to discuss and debate contemporary challenges to VR service delivery and develop and disseminate publications used to train VR professionals.

For 59 years the IRI has served to exemplify the unique partnerships among federal and state governments, university training programs, and persons served by VR agencies. IRI publications are posted on the two university websites (University of Arkansas and George Washington University). VR rehabilitation counselors can use and complete a questionnaire based on the content of IRI publications to maintain their certification and to earn continuing education credits.

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Topics Studied During FYs 2007 and 2008

- **Linking Federal Veterans Affairs (VA) Services and State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services**
- **The Aging Workforce**

EVALUATION, RESEARCH, AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

To improve the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, the *Rehabilitation Act* requires the distribution of practical and scientific information regarding state-of-the-art practices, scientific breakthroughs, and new knowledge about disabilities. To address those requirements, RSA funds and promotes a variety of research and demonstration projects, and training programs. RSA also funds a range of information dissemination projects designed to generate and make available critical data and information for targeted audiences.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Authorized Under Section 14 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

Section 14 mandates that RSA evaluate all programs authorized by the *Rehabilitation Act* using appropriate methodology and evaluative research design. The purpose of this mandate is to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in relation to their cost, impact on target populations, and mechanisms for delivery of services. The *Rehabilitation Act* requires the development of standards for evaluations and their use by those who are not involved in the administration of the program or project being evaluated. RSA relies significantly on evaluation studies to: obtain information on the operations and effects of the programs it administers; help make judgments about the programs' levels of success; and recommend decisions on how to improve them.

**Program Evaluation
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$1,473,120**

In FY 2007, program evaluation funds were used to continue two existing studies and to initiate one new study, listed below:

- **Evaluation of Projects Demonstrating the Use of Literacy Services by State VR Agencies to Improve the Earnings of Individuals with Disabilities** (Development Associates):

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess whether instruction in the Wilson Reading System and the provision of relevant support services, as carried out by five Department-funded model demonstration projects, have an impact on the literacy skills, utilization of postsecondary education, employability, and earning and benefits of VR consumers with poor literacy skills, particularly individuals with learning disabilities.

Study objectives are to:

1. Describe the literacy and related services provided at each project;
2. Assess the impact of the literacy intervention and related services on (a) literacy skills; (b) postsecondary education and/or training; and (c) earnings and benefits for VR consumers;
3. Identify factors and conditions correlated with successful outcomes, such as hours and duration of literacy services, VR and support services received, and accommodations provided to support literacy instruction;
4. Document whether certain types or profiles of VR consumers seem to benefit more from literacy interventions;
5. Identify promising practices demonstrated by the projects; and
6. Identify challenges and barriers to effective provision of literacy and related services to individuals with disabilities by VR programs.

The contract was modified in FY 2007 to support follow-up data collections at six and 12 months after a project participant's VR case is closed. These data will assist in determining the degree to which individuals have progressed in employment and pursued additional education and/or services, and the participants' perceptions of the usefulness of the literacy services. The contractor will be conducting follow-up activities in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The final report is expected in 2009.

- **Long-Term Post-Program Experiences of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Consumers (Westat):**

This multiyear national study, initiated at the end of FY 2005, focuses on the post-program experiences of four subgroups of former VR consumers in the years following their participation in the VR services program. These four subgroups of VR consumers are: transitioning youths, individuals with mental retardation, individuals with mental illness, and persons receiving Social Security disability benefits. Individuals in these groups face unique challenges in achieving long-term employment success. The *Post Vocational Rehabilitation Experiences Study (PVRES)* is designed to determine the degree to which these former VR consumers make satisfactory progress in employment, identify post-closure services that may assist them, and discover variables that may impede their long-term success. The study will document the long-term outcomes of these consumers (employment status, earnings, and reductions in federal benefits) and examine the role of post-employment services in enhancing these outcomes. Of particular interest are ongoing VR services that: (1) assist persons with the most significant disabilities in maintaining stable employment and (2) support the career advancement goals of persons desiring to improve their employment experiences. In addition, supported employment outcomes for these individuals will be noted for secondary analysis. Using a baseline interview and two annual follow-up interviews, the contractor will collect data to form a nationally representative sample of VR consumers in these subgroups who recently exited the program.

- **Targeted Studies of State VR Agency Practices (Research Triangle Institute)**

In FY 2007, RSA initiated targeted studies to examine three aspects of state VR agency practices—the use of cooperative agreements, comprehensive rehabilitation centers, and state VR agency quality assurance practices and procedures.

Cooperative Arrangements

Historically, some state VR agencies have used sources of matching funds other than state general revenue fund appropriations to meet the state VR Services program's match requirements. Available data indicate that, for some states, sources other than direct state appropriations account for up to 30 percent of the total matching funds. One such source is third-party cooperative arrangements. Reliance upon third-party agreements affects the overall performance of VR agencies. It may also affect the scope of services and the populations served by the VR program. The purpose of this study is to determine how widespread the use of cooperative agreements is among state VR agencies, the effects and outcomes of such cooperative agreements and their cost effectiveness.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers

Eight states provide VR services, in part, through a comprehensive rehabilitation center (CRC). A CRC provides VR training, counseling, and medical support and has a residential component. It is not clear to what extent states that support a CRC

achieve different outcomes, or have a difference in the cost of services or return on investment compared to other states. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of CRC consumers and to determine the extent to which states that support a CRC achieve different outcomes, or have differences in the cost of services or return on investment compared to other states.

State VR Agency Quality Assurance Procedures

State VR agencies employ a variety of delivery models and mechanisms to provide services. Some agencies use quality assurance (QA) techniques to ensure that agency activities are being performed appropriately (e.g., in accordance with regulations), efficiently, and effectively. However, it is not known to what extent VR agencies employ any standardized model or QA techniques to ensure that services are provided in accordance with either federal standards or with state policies and requirements. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which VR agencies perform QA and program evaluation functions, how well these functions are performed, the results that are attributable to QA and/or program evaluation functions, and what practices are effective.

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Vocational Rehabilitation

In FY 2007, evaluation funds were also used to jointly support a five-year RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation with the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. Their joint efforts will be to develop systematic knowledge of the variations in complex and dynamic state-level employment structures, and the VR program's role and position within them. New knowledge from this research center will provide the VR program with an empirical context in which services and service delivery systems and mechanisms can be designed to optimize VR outcomes and the employment of individuals with disabilities. This RRTC will conduct research on the complex employment service delivery structures for individuals with disabilities, investigate "best VR practices" in certain critical areas, and provide training and technical assistance to improve VR services and employment outcomes among people with disabilities.

In addition, fiscal year 2007 funds were used to develop an evaluation design and model annual performance reports to be used by grantees conducting model projects demonstrating the use of promising transition practices in improving the postsecondary education and employment outcomes of youths with disabilities. Funds were awarded in same year under the Demonstration and Training program.

INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

Authorized Under Section 15 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM), located at Utah State University in Logan, Utah, responds to inquiries and provides the public with

information about activities affecting the rehabilitation community. Inquiries usually come from individuals with disabilities, their families, national organizations, other federal and state agencies, information providers, the news media, and the general public. Most inquiries are related to federal funding, legislation affecting individuals with disabilities, and federal programs and policies. These inquiries are often referred to other appropriate sources of disability-related information and assistance.

Periodically, the NCRTM staff analyzes all forms of inquiries to assess current information needs. Based on these analyses, fact sheets and other relevant publications and resources are developed and made available to the public.

Historically, NCRTM disseminated materials by sending hard copies to customers, who were charged copy and mailing costs. Since relocating to Utah State University, the NCRTM's dissemination program has been digitized, a change that has resulted in the elimination of waste and increased efficiency in reaching constituents.

During FY 2007, NCRTM sold 8,014 items to customers. These print pieces were primarily VR career marketing materials. During this time, NCRTM digitized all of the NCRTM "hard copy" holdings. Digital versions are available to constituents online, free of charge, through the NCRTM website. The NCRTM newsletter is e-mailed quarterly to approximately 1,200 individuals.

Website usage data is collected through Google Analytics. During FY 2007, there were 14,443 visits to the website, with 9,607 unique visitors, 62 percent of whom were new. There were 12,520 visits from within the United States and 1,923 visits from 106 other countries. The average number of page views per visit were 3.21.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH
Authorized Under Sections 200–204 of the Rehabilitation Act
Managed by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Created in 1978, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) conducts comprehensive and coordinated programs of research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities. Activities funded by NIDRR promote full inclusion and integration into society; employment; independent living; maintenance of health and function; and the transfer of rehabilitation technology to individuals with disabilities. NIDRR activities are designed to improve the economic and social self-sufficiency of these individuals, with particular emphasis on improving the effectiveness of services authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*.

**National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$106,705,170**

NIDRR's primary role is to provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of research and related activities to advance knowledge, and inform and improve

policy, practice, and system capacity to maximize the inclusion and social integration, health, function, employment, and independent living of individuals of all ages with disabilities.

To perform this role, NIDRR supports rehabilitation research and development centers, demonstration projects, and related activities, including training rehabilitation service providers and those who conduct rehabilitation research. In addition, NIDRR supports projects to disseminate information about and promote the use of developments in rehabilitation procedures, methods, and devices. Information is provided to rehabilitation professionals and to persons with disabilities and their representatives.

NIDRR also supports data analyses on the demographics of those with disabilities and provides that information to policymakers, administrators, and other relevant groups.

NIDRR's Research Programs and Selected Accomplishments for 2007

NIDRR is unique among the offices within OSERS. In contrast to RSA and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), which implement and monitor nationwide service and compliance programs, NIDRR fulfills its mission through targeted investments in research, dissemination, and capacity-building activities across 11 discretionary grant-making authorities. Grants are competitive, with applications reviewed by panels of experts, including rehabilitation professionals, rehabilitation researchers, and persons with disabilities.

NIDRR's grant authorities are described below along with selected accomplishments that highlight how the results of NIDRR-funded programs contribute to the goals of Title II of the *Rehabilitation Act*. Accomplishments from three other types of NIDRR activities are also reported under the subheadings of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research, NIDRR Management, and Peer-Reviewed Publications. All reported accomplishments consist of either *outputs* or *outcomes*.¹² *Outputs* are the direct result of NIDRR-funded research and related activities and include products resulting from a program's activities (e.g., study findings or publications) provided to audiences beyond the project conducting the activities. *Outcomes*, on the other hand, describe the intended results of NIDRR-funded activities for beneficiaries (e.g., researchers and rehabilitation professionals) and include advances in knowledge and understanding, and improvements in policy, practice, and system capacity.

1. Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs) conduct coordinated, integrated and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination to improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems. These efforts work to alleviate or stabilize disabling conditions and promote maximum social and economic

¹² See Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Performance Measurement Challenges and Strategies at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/challenges_strategies/. This document provides definitions of key terms and practical strategies for addressing common performance measurement challenges.

independence for individuals with disabilities. RRTCs also provide graduate, preservice, and in-service training to rehabilitation personnel so they may improve the provision of rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. In addition, they serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for providers and for individuals with disabilities and their representatives. RRTCs develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technologies that are intended to maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals into society, especially those with significant disabilities. For example, the centers improve outcomes in the areas of employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency. Awards are for five years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years. The following are accomplishments of the RRTC program for FY 2007:

- The RRTC on Personal Assistance Services published a peer-reviewed article comparing the long-term care expenditures of participants receiving Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers (which require that participants have an institutional level of care need) and of those receiving Medicaid institutional care (Kitchener, M., Ng, T., Miller, N., and Harrington, C. (2006). Institutional and Community-Based Long-Term Care: A Comparative Estimate of Public Costs, *Journal of Health and Social Policy*, 22(2), 31-50). Using data from 2002, the authors estimate that when compared with Medicaid institutional care, HCBS waivers produced a national average public expenditure saving of \$43,947 per participant. This finding challenged previous Congressional Budget Office analyses, which estimated that the then pending Medicaid Community Attendant Services Act (MiCASA) was cost prohibitive. Expert panelists from NIDRR's Annual Performance Assessment Expert Review (APAER) on Participation and Community Living deemed this publication to be of high quality and a contribution to the field. There is pressing need for rigorous scientific information on comparative costs of community-based and institutional care to inform the long-term care policy in the United States.
- The RRTC on Aging with Developmental Disabilities published a peer-reviewed article describing results of a comparative longitudinal study of the effects of consumer-directed services on adults with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families (Caldwell, J., Heller, T. and Taylor, S. (2007) Longitudinal Outcomes of a Consumer-directed Program Supporting Adults With Developmental Disabilities and Their Families. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 161-173). Key findings from the study indicate that, over a period of nine years, families who participated in a consumer-directed program supporting adults with DD had more of their service needs for occupational therapy, social and recreational activities, educational and vocational services, and assistance in obtaining benefits met than did families on the waiting list.

When they participated in a consumer-directed program, participating families also reported higher service satisfaction, increased community participation, and decreased caregiver burden. Expert panelists from NIDRR's APAER on Participation

and Community Living designated this publication as one that advances knowledge by providing rigorous longitudinal data and analysis to inform policy makers and service providers on the benefits of consumer-directed support programs for adults with DD.

- With NIDRR funding and support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the RRTC on Disability in Rural Communities developed, evaluated, and experimentally demonstrated the cost effectiveness of the Living Well with a Disability program, designed to help adults with disabilities prevent and better manage their secondary conditions. Evidence of the positive outcomes of the program is contained in a series of peer-reviewed articles, the most recent of which was published in 2007. This article describes the development of the program and documents the results of the evaluation (Ravesloot, C. H., Seekins, T., Cahill, T., Lindgren, S., Nary, D.E., White, G. (2006). Health Promotion for People with Disabilities: Development and Evaluation of the Living Well with a Disability Program. *Health Education Research*; 22, 522–531). The Living Well with a Disability program has contributed to significant changes in practice, improved health outcomes for adults with disabilities, and demonstrated cost effectiveness. By the end of FY 2007, 151 agencies, including centers for independent living, state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, and public health and community rehabilitation facilities in 31 states had adopted the Living Well with a Disability program. Also, during this time, more than 516 program facilitators had been trained. Moreover, results from a randomized effectiveness study, in which center for independent living consumers were randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions, determined in a cost-effectiveness analysis that program participants experienced a total increase of 49,123 symptom-free days. This resulted in an estimated savings to third-party insurers of between \$3.9 million and \$6.6 million.
- The RRTC on Disability in Rural Communities published a peer-reviewed article describing the development of a new dynamic measure of participation, based on the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning (ICF) and using ecological momentary assessment (EMA), the observations of events reported as they occur rather than as retrospective reports, as the data collection methodology (Seekins, T., Ipsen, C., & Arnold, A. (2007). Using Ecological Momentary Assessment to measure participation: A preliminary study, *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 52(3), 319-330). While participation in the community and social roles is emerging as one of the key outcome measures in disability and rehabilitation research, few methods exist for measuring participation that take into account the ICF definition of disability based on the interaction of person and environmental factors. The new measure described in the article was developed and validated using personal data assistants (PDAs) programmed to prompt five residents of a rural community to report their location, activity, social contact, environmental barriers and facilitators, secondary conditions, and ratings of community connectedness and fulfillment. Data were collected on 1,352 engagements over seven weeks, and preliminary results indicate that participants reported greater community connectedness and fulfillment when they spent time with others, were

not at home, and were not experiencing barriers or secondary conditions. NIDRR's 2007 APAER on Participation and Community Living deemed the new tool to be potentially helpful in closing this gap. The new tool provides empirical support for the ecological model of disability, the view that disability is the outcome of the interaction between an individual and the environment rather than simply a medical condition.

2. Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) focus on rehabilitation technology, including rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology devices and services. The purpose of the RERC program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*. It does this by conducting advanced engineering research and development on innovative technologies designed to solve particular rehabilitation problems or remove environmental barriers. RERCs also demonstrate and evaluate such technologies, facilitate service delivery systems changes, stimulate the production and distribution of equipment in the private sector and provide training opportunities to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to become researchers and practitioners of rehabilitation technology. Awards are for five years, except that grants to new recipients or to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years. The following are accomplishments of the RERC program for 2007:

- The RERC on Universal Interface and Information Technology Access produced a successful working prototype of the Universal Remote Console Communication (URCC) Hub, which enables individuals with disabilities to use information technology (IT) interfaces to access and use mainstream products. For example, a product that commonly has physical buttons and a display screen can be accessed and used by individuals with a wide range of input techniques, including sip and puff system, eye gaze system, augmentative communication device, or a Braille device. By providing mechanisms to allow specialized interfaces to control mainstream products, the URC control hub provides a means for individuals to access products they would not otherwise be able to control. The Hub was validated through testing with existing universal plug and play devices that are available commercially and multiple universal remote console implementations. Results were presented at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, in January 2007.
- The RERC on Technology for Successful Aging produced a working prototype of the Smart House System, designed to support community living, health, and safety for adults aging with long-term disabilities and for those aging into disabilities. The Smart House System assists, guides and/or monitors residents in the home and can be used by distant care providers. The prototype includes features such as voice-activated door opening, person location-recognition, and remote monitoring capability. To validate the Smart House System, trials were run with graduate students, followed by focus groups, and live-in trials with older persons with disabilities. The prototype Smart House System has been incorporated into the University of Florida Gator Tech Smart House, and corporate partners have agreed

to work with the RERC in commercializing this system. A description of the Smart House System is available in Helal, A., Mokhtari, M., Abdulrazak, B. (2008). *The Engineering Handbook on Smart Technology for Aging, Disability and Independence*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons. In addition, one of the components developed for the Gator Tech Smart House is a sensor platform called *Atlas* and is described at: <http://www.pervasa.com/AHP.php>.¹³



- The RERC on Accessible Public Transportation successfully developed new standards for accessible lavatories on aircraft. The *Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)* requires an accessible lavatory on board twin aisle aircraft, but there is no clear definition of what is meant by “accessible.” As a result, individuals with disabilities face inconsistent lavatory facilities when they travel by air. The development of the new standard for an accessible lavatory defines in very specific terms the parameters for an accessible lavatory. The standard also provides technical specifications for many of the lavatory amenities. The standard was developed by harmonizing international guidelines, in partnership with the aviation industry, and informed by the biomechanics research work done by the grantee during this RERC funding cycle. The new standards were validated by the aircraft manufacturing industry. It is anticipated that the new standards will be incorporated into federal regulations and contribute to increased participation among individuals with disabilities, especially those with mobility and sensory impairments, by providing a common, more inclusive, design base for all new accessible aircraft lavatories for the next generation of aircraft. Below is a photograph of the working version of the accessible lavatory standards, which are available at <http://ncat.oregonstate.edu/projects/lavatories.html>. A description of these standards is also available in a paper on the RERC’s website at: http://ncat.oregonstate.edu/pubs/TRANSED/1095_Lav_Standards.pdf.¹⁴
- The RERC on Wheelchair Transportation Safety successfully developed the Draft International Standard (DIS) for Seating Systems for Use in Motor Vehicles. Developed under the auspices of the International Organization for Standardization

Photo courtesy of the RERC on
Wheelchair Transportation Safety

¹³ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for Successful Aging (H133E010106; <http://www.phhp.ufl.edu/centers/lerc.htm>), University of Florida (William Mann, principal investigator).

¹⁴ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Accessible Public Transportation (H133E030009; <http://people.oregonstate.edu/~hunterzk/ncat/>), Oregon State University (Katharine Hunter-Zaworski, principal investigator).

(ISO), this standard provides design and performance requirements and associated test methods for independent evaluation of wheelchair seating systems relative to their use as seats in motor vehicles. The RERC also developed the specifications for the surrogate wheelchair base used for testing the crash performance of a wheelchair seating system. The surrogate base was validated by the RERC and results presented in a 2006 Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America conference proceeding.

By developing guidelines to support the independent evaluation of wheelchair seating systems for use in motor vehicles, the draft standard is expected to benefit individuals with disabilities across the major life domains of employment, health and function, and participation by increasing the safety of vehicular transportation.

- The RERC on Accessible Medical Instrumentation successfully developed prototypes for two new tools for evaluating the accessibility of medical equipment. These prototypes could serve as the basis for designing accessible medical equipment primarily for use in the delivery of healthcare services to individuals with physical disabilities. Center staff served as the primary authors for two guidelines governing the design of accessible medical devices (ANSI/AAMI HE-75: Human Factors Engineering–Design of Medical Devices, and RERC-AMI–clause #16 of 25, Accessibility Consideration) and provided key consulting to the U.S. Department of Justice on ensuring equal access to medical services and accessible medical equipment, including holding discussions regarding refining definitions and enforcement mechanisms under the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, as well as processes, procedures, and policies. The definitive reference for accessible medical instrumentation, published by the Center, is *Medical Instrumentation: Accessibility and Usability Considerations*, ed. Winters, J. and M. F. Story. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2007.¹⁵

3. Disability and Rehabilitation Research and Related Projects

The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project (DRRP) program supports projects that carry out one or more of the following activities: research, development, demonstration, training, dissemination, utilization, and technical assistance. The purpose of the DRRP program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities. These activities are intended to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency. The program also works to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*.

NIDRR funds four types of DRRPs: (1) Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (KDU) projects; (2) Model Systems in Traumatic Brain Injury and Burn Injury, described hereafter under Model Systems; (3) Disability and Business Technical Assistance

¹⁵ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Accessible Medical Instrumentation (H133E020729; <http://www.erc-ami.org/ami/>), Marquette University (Jack Winters and Molly Follette Story, principal investigators).

Centers (DBTAC) projects; and (4) individual research projects. The first three types of DRRPs operate as separate programs and are discussed later in this report. Therefore, only research DRRPs are described here under the general DRRP heading. Research DRRPs differ from RRTCs and RERCs in their support of short-term research related to the development of methods, procedures, and devices to assist in the provision of rehabilitation services, particularly to persons with significant disabilities. Awards are for five years, except that grants to support new or innovative research may be made for less than five years. The following are accomplishments for research DRRPs for 2007:

- Research on obesity resulted in documentation of the high prevalence of obesity and physical inactivity among youths with pre-existing disabilities. Findings published in a 2007 peer-reviewed journal article indicate that youths with disabilities are three times more likely to be obese than youths without disabilities and 50 percent more likely to be physically inactive compared to youths without disabilities (Rimmer, J. H., Rowland, J.L. and Yamaki, K., (2007). Obesity and secondary conditions in adolescents with disabilities: Addressing the needs of an underserved population. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 224-229). While it is widely recognized that obese and overweight adolescents are at a higher risk of negative health consequences in adulthood, little information existed regarding the significant disparities in obesity prevalence between youths with and without disabilities prior to this NIDRR-funded research. These findings are contributing to advancing knowledge among public health and rehabilitation professionals regarding the magnitude of obesity among youths with disabilities and pointing the way to potential strategies for reducing this significant health risk.
- The DRRP on Innovative, Collaborative Research on Interpreter Training, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Psychological Testing successfully adapted two of the most important tests in the Wechsler Memory Scale (i.e., the Logical Memory subtest and the Paired Associates Test) for use with deaf individuals who sign. The newly created tests are the Signed Paired Associates Test (or SPAT) and the American Sign Language (ALS) Stories Test, which address cognitive functioning, learning, and memory. Results of validation testing indicate that the SPAT has utility as a test of verbal learning and memory for sign language users and provides evidence of validity in detecting cognitive impairment in this population. The ALS Stories Test shows promise as a verbal memory research and clinical tool. Based on this research, practitioners will be able to diagnose a broad range of cognitive disabilities and conditions in deaf individuals, such as brain injury, stroke, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and learning disability. This research has the potential to significantly enhance medical, educational, and vocational interventions, and help prevent inappropriate diagnoses of mental illness in this population. A description of the methods used to create these tests and the results of validation testing are available in a 2007 peer-reviewed publication (Pollard, R., DeMatteo, A., Lentz, E., Rediess, S. (2007). A prose recall test using stories in American Sign Language.

Rehabilitation Psychology, 52, 11-24). For additional details see: <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/dwc/scholarship/Equity.htm>).¹⁶

4. Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (KDU)

NIDRR's KDU projects, referred to as Knowledge Translation (KT) projects in the *NIDRR Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2005–09*, support information utilization and dissemination, to ensure that knowledge generated from research is available and can be used to improve services, opportunities, and conditions for persons with disabilities. Through this program, NIDRR reaches many constituencies, including research scientists, people with disabilities and their families, service providers, policymakers, educators, human resource developers, advocates, and entities covered by the *ADA* and others. In carrying out this part of its mission, NIDRR's challenge is to reach diverse and changing populations, to present research results in many different and accessible formats, and to use technology appropriately. In addition to requiring grantees to engage in dissemination of research results, demonstration, training, and other activities, NIDRR supports a range of centers that address other aspects of its mission, such as providing information on specific disabilities or information to target audiences. These projects work collaboratively with each other and with NIDRR centers through the publication of materials, Web-based communication, and participation in meetings of project directors. The following are accomplishments for KDU projects for FY 2007:

- Five NIDRR grantees received additional Research Utilization Awards (RUAs) under the Research Utilization Support and Help (RUSH) project. These grantees proposed projects that promoted the use of their research findings in targeted, measurable ways among members of a specific audience. One such RUA went to Disability Access, Inc, which, under a previous NIDRR-funded Small Business Innovative Research grant to Spirit Lake Consulting (H133S050165; see also <http://www.spiritleakeconsulting.com/>; this site was last accessed on June 15, 2008) developed a website on disability issues for Native American audiences. Disability Access used the RUA funding to develop a companion Web-based tutorial on the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) process and to conduct workshops and general outreach to seven reservations aimed at increasing knowledge of and participation in the IEP process by tribal members with disabilities and their families. Disability Access also used the RUA funding to do research on how best to disseminate information among Native Americans in their region, the results of which are contained in a final report available on the RUSH website at: <http://www.researchutilization.org/partners/ruas/rua12/>.¹⁷
- The National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) developed and implemented a Web-based training for NIDRR grantees titled *Developing*

¹⁶ Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project on Toward Equity: Innovative, collaborative research on interpreter training, DBT and psychological testing (H133A031105; <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/dwc/scholarship/Equity.htm>), University of Rochester, (Robert Pollard, principal investigator).

¹⁷ Disability Rehabilitation Research Project on Research Utilization Support and Help (RUSH) Project (H133A031402; <http://www.researchutilization.org>), SEDL (John Westbrook, principal investigator).

Evidence-Based Products Using the Systematic Review Process. The objective of the course was to build capacity among NIDRR grantees to contribute to a new Disability Coordinating Group within the international Campbell Collaboration. The purpose of this coordinating group is to strengthen the evidence base within rehabilitation through systematic reviews of disability research. The course, implemented by NCDDR, was designed for upper-level graduate students and post-doctoral trainees, as well as early career and experienced researchers. Training covered the steps in the systematic review process through 18 hours of online, interactive sessions. Course instructors were active members of the Campbell Collaboration's Education Coordinating Group. Participants included 27 individuals organized in nine teams from NIDRR-funded projects. All course participants committed to developing one of the following three written products by September 2008:¹⁸

- **A scoping review**, which assesses the breadth of research available by mapping the literature base and identifying sources of evidence but does not include the quantitative synthesis typical of a systematic review.
- **A rapid evidence assessment review**, which identifies and summarizes the most accessible, current evidence to guide policy decisions.
- **A systematic review**, which involves the collection, evaluation, analysis, and synthesis of all published and unpublished data available on a topic.

All approved products will be posted on the NCDDR website at <http://www.ncddr.org> and will be publicized to NIDRR and its grantees.

- The Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE) hosted the international conference *Sharing Knowledge Through the International Classification of Functioning (ICF)*, June 5–7, 2007, in Niagara Falls, N.Y., which was attended by 100 persons representing 12 nations and four World Health Organization (WHO) Family of International Classifications Collaborating Centers. The purpose of the three-day conference was to share scientific activities, connect the expertise of professionals from different countries, and enhance international collaboration in disability and rehabilitation research. The conference theme, sharing knowledge through the *ICF*, points to the role of the ICF framework in making it possible for researchers to communicate about disability across nationalities, cultures, languages, and professions. For more information on the conference sessions and names of presenters, go to the Conference Program booklet on the CIRRIE website:
<http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/icf/conference/program.pdf>.¹⁹

¹⁸ Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) (H133A060028; <http://www.ncddr.org>), SEDL (John Westbrook, principal investigator).

¹⁹ Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE-2) (H133A050008; <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu>), University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, (John Stone, principal investigator).

- NIDRR contractors from ABLEDATA continued to provide technical assistance and to serve as representatives to the International Organization for Standardization’s subcommittee responsible for developing the ISO 9999 for assistive products for persons with disabilities. The ISO 9999 is a function-oriented classification of assistive products for persons with disabilities, developed by an international body of representative organizations from numerous countries including the U.S. This activity came to successful fruition in March 2007 with the official publication of the fourth edition of ISO 9999, *Assistive products for persons with a disability—Classification and terminology*. The participation of a NIDRR grantee in this ISO working group is significant as it places NIDRR at the forefront of the development of this important taxonomy. It will be used internationally by individuals with disabilities, researchers, medical professionals, assistive product manufacturers and distributors, and others with an interest in the assistive technology field. The latest 2007 version of the ISO 9999 classification can be found on the International Organization for Standardization website at:
http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=38894²⁰

5. Model Systems

Model Systems projects conduct research activities across all of NIDRR’s LRP research domains. For example, in the Health and Function domain, model systems projects address challenges to individual care, rehabilitation services, and supports for people with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury. Other projects associated with these three model systems focus on the Employment and Participation and Community living LRP domains and test the effectiveness of social interventions in terms of enhancing options for workplace and community reintegration for individuals with these disabilities. TBI and burn model systems are funded as Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects. The SCI Model System is funded under its own authority (34 *CFR* 359—Disability and Rehabilitation Research: Special Projects and Demonstrations for Spinal Cord Injuries). The following are accomplishments for Model Systems projects for 2007:

- The National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (NSCISC) published a peer-reviewed article based on data collected from 24,332 SCI patients injured between 1973 and 2006 and follow-up data on 9,225 of these patients (DeVivo, MJ, Trends in spinal cord injury rehabilitation outcomes from model systems in the United States: 1973–2006, *Spinal Cord* (2007) 45, 713–721). Key findings from this longitudinal research point to improvements in SCI rehabilitation outcomes that are in part attributable to the model of comprehensive care funded under the NIDRR Model Systems. These findings include: “the probability of neurologic improvement from admission to discharge increased; the odds of medical complications decreased during in-patient treatment, but increased post-discharge; rehospitalizations declined over time; community integration improved; and first year mortality rates improved, but

²⁰ ABLEDATA (Contract No. ED-02-CO-0038; see also ED -04-CO-0018/0007) to ORC Macro (<http://www.abledata.com>) (Katherine Belknap, principal investigator).

longer term mortality rates showed no improvement.” A copy of this publication is available to the public at:

<http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=99873>.²¹

- Research conducted by the Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems at the JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute led to the successful application of a widely available functional neuroimaging technology to assess cognitive functioning and provide additional prognostic information for persons with TBI who are unable to provide consistent behavioral responses. Findings from this research provide convincing evidence that functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) is an effective technological tool for assessing cognitive processing in patients with disorders of consciousness and may help guide treatment interventions in this underserved population. The grantee has published several peer-reviewed journal articles based on this research, including a 2006 review of “Functional neuroimaging applications for assessment and rehabilitation planning in patients with disorders of consciousness” (Giacino, J., Hirsch, J., Schiff, N., and Laureys, S. *Archives of Physical Medicine Rehabilitation*, Vol 87, Suppl 2, December 2006). The model system at JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute also brought widespread attention to the issues of severe TBI by playing a central role in the 2003 HBO documentary “COMA,”. The documentary traces the recovery of four JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute patients with severe TBI and their families to help educate the public about comas and related disorders of consciousness as well as the treatment options available to patients with these conditions. (For details see: <http://comadocumentary.org/about.html>).²²
- Researchers at the Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS) successfully developed and validated a social communication skills training program for individuals with TBI. Individuals who have experienced TBI frequently have difficulties with pragmatic communication skills. These difficulties are associated with decreased societal participation, social integration, and satisfaction with life. Results of the validation testing showed that people who received the training had improved communication skills, as well as increases in overall life satisfaction. A description of the development and the efficacy of the social communication skills training program are available in the following peer-reviewed journal article: Dahlberg, C., Cusick, C., Hawley, L., Newman, J., Morey, C., Harrison-Felix, C., Whiteneck, G. (2007). Treatment Efficacy of Social Communication Skills Training After Traumatic Brain Injury: A Randomized Treatment and Deferred Treatment Controlled Trial. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 88, 1561-1573.²³

²¹ National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (NSCISC) (H133A060039). University of Alabama/Birmingham (Yuying Chen, principal investigator).

²² JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems (H133A020518; see also H133A070030; <http://www.njrehab.org>) (Keith Cicerone, principal investigator).

²³ The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS) (H133A020510; see also: H133A070022), Craig Hospital. (Gale Whiteneck, principal investigator).

6. Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)

The DBTACs are a network of 10 regional centers that provide information, training, and technical assistance to businesses and agencies with responsibilities under the *ADA*. An additional grantee serves as an *ADA* technical assistance coordinator and assists the 10 regional centers with their activities. DBTACs are responsible for providing technical assistance, disseminating information and providing training to individuals or entities with responsibilities and rights under the *Rehabilitation Act* on the requirements of *ADA* and developments in *ADA* case law, policy, and implementation. DBTACs are also responsible for increasing the capacity of organizations at the state and local levels to provide technical assistance, disseminate information, provide training, and promote awareness of *ADA* requirements. DBTACs also promote the availability of services provided by the DBTACs, other NIDRR grantees working on *ADA* issues, and other federal information sources on *ADA*. The following is an accomplishment for the DBTAC program for 2007:

- Using Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data, the Coordination, Outreach and Research Center (CORC), which is part of the Disability Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) system, examined the specific nature and scope of workplace discrimination grievances filed under the *ADA*, including profiles of discrimination related to types of disability, industry, race and ethnicity, and employers' characteristics. The results of these analyses, published in peer-reviewed journals, provide some of the first empirical data on the effects of the *ADA*. This research can be used to inform future changes in policy and practice related to the employment of people with disabilities. For example, key findings from a 2007 article indicated that: (1) allegations of workplace discrimination were more likely to reach merit resolution in favor of the claimant, signifying that actual discrimination did occur when allegations were made against skilled nursing, intermediate care, and personal care facilities than when they were made against hospitals and home health providers; and (2) race predicted closure status, with persons of mixed ethnic heritage, Asian Americans, and Native Americans most likely to have merit closures (i.e., experience actual discrimination) (Tartaglia, A., McMahon, B.T., West, S.L., Belongia, L., and Lhier-Beach, L. (2007). Workplace discrimination and healthcare: The National EEOC ADA Research Project. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 27(3), 1-7). (For abstracts of these articles search under the name of the author, "Tartaglia," in the NARIC REHABDATA-Connection at: http://www.naric.com/services/rehab_connect.cfm).²⁴

7. Field-Initiated Projects

Field-Initiated Projects (FIPs) conduct research and development activities that address topics and issues identified by researchers. Most FIP awards are made for three years. The following are accomplishments for the FIP program for 2007:

²⁴ Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers: Coordination, Outreach, and Research Center (H133A060087; (<http://www.adata.org>), Virginia Commonwealth University (Brian T. McMahon, principal investigator).

- The FIP “Cross Watch: Development of an Intersection Information System for Blind Travelers Based on Computer Vision” successfully developed new software to assist blind pedestrians. The new software can be implemented on small computing platforms such as cell phones to convey information about the environment (e.g., presence and orientation of a crosswalk) to a blind user. For more information on this innovation see: Coughlan, J., Shen, H. (2006). A Fast Algorithm for Finding Crosswalks using Figure-Ground Segmentation. 2nd Workshop on Applications of Computer Vision. Graz, Austria: ECCV. ²⁵
- The FIP “Interference in Hearing Aids from Digital Wireless Telephones: Improved Predictive Methods” contributed to the successful development of *American National Standard Methods of Measurement of Compatibility Between Wireless Communications Devices and Hearing Aids*. This standard specifies methods for measuring interference in a hearing aid produced by wireless communication devices, such as cellular telephones. Because of their complexity, standardized procedures are needed for these measurements to allow researchers, telephone companies, hearing aid manufactures, and other interested groups to have a common basis for comparing experimental results and for complying with regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Development of this standard was a group effort involving industry, consumer advocates, and independent researchers, including the FIP. The data and theoretical predictions obtained by the project during the preceding year were included in the standard. The standard is important because hearing aid manufacturers and wireless telephone manufacturers rate their products using procedures defined in the standard. These ratings provide consumers with a simple index of the level of interference to be expected when using a given wireless telephone and hearing aid. The FCC requires wireless telephone manufacturers to produce telephones that meet an acceptable level of interference in terms of this index. The ANSI C63.19-2007 was published by the American National Standards Institute on March 29, 2007 (E-ISBN: 978-0-7381-5614-9). To view the citation and abstract for the ANSI C63.19-2007 see: http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/freeabs_all.jsp?tp=&arnumber=4233252&isnumber=4233251. ²⁶

8. Small Business Innovation Research

The intent of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, as mandated under the *Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2000*, is to help support the development of new ideas and projects that are useful to persons with disabilities by inviting the participation of small business firms with strong research capabilities in science, engineering, or educational technology. Small businesses must meet certain eligibility criteria to participate: the company must be American-owned and

²⁵ Field Initiated [Research] Project on Cross Watch: Development of an Intersection Information System for Blind Travelers Based on Computer Vision (H133G030080), Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute (John Brabyn, principal investigator).

²⁶ Field Initiated [Research] Project on Interference in Hearing Aids from Digital Wireless Telephones: Improved Predictive Methods (H133G050228), Advanced Hearing Concepts (Harry Levitt, principal investigator).

independently operated; it must be for-profit and employ no more than 500 employees; and the principal researcher must be employed by the business. Government-wide, this program funds small businesses in three phases, although NIDRR and the Department of Education participate only in the first two of these phases. During Phase I, firms conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of an idea. During Phase II, firms expand on the results of Phase I and pursue further development. In Phase III, the program focuses on helping small businesses find funding in the private sector to move innovations from the laboratory into the marketplace. The following are accomplishments for SBIR projects for 2007:

- The SBIR on Multimedia Literacy Software for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Visual Learners successfully developed the software for the “Sign Smith Studio 3.0 Authoring Tool” for American Sign Language (ASL) users. This tool allows easy creation of curriculum-specific content where animated characters sign the information to make it accessible to students or anyone who could benefit from sign language. Additional features of the Sign Smith Studio 3.0, such as background and foreground images, allow the creator of content to personalize the videos for the student or the curriculum. Providing animated sign language content to students in their primary language is expected to benefit the deaf and hard-of-hearing population both inside and outside the classroom. For a description and demonstration of the Sign Smith Studio product see: <http://www.vcom3d.com/index.php?id=ssstudio>.²⁷

²⁷ Small Business Innovation Research, Phase II, on Multimedia Literacy Software for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Visual Learners, (H133S050137), Vcom3D, Inc., (<http://www.vcom3d.com>) (Edward Sims, principal investigator)

- CreateAbility refined a *SoundAlert* system to improve sound recognition technology, reduce the weight of the technology for portable applications, and enhance a user's sense of safety, security, and independence. Developed initially under a previous NIDRR-funded Phase I SBIR, *SoundAlert* is a fixed-location network of sound sensors to help people with serious-to-profound hearing loss become aware of critical sound-related events in home or workplace settings. The network consists of small, battery-powered sound sensors that wirelessly report into a central unit, which presents the notification of the sound alert to the individual on a Pocket PC via pictures and captions. The system enables outbound and inbound communication with emergency services in response to emergency events, thus alleviating a major concern of the deaf and hard-of-hearing for their personal safety. *SoundAlert* also addresses a significant problem through the ability to consolidate alerts, emergency information, and alarms on a single platform, which can bridge a critical gap for the nonhearing population and facilitate rescue and evacuation operations. (A description of the *SoundAlert* system is available at: <http://www.createabilityinc.com/soundalert.html>).²⁸

9. Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) projects increase the rehabilitation field's capacity to conduct high-quality rehabilitation research. It does this by supporting grants to institutions that provide advanced training in research to physicians, nurses, engineers, physical therapists, and other professionals. Grants are made to institutions to provide fellowships to qualified persons with doctoral or similar advanced degrees with clinical, management or basic science research experience and to prepare them to conduct independent research in areas related to disability and rehabilitation. This research training may integrate disciplines, teach research methodology, and promote the capacity for disability studies and rehabilitation science. Training projects must operate in interdisciplinary environments and provide training in rigorous scientific methods.

Selected ARRT project statistics for the period July 2006 to June 2007 are reflected in Table 12.

²⁸ Small Business Innovation Research, Phase II, on SoundAlert - A Centralized System Capable of Alerting People Who Are Deaf or Hearing Impaired to Critical Sounds in Their Environment (H133S060109), CreateAbility Concepts, Inc. (Stephen M. Sutter, principal investigator).

Table 12. Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Projects: Selected Indicators, July 2006 to June 2007

Total number of active awards to institutions	17
Fellows enrolled since last report	60
Fellows completing program	21
Total number of fellows in program (unduplicated count)	81
Fellows with disabilities	9
Fellows contributing to publications	34
Total numbers of publications authored by fellows	18

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, NIDRR 2007g

10. Mary E. Switzer Fellowship Program

The Mary E. Switzer Fellowship Program increases capacity in rehabilitation research by giving individual researchers the opportunity to develop new ideas and gain research experience. There are two levels of fellowships: (1) Distinguished Fellowships go to individuals of doctorate or comparable academic status who have had seven or more years of experience relevant to rehabilitation research; and (2) Merit Fellowships are given to persons with rehabilitation research experience but who do not meet the qualifications for Distinguished Fellowships, usually because they are in earlier stages of their careers. Fellows work for one year on an independent research project of their design.

Table 13 summarizes accomplishments for the Switzer Research Fellowship Program for FY 2007, defined as peer-reviewed publications, professional conference presentations, and funded competitive grants. All accomplishments reported occurred from July 2006 to June 2007 but were generated by Switzer Fellows receiving awards between 2004 and 2006. This lag between the year of the award and the year of the accomplishment is due to the time it takes to conduct research activities and produce results.

Table 13. Switzer Research Fellowship Program Accomplishments, July 2006 to June 2007

Total number of 2004, 2005, and 2006 Fellows	29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Merit Fellows • Number of Distinguished Fellows 	18
Number of 2004-2006 Fellows reporting accomplishments in the 2007 Annual Performance Report	11
Number of peer-reviewed publications	22
Number of professional conference presentations	15
Number of competitive grant awards	23
	3

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, NIDRR 2007h

11. Outreach to Minority Serving Colleges and Universities

Section 21 of the *Rehabilitation Act* requires NIDRR and RSA to reserve 1 percent of the funds appropriated for the fiscal year for programs authorized under Titles II, III, VI and VII to serve traditionally underserved populations. These funds then are awarded through grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to minority entities and Native American tribes to carry out activities under title I, III, VI, and VII programs. Funds are also used to conduct research, training, technical assistance, or a related activity. Awards may also be made to state or public or private nonprofit agencies or organizations, including colleges and universities, to provide outreach and technical assistance to minority entities and Native American tribes to promote their participation in activities funded under this act, including assistance to enhance their capacity to carry out such activities. The funds set-aside from NIDRR's appropriation for this purpose can be used to fund separate grants across various discretionary grant-funding authorities (e.g., RRTCs, DRRPs) or to supplement existing grants to conduct specific Section 21-related activities. The following are accomplishments for the Section 21 program for 2007:

- Grantees from the Rehabilitation Research Institute for Underrepresented Populations (RRIUP) published a peer-reviewed journal article examining differences in VR outcomes associated with demographic characteristics, work disincentives, and case service variables (Cardoso, E., Romero, M., Chan, F., Dutta, A., & Rahimi, M. (2007). Disparities in vocational rehabilitation services and outcomes for Hispanic clients with traumatic brain injury: do they exist?. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 22, 85-94). Key findings indicate that European Americans were 1.27 times more likely to obtain competitive employment after receiving VR services than were Hispanics. Gender and age were also found to be significant predictors of successful outcomes, with men 1.2 times more likely to be employed after receiving VR services than women. Younger clients, between 16 and 34 years of age, have a 13 percent increase in the odds of being employed compared to older clients between the ages of 35 and 54. Together, these findings advance knowledge of the employment disparities experienced by members of certain demographic groups and highlight areas of needed focus in addressing the VR needs of consumers.²⁹
- The Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE), through its Minority Serving Institutions program, sponsored two Section 21 institutions in the United States to achieve its international research goals. The first exchange sponsored a faculty member and graduate student from the Rehabilitation Counseling program of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University to travel to Nigeria to conduct collaborative research with faculty from the Department of Psychiatry at the University College Hospital in Ibadan on the role of culture in the diagnosis and treatment of addictions and mental illness.

²⁹ Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project (H133A031705) to the Rehabilitation Research Institute for Underrepresented Populations (RRIUP), Southern University A&M College, Baton Rouge, LA (Alo Dutta and Madan Kundu, Principal investigator).

The second CIRRIE-sponsored exchange supported rehabilitation professionals from Guatemala to consult with faculty from the Department of Psychology at California State University at Northridge on developing culturally competent interpretive models for analyzing interview data from parents of Guatemalan children with disabilities. More information on the CIRRIE Minority Serving Institutions program is available at: <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/exchange/index.php>.³⁰ While this project is funded as part of the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization portfolio, part of its activities in the exchange programs also contributed to enhancing the capacity of scholars in minority-serving institutions, as mentioned above.

Other Program Areas

NIDRR funding also supports a variety of other activities, including interagency research initiatives and activities to improve the quality and utility of NIDRR-funded research.

12. Interagency Committee on Disability Research

NIDRR serves as the administrative home for the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR), which is chaired by the director of NIDRR. The committee is composed of a senior oversight committee and five subcommittees that address specific issues: Disability Statistics, Medical Rehabilitation, Technology, Employment, and Community Participation and Inclusion. The ICDR is authorized by the *Rehabilitation Act* to coordinate all federal programs, activities, and projects, and plans for such programs, activities, and projects, with respect to the conduct of research related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, and to promote joint research, collaboration, and communication between federal programs. In addition to coordinating federal disability research, the committee:

- Secures public input on disability research,
- Identifies research gaps,
- Promotes cost-savings and resource sharing amongst federal agencies, and
- Recommends coordination activities with regard to development of objectives and priorities for all federal programs relating to the conduct of disability and related research.

Selected ICDR accomplishments for 2007 include the following:

- Representatives of 35 federal entities participated in more than 30 ICDR meetings in support of interagency planning, project development, and the conduct of related activities. Discussions and joint decision-making assisted the committee to identify three key topics to examine in a coordinated agenda: (1) Veterans' Issues; (2) Employment; and (3) Health Disparities.

³⁰ Disability Rehabilitation Research Project, Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE-2) (H133A050008; <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu>), University at Buffalo. The State University of New York <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17472425>, (John Stone, principal investigator).

- On Aug. 14-15, 2007, the ICDR held a public meeting in Washington, D.C., to seek comments from the public on the federal disability and rehabilitation research agenda. Fifteen representatives from a range of advocacy, service, and professional organizations, and research institutions made recommendations on specific ways to improve future research for people with disabilities. The second day of the meeting elicited expert discussion of the preliminary topics identified from the August 14 public comments. Several topics led to the development of issue summaries, technical reports, and state-of-the-science meetings that helped further the goal of joint planning and research agenda development.
- Federal agencies partnered to conduct the following interagency state-of-the-art meetings with the goal of reducing duplication of effort and sharing information and other resources:
 - Transfer Strategies and Technologies for Individuals with Disabilities, Sept. 10–11, 2007;
 - International Classification of Functioning (ICF) and Federal Health Information Technology, July 10–11, 2007;
 - A Research Agenda for Getting Beyond the Plateau: Promoting Recovery through the Chronic Phase, March 6–7, 2007;
 - Roundtable on Employment, Sept. 13–14, 2007; and
 - Framing Health Disparities and the Interagency Research Agenda, Sept. 18–19, 2007.
- The ICDR commissioned issue summaries and reports to inform the development of objectives, priorities and disability research agenda recommendations. A total of six issue summaries and three funding summaries were completed, including:
 - Demand-side Employment Research;
 - ICF Overview;
 - Physical Transfer of Persons with Disabilities;
 - Inventory of Existing and Proposed Federal Disability Data;
 - Update of Employment Research Overview;
 - Agency Funding Priorities and RFPs;
 - Federal Funding for Research into Health Disparities among People with Disabilities; and
 - Federally Funded Research on Returning Veterans.

These reports informed joint planning and research agenda development activities. For example, the demand-side employment research document provided the framework for a federally coordinated, public-private dialogue regarding the needs of employers, business, individuals with disabilities, and other stakeholders. Recommendations and input from the 2007 meeting led to a 2008 employment summit that helped federal

agencies to further define and assess the relevance of the disability employment research agenda.

13. Peer-Reviewed Publications by Discretionary Grant Funding Authority

In addition to the narrative accomplishments reported above for NIDRR's 11 discretionary grant funding authorities and other program areas, NIDRR demonstrates accountability for results annually by reporting the average number of publications per award per program published in refereed journals. Information on the quantity of peer-reviewed publications produced is important because it constitutes a well-accepted standard for evaluating the scientific productivity, as opposed to the scientific quality and impact, of research investments. Data on the average number of peer-reviewed publications per award per calendar year also corresponds to one of NIDRR's performance measures used to satisfy *Government Performance Results Act* and PART requirements, which also can be used to track progress over time in scientific productivity.³¹

Consistent with standard bibliometric procedures for tracking publications,³² table 14 contains data on the average number of peer-reviewed publications per award based on calendar year 2006 rather than on FY 2007.³³ To calculate the average number of peer-reviewed publications for calendar year 2006 requires data from two years of annual performance reports (APRs), submitted by grantees in June 2006 and June 2007. Because of this, publications reported for a calendar year always lag one year behind the fiscal year of the RSA Annual Report.

Table 14 is subdivided into Panels A and B to capture the scientific productivity of two different sets of NIDRR's programs. Panel A contains data on NIDRR's three largest programs (RERCs, RRTC's, and Model Systems); information on peer-reviewed publications for these programs was first reported in the RSA Annual Report for FY 2005. Panel B contains data on three additional NIDRR programs (DRRPs, FIPs and KDU projects); information on peer-reviewed publications for these programs was first reported in the RSA Annual Report for FY 2006.

Results for Panel A show that the 109 NIDRR grantees submitting APRs produced a total of 373 peer-reviewed publications in calendar year 2006 for a combined average of 3.42 publications per award. However, within Panel A, the average number of peer-reviewed publications per award varies significantly by program from a high of 4.65 for

³¹ Information on NIDRR-related R&D publications is collected through citations entered into the agency's Web-based annual performance reporting (APR) form, which is completed by all grantees to demonstrate progress on their award as part of the Department of Education's required grant continuation process. The peer-review status of publications is verified independently through the Thomson Scientific Institute for Science Information's Master Journal List provided by the Thomson Reuters Corporation (see <http://science.thomsonreuters.com/mjl/>).

³² For a definition of bibliometrics see: Geisler, Eliezer (2000). *The metrics of science and technology*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers.

³³ Because the average number of peer-reviewed publications is measured by calendar year not fiscal year, calculating this measure requires data from two performance-reporting periods and always lags one year behind the current fiscal year. Data on publications for calendar year 2006 are based on completed APRs submitted in June 2006 and June 2007. The next installment of data for calendar year 2007 will be available October 2008, based on completed APRs submitted in June 2007 and 2008.

RRTCs to a low of 1.88 for RERCs. Model Systems fall in between, with an average of 3.33 publications per award. In contrast to Panel A, the considerably larger number of grantees submitting APRs in Panel B (175 vs. 109) produced a total of only 92 peer-reviewed publications, with the averages per award of less than one for all three additional programs represented.

The differences between Panels A and B may not necessarily reflect differences in scientific productivity. Differences in the duration and level of funding can contribute significantly to the type and number of outputs produced. All of the awards associated with Panel A, for example, are funded for five years and, on average, at higher levels than those in Panel B, which typically conduct smaller-scale studies, with funding cycles ranging from three to five years. Given the time it takes to get research manuscripts published, the shorter funding cycle can limit opportunities to get research results published in time to be listed in annual performance reports. Similarly, the nature of the research and development activities conducted by grantees makes a difference in productivity. The RRTCs and Model Systems conduct primarily medical rehabilitation and psychosocial-behavioral research, which results in empirical findings that readily lend themselves to publication in peer-reviewed journals. RERCs, on the other hand, conduct primarily rehabilitation engineering research and development activities, where the outputs are more technology-oriented. For example, applications of existing technologies, prototypes of new devices and industry standards for products, are less well suited to publication in peer-reviewed journal articles. Another factor that can affect measures of scientific productivity is the stage in the funding cycle when grantees are reporting on productivity. For examples, grantees completing APRs early in a five-year cycle will typically have few publications to report than their counterparts who are in the last year of a five-year cycle.

Because of these differences in types of research conducted and outputs produced, as well as time of measurement, caution must be exercised in making comparisons of scientific productivity across NIDRR's programs.

Table 14. Total and Average Number per Award of NIDRR Peer-reviewed Publications for Calendar Year 2006, by Program ^a

Panel A: Programs for which data was available since FY 2005^b

Program	Total No. Refereed Publications	Total No. Awards Submitting APRs	Average No. Refereed Publications/Award
RRTCs ^c	158	34	4.65
RERCs ^d	45	24	1.88
Model Systems ^e	170	51	3.33
Combined	373	109	3.42

Panel B: Programs for which data became available since FY 2006^f

Program	Total No. Refereed Publications	Total No. Awards Submitting APRs	Average No. Refereed Publications/Award
DRRPs ^g	33	41	0.80
FIPs ^h	49	123	0.40
KDU ⁱ	10	11	0.91
Overall Totals Across All Six Programs	465	284	1.64

- ^a Data presented in this table correspond to peer-reviewed publications published in calendar year 2006 rather than to FY 2007. To calculate the total and average number of peer-reviewed publications for the full calendar year of 2006 requires data from two years of annual performance reports (APRs), submitted in June 2006 and June 2007. Because of this, reported publications always lag one calendar year behind the FY of the RSA Annual Report.
- ^b Data in Panel A correspond to NIDRR's official GPRA performance measure based on the average number of peer-reviewed publications per award per calendar year and are used to satisfy PART requirements.
- ^c Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers.
- ^d Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers.
- ^e Model Systems projects for Spinal Cord Injury, Brain Injury and Burn
- ^f Data for these programs are not included in NIDRR's official GPRA measure.
- ^g Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects.
- ^h Field Initiated Projects (Research and Development).
- ⁱ Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization (also referred to as Knowledge Translation)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, NIDRR 2007g

14. NIDRR Allocations

The allocation of NIDRR grant funds for FYs 2006 and 2007 is shown in table 15. For each program, the table includes the number of new and continuation awards along with the corresponding grant amount and the combined totals for FYs 2006 and 2007. NIDRR's overall grant allocations across all 11 programs totaled \$95,784,213 for FY 2006 and \$96,433,947 for FY 2007. NIDRR awarded \$10,271,223 in contracts and other support activities for FY 2007.

Table 15. Number of Awards and Grant Amount per Award for NIDRR-Funded Centers and Projects, by Type of Awards, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

NIDRR-Funded Centers and Projects	Number of Awards FY 2006	Grant Amount (in thousands of dollars)	Number of Awards FY 2007	Grant Amount (in thousands of dollars)
RRTCs				
Continuations	25	\$20,860	27	\$17,094
New Awards	2	\$1,450	0	\$0
Total	27	\$22,310	27	\$17,094
RERCs				
Continuations	18	\$15,898	17	\$15,799
New Awards	3	\$2,800	5	\$4,750
Total	21	\$18,698	22	\$20,549
ARRTs				
Continuations	16	\$2,238	9	\$1,346
New Awards	1	\$150	6	\$900
Total	17	\$2,388	15	\$2,246
DRRPs				
Continuations	14	\$3,598	18	\$7,975
New Awards	5	\$2,850	1	\$450
Total	19	\$6,448	19	\$8,425
DBTACs				
Continuations	0	\$0	11	\$11,900
New Awards	11	\$11,167	0	\$0
Total	11	\$11,167	11	\$11,900
SBIRs				
	26	\$3,726	25	\$3,625
KDUs				
Continuations	4	\$1,844	4	\$2,100
New	2	\$1,350	0	\$0
Total	6	\$3,194	4	\$2,100
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)				
Continuations	48	\$6,928	51	\$7,646
New Awards	21	\$3,037	23	\$4,600
Total	69	\$9,965	74	\$12,246
Mary Switzer Fellowships				
New Awards	8	\$550	7	\$505
Model Systems				
Spinal Cord Injury				
Continuations	0	\$0	15	\$7,075
New Awards	15	\$7,120	0	\$0
Total	15	\$7,120	15	\$7,075

Table 15. Number of Awards and Grant Amount per Award for NIDRR-Funded Centers and Projects, by Type of Awards, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

NIDRR-Funded Centers and Projects	Number of Awards FY 2006	Grant Amount (in thousands of dollars)	Number of Awards FY 2007	Grant Amount (in thousands of dollars)
Traumatic Brain Injury				
Continuations	18	\$7,026	3	\$1,850
New Awards	2	\$925	16	\$6,000
Total	20	\$7,951	19	\$7,850
Burn Injury				
Continuations	5	\$1,200	0	\$0
New Awards	0	0	5	\$1,750
Total	5	\$1,200	5	\$1,750
Outreach to Minority Institutions				
	4	\$1,067	4	\$1,070
TOTAL	248	\$95,784	247	\$96,435

* Abbreviations and full titles of NIDRR-funded Centers and Projects:

- RRTCs—Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
- RERCs—Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers
- ARRTs—Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Grants
- DRRPs—Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects
- DBTACs—Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers
- SBIRs—Small Business Innovation Research Projects
- KDUs—Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Projects

Source: U. S. Department of Education, OSERS, NIDRR 2007i

ADVOCACY AND ENFORCEMENT

Through the programs and activities described in this report, Congress and the federal government are doing much to improve opportunities for employment and community integration for persons with disabilities. However, full independence cannot be achieved if individuals are not able to protect their rights under the law. Recognizing this need, Congress has created a number of programs to assist and advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities. Several of these programs are administered by RSA and include the Client Assistance Program (CAP), the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program, and the Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT) program. Each of these programs directs its advocacy efforts to a particular group of persons with disabilities or to a specific issue. This section of the annual report provides data and information concerning the activities and performance of the CAP and PAIR programs. Information pertaining to the PAAT program is contained in the annual report to Congress prepared in accordance with Section 7 of the *Assistive Technology Act of 1998*, as amended, to be published in FY 2008.

Requirements under the *Rehabilitation Act* call for the continuous review of policies and practices related to the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment of individuals with disabilities and their access to facilities and information. To carry out the responsibilities stemming from those requirements, the *Rehabilitation Act* authorizes a number of advocacy and advisory programs operating at national and state levels. Such programs conduct periodic reviews of existing employment policies and practices. In addition, these programs develop and recommend policies and procedures that facilitate the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment of individuals who have received rehabilitation services to ensure compliance with standards prescribed by federal legislation.

Some of the advocacy programs also develop advisory information and provide appropriate training and technical assistance. They also make recommendations to the president, Congress, and the U.S. secretary of Education.

Several federal agencies have been given enforcement authority to ensure that government agencies and private entities that receive federal assistance subscribe to and implement legislative provisions related to the employment of individuals with disabilities. These enforcement agencies review complaints, conduct investigations, conduct outreach and technical assistance activities to promote compliance, conduct public hearings, attempt to obtain voluntary compliance with civil rights laws, and pursue formal administrative and court enforcement where necessary. These agencies participate, when necessary, as *amicus curiae* in any United States court in civil actions. They also design appropriate and equitable remedies. Formal enforcement action may lead to the withholding of or suspension of federal funds.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Authorized Under Section 112 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

The Client Assistance Program (CAP), through grants to the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. territories, provides advocacy and legal representation to individuals in dispute with other programs, projects, or facilities funded under the *Rehabilitation Act*. Primarily, CAPs assist individuals in their relationships with the VR program. In addition, CAP grantees provide information to individuals with disabilities regarding the programs and services available under the *Rehabilitation Act* and the rights afforded them under Title I of the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. State VR agencies, and the other programs and projects funded under the *Rehabilitation Act*, must inform consumers about the services available from the CAP and how to contact the CAP. States must operate a CAP in order to receive other allotments under the *Rehabilitation Act*, including VR grant funds.

**Client Assistance Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$11,781,990**

Each governor designates a public or private agency to operate a CAP. This designated agency must be independent of any agency that provides services under the *Rehabilitation Act*, except in those cases where the *Rehabilitation Act* “grandfathered” CAPs already housed within state agencies providing services. In the event that one of these state agencies providing services under the *Rehabilitation Act* undergoes a change in the organizational structure that meets specific criteria, the *Rehabilitation Act* requires the governor to redesignate the CAP in an agency that does not provide services under the act. Currently, only a few “internal” CAPs (e.g., those housed within a state VR agency or other agency providing services under the *Rehabilitation Act*) remain.

Overall, in FY 2007, CAPs nationwide responded to 55,350 requests for information and provided extensive services to 7,087 individuals. Slightly more than 94 percent of those cases in which extensive services were provided involved applicants for or recipients of services from the VR program. In 93 percent of those cases, issues related to the delivery of VR services. This data also demonstrates that: in 33 percent of the cases closed, CAPs enabled the individuals to advocate for themselves through the explanation of policies; 18 percent of these cases resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties; and 19 percent resulted in the development or implementation of an IPE. In addition, 67 percent of the cases requiring action by the CAP on behalf of an individual were resolved in the individual’s favor.

Examples of CAP activities during FY 2007 include:

- In Arkansas, an individual with a disability requested services from the VR agency to enable him to start his own business making parts for racing cars. He needed a certain machine to make the parts for sale, but his VR counselor denied the

request for funds to purchase the machine. The Arkansas CAP advocated on behalf of the individual, believing that his research demonstrated that he could be successful in this business with the machine. After meeting with the CAP advocate and the individual, the VR agency staff agreed to provide funding to purchase the machine. Currently, the individual is working in his business and reports that he is very satisfied.

- In Louisiana, community colleges and high schools throughout the state have collaborated and are now offering a dual enrollment program known as “Steps to Success” through which high school students can earn college credit prior to graduation. A student with a disability wanted to participate in a similar program by attending a cosmetology training program and high school part-time. Although the high school agreed and the student was admitted to the program, the VR agency was reluctant to support this endeavor because the student had yet to complete high school. The student’s VR counselor was concerned that the heavy course load might exacerbate the student’s disability. The student’s social worker submitted written support for her ability to psychologically handle the training. Together, the student and the CAP advocate gathered information on cosmetology certification requirements, duties, and job opportunities available in the community. The CAP submitted a request for reconsideration, and the regional manager overturned the denial. The Steps to Success program is gaining popularity in Louisiana among students with disabilities transitioning from high school to work. This particular student’s case has expanded opportunities through which other individuals with disabilities can get a head start on career training.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS PROGRAM **Authorized Under Section 509 of the *Rehabilitation Act***

The Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program is a mandatory component of the protection and advocacy (P&A) system, established in each of the 56 states and territories. In addition, the PAIR program helps to fund a P&A system to serve

**Program and Advocacy of
Individual Rights Program
FY 2007 Federal Funding
\$16,489,440**

the American Indian consortium pursuant to Part C of the *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act)*. The 57 PAIR programs provide information, advocacy and legal representation to individuals with disabilities who are not eligible for other P&A programs serving persons with developmental disabilities and mental illness or whose issues do not pertain to programs funded under the *Rehabilitation Act*. Of all the various P&A programs, the PAIR program has the broadest mandate and potentially represents the greatest number of individuals. Through the provision of information and the conduct of advocacy, PAIR programs help to ensure the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities under federal and state law in a wide variety of areas, including employment, access to public accommodations, education, housing, and transportation. PAIR programs investigate, negotiate, or mediate solutions to problems

expressed by individuals with disabilities. Grantees provide information and technical assistance to requesting individuals and organizations. PAIR programs also provide legal counsel and litigation services.

Prior to making allotments to the individual grantees, a portion of the total appropriation must be set aside for each of the following two activities. During any fiscal year in which the appropriation is equal to or exceeds \$5.5 million the secretary must first set aside not less than 1.8 percent and not more than 2.2 percent of the amount appropriated for training and technical assistance to eligible systems established under this program. In addition, in any fiscal year in which the total appropriation exceeds \$10.5 million, the secretary must award \$50,000 to the eligible system established under the *DD Act* to serve the American Indian consortium. The secretary then distributes the remainder of the appropriation to the eligible systems within the 50 states on a population basis, after satisfying minimum allocations to them of \$100,000. The territories of Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands each receives \$50,000.

Each year, PAIR programs, with public comment, must develop a statement of objectives and priorities, including a rationale for the selection of the objectives and priorities and a plan for achieving them. These objectives and priorities define the issues that PAIR will address during the year, whether through individual or systemic advocacy. During FY 2007, PAIR programs reported representing 16,880 individuals and responded to 54,539 requests for information or referral. Of the cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, the greatest number of specified issues involved education (16 percent), employment (13 percent), government benefits and services (13 percent), and housing (10 percent). Because PAIR programs cannot address all issues facing individuals with disabilities solely through individual advocacy, they seek to change public and private policies and practices that present barriers to the rights of individuals with disabilities, utilizing negotiations and class action litigation. In FY 2007, 52 out of the 57 PAIR programs (91 percent) reported that these activities resulted in changes in policies and practices benefiting individuals with disabilities.

Examples of PAIR activities during FY 2007 include:

- The Arizona Center for Disability Law successfully represented a 45-year-old man with single-sided deafness in an administrative appeal challenging the denial of an osseointegrated implant. The implant replaces the function of the middle ear and allows a person with single-sided deafness to "hear" out of both ears. As a result of his hearing impairment, the client was unable to continue teaching, but the implant would allow him to return to his job. The state Medicaid program denied the implant on the basis that it was a hearing aid, a service not covered under the state Medicaid plan for adults. However, the center was able to successfully argue that the implant was not an excluded hearing aid but rather a covered prosthetic device. The administrative law judge ruled in the client's favor and, as a result, the center was able to not only obtain coverage of the device for this client but was also able to successfully advocate for a change to the state Medicaid program's prosthetic device

coverage policy, such that now osseointegrated devices are explicitly covered by the Medicaid program for adults.

- In Alabama, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) began reviewing and improving upon existing community standards for informing people with disabilities about emergencies, especially quickly developing dangers with weather. The P&A worked with NOAA to provide information about methods of communication and the demographics of people with disabilities in Alabama. A collaboration between NOAA and the Alabama P&A resulted in people with disabilities having instant and actionable information about potential or impending emergency weather or disaster situations in a format easily accessible to them.
- The intervention of the Minnesota P&A on behalf of a deaf father of a teenager with behavioral problems resulted in enhanced communication access and policy changes. The parents placed their son in a private residential behavioral treatment program and school. This program included a series of parent and parent-child seminars that were sponsored by a third party. The school did not provide an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for meetings where the father was present. The seminar company also refused to provide an ASL interpreter. The client's wife had to interpret as best she could for her husband during seminars and meetings. The P&A represented the clients in a complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) against the school and the seminar company and helped negotiate a settlement through the DOJ's mediation program. The terms of the settlement are confidential but it did result in new policies to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their parents receive the kind of auxiliary aids and services, including ASL interpreters, needed for effective communication.
- As a result of intervention by the Puerto Rico P&A, a university student with a mobility disability was able to attend her graduation ceremony. The facility had no accessible route to the main area where the diplomas were to be given. A temporary ramp was constructed, and the client participated fully in her graduation. In the future, this facility will be able to offer this service to persons with disabilities because procedures were put in place to ensure that the temporary ramp would be available to other students when needed.

EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
Authorized Under Section 501 of the *Rehabilitation Act*
Managed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The *Rehabilitation Act* authorizes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce the nondiscrimination and affirmative employment provisions of laws and regulations concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities. As part of its oversight responsibilities, the EEOC conducts on-site reviews of federal agency affirmative action employment programs. Based on these reviews, the EEOC submits findings and recommendations for federal agency implementation. The EEOC then

monitors the implementation of these findings and recommendations by performing follow-up on-site reviews.

For more information, visit <http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/coordination.cfm>

ARCHITECTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS COMPLIANCE BOARD (Access Board)

Authorized Under Section 502 and Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

Section 502 of the *Rehabilitation Act* created the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, also known as the Access Board. Section 502 lays out the duties of the board under the *Architectural Barriers Act (ABA)*, which include: ensuring compliance with standards issued under the *ABA*; developing and maintaining guidelines for complying with *ABA*; and promoting access throughout all segments of society. The Access Board also has the primary responsibility for developing and maintaining accessibility guidelines and providing technical assistance under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* regarding overcoming architectural, transportation, and communication barriers. The Access Board is also responsible for developing and periodically updating guidelines under the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* that ensure access to various telecommunication products.

Composed of 25 members, the Access Board is structured to function as a representative of the general public and as a coordinating body among federal agencies. Twelve of its members are senior managers from federal departments; the other 13 are private citizens appointed by the president, a majority of whom must be individuals with disabilities. Key responsibilities of the Access Board include: developing and maintaining accessibility requirements for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and electronic and information technology; providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines and standards; and enforcing accessibility standards for federally funded facilities.

The 1998 amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* expanded the Access Board's role and gave it responsibility for developing access standards for electronic and information technology under Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. The description of the Access Board in Section 508 provides information regarding its expanded role and those standards. The Access Board provides training and technical assistance on all its guidelines and standards.

With its publications, hotline and training sessions, the Access Board also provides a range of services to private as well as public organizations. In addition, the board enforces accessibility provisions of the *ABA*, the *ADA* and the *Telecommunications Act* through the investigation of complaints. The Access Board conducts its investigations through the responsible federal agencies and strives for amicable resolution of complaints. For more information, visit <http://www.access-board.gov>.

ELECTRONIC AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Authorized under Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act*
Activities Conducted by the Assistive Technology Team, Office of the Chief
Information Officer, U.S. Department of Education

Section 508 requires that when federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology they shall ensure that the electronic and information technology allows federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that are comparable to the access to and use of information and data by federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. Section 508 also requires that individuals with disabilities who are members of the public seeking information or services from a federal agency have access to and use of information and data that are comparable to the access to and use of information and data by members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. The intention is to eliminate barriers in accessing information technology, make new opportunities available for individuals with disabilities, and encourage development of technologies that will help achieve a more accessible society. The 1998 amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* significantly expanded and strengthened the technology access requirements in Section 508.

The Department's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) plays a lead role in the implementation of Section 508 through such activities as product performance testing and the provision of technical assistance to government agencies and vendors on the implementation of the Section 508 standards. The OCIO Assistive Technology Team delivers assistive technology workshops, presentations, and demonstrations to other federal agencies, to state and local education institutions, and at assistive technology and information technology industry seminars and conferences, and conducts numerous conformance tests of high-visibility e-government-sponsored websites.

The OCIO, in conjunction with the Access Board and the General Services Administration (GSA), and a number of other government agencies, also participates in the Interagency Section 508 Working Group, an effort coordinated by GSA and OMB, to offer technical assistance and to provide an informal means of cooperation and information sharing on implementation of Section 508 throughout the federal government. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocio/ocio.html>.

EMPLOYMENT UNDER FEDERAL CONTRACTS
Authorized Under Section 503 of the *Rehabilitation Act*
Managed by the Employment Standards Administration,
U.S. Department of Labor

The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) is responsible for ensuring that employers with federal contracts or subcontracts in excess

of \$10,000 take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities. OFCCP investigators conduct at least several thousand compliance reviews and investigate hundreds of complaints each year. OFCCP also issues policy guidance to private companies and develops innovative ways to gain compliance with the law. For more information, visit <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp>.

**NONDISCRIMINATION IN PROGRAMS THAT RECEIVE
FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**
Authorized under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*
Enforced by the
Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, and the
Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of federal financial assistance. This provision of the *Rehabilitation Act* is designed to protect the rights of any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (CRD) has overall responsibility for coordinating federal agencies' implementation and enforcement of Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*.

Through its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) the Department enforces Section 504 with respect to state and local educational agencies and public and private elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools that receive federal financial assistance from the Department. In addition, OCR and CRD both have enforcement responsibilities under the *ADA*. In the education context, OCR enforces Title II of the *ADA*, which prohibits disability discrimination by state and local government entities, including public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. CRD enforces Title III of the *ADA*, which prohibits disability discrimination by private entities in places of public accommodation, including private elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools.

Examples of the types of discrimination prohibited by Section 504 and its implementing regulations include access to educational programs and facilities, improper denials of a free appropriate public education for elementary and secondary school students, and improper denials of academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services to postsecondary students. Section 504, the *ADA* and their implementing regulations also prohibit employment discrimination and retaliation for filing, or participating in any manner in an OCR complaint or proceeding or for advocating for a right protected by these laws.

For information on OCR, visit its website at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr>.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
Authorized under Section 400 of the *Rehabilitation Act*
An Independent Federal Agency

As an independent agency, the National Council on Disability (NCD) promotes policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities and that empower people with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, inclusion, and integration into all aspects of society. More specifically, the NCD reviews and evaluates laws, policies, programs, practices, and procedures conducted or assisted by federal departments or agencies to see if they meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The council makes recommendations based on those evaluations to the president, Congress, the secretary of education, the commissioner of RSA, the director of NIDRR, and officials of federal agencies.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Table A-1. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies Serving Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007

Must Pass at Least Four of Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^b

Agency ^c	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (> 68.9%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (> 35.4%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (> 89.0%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage (> .59)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (> 30.4)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
<i>Performance level criteria are shown in parentheses for each indicator.</i>								
Arkansas	3	80.82	78.15	100.00	0.632	30.37	5	3
Connecticut	-21	80.46	83.54	100.00	0.610	34.98	5	3
Delaware	4	70.27	96.15	100.00	0.490	36.00	5	2
Florida	78	65.61	95.58	99.48	0.628	46.27	5	3
Idaho	32	68.00	82.94	97.16	0.658	36.88	5	3

^a VR—Vocational Rehabilitation

^b Minimum performance-level criteria for each standard and indicator were established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and published in the *Federal Register* on June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^c Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

^d To pass this indicator, the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the current performance period must be at least the same as the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the previous performance period and, hence, comparison of the two elements must yield a number greater than or equal to zero.

^e Percentage of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved employment in an integrated setting (with or without supports), self-employment, or employment through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

^f Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a

Table A-1. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies Serving Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)

Must Pass at Least Four of Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^b

Agency ^c	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (> 68.9%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (> 35.4%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (> 89.0%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage (> .59)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (> 30.4)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
<i>Performance level criteria are shown in parentheses for each indicator.</i>								
Iowa	-4	81.88	88.54	100.00	0.788	24.55	4	3
Kentucky	-39	83.37	84.04	100.00	0.650	33.98	5	3
Maine	-19	77.08	25.38	98.99	0.819	47.47	4	2
Massachusetts	-10	65.17	53.71	100.00	0.693	36.67	4	3
Michigan	-10	62.80	60.32	99.40	0.623	34.23	4	3
Minnesota	-47	46.60	94.05	98.85	0.713	35.06	4	3
Missouri	14	77.23	90.44	99.78	0.733	30.18	5	3
Nebraska	-25	54.01	84.38	100.00	0.743	44.44	4	3
New Jersey	30	69.74	93.89	95.78	0.558	47.98	5	2
New Mexico	-5	50.91	100.00	100.00	0.958	64.29	4	3
New York	-283	68.95	55.55	98.55	0.558	30.49	4	2
North Carolina	0	71.47	98.79	95.73	0.571	34.20	5	2
Oregon	2	81.82	73.33	98.79	0.703	43.03	6	3
South Carolina	19	75.74	78.58	93.69	0.621	26.13	5	3
South Dakota	13	73.96	95.41	97.86	0.667	40.64	6	3

Table A-1. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies Serving Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)

Must Pass at Least Four of Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^b

Agency ^c	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (> 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (> 68.9%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (> 35.4%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (> 89.0%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage (> .59)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (> 30.4)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
<i>Performance level criteria are shown in parentheses for each indicator.</i>								
Texas	2	71.44	87.93	99.96	0.599	25.66	5	3
Vermont	0	77.95	55.05	99.08	0.800	23.85	5	3
Virginia	57	66.26	91.29	99.42	0.603	33.53	5	3
Washington	43	56.67	98.71	97.39	0.777	44.77	5	3

**Table A-2. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007**

Must Pass at Least Four of the Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^c

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (≥ 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (≥ 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (≥ 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (≥ 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage ^g (≥ .52)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (≥ 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
<i>Performance level criteria are shown in parentheses for each indicator.</i>								
Alabama	10	69.13	99.09	90.34	0.491	77.97	5	2
Alaska	2	59.04	99.24	85.33	0.649	57.33	6	3
American Samoa	14	80.00	65.63	47.62	N/A	95.24	4	1
Arizona	91	52.70	95.23	95.84	0.536	70.19	5	3
Arkansas	-193	57.75	100.00	86.75	0.658	59.42	5	3

^a VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

^b General agencies serve individuals with various disabilities other than blindness and/or other visual impairments. Combined agencies serve all individuals with disabilities including individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

^c Minimum performance-level criteria for each standard and indicator were established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and published in the Federal Register on Monday, June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d To pass this indicator, the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the current performance period must be at least the same as the number of individuals exiting the VR program securing employment during the previous performance period.

^e Percentage of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved employment in an integrated setting (with or without supports), self-employment, or employment through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

^f Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

^g No state wage data exists for Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. Therefore, Indicator 1.5 cannot be computed for these VR agencies.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a

**Table A-2. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)**

Must Pass at Least Four of the Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^c

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (≥ 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (≥ 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (≥ 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (≥ 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage ^g (≥ .52)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (≥ 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
California	-944	58.16	89.62	99.89	0.474	70.18	4	2
Colorado	300	62.98	91.47	95.03	0.494	54.29	5	2
Connecticut	61	61.18	99.70	100.00	0.589	35.67	5	3
Delaware	10	65.28	99.06	74.47	0.427	69.12	5	2
District of Columbia	-120	59.16	98.43	97.88	0.354	79.15	4	2
Florida	811	61.76	97.66	72.61	0.618	47.37	5	3
Georgia	-46	58.40	95.82	88.73	0.434	69.39	4	2
Guam	7	84.00	95.24	95.00	N/A	75.00	6	3
Hawaii	-90	35.03	98.27	84.30	0.614	63.49	4	3
Idaho	124	65.49	99.43	99.10	0.610	68.55	6	3
Illinois	190	59.94	93.13	100.00	0.416	58.64	5	2
Indiana	-570	58.21	96.59	76.88	0.605	40.23	4	3
Iowa	4	58.89	98.78	93.44	0.632	61.45	6	3
Kansas	107	60.99	97.57	98.89	0.507	60.73	5	2
Kentucky	51	66.78	98.78	99.92	0.598	70.07	6	3
Louisiana	793	58.93	98.95	80.72	0.735	51.66	5	3

**Table A-2. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)**

Must Pass at Least Four of the Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^c

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (≥ 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (≥ 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (≥ 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (≥ 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage ^g (≥ .52)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (≥ 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Maine	54	51.44	96.99	100.00	0.660	64.64	5	3
Maryland	15	49.90	93.06	100.00	0.441	70.12	4	2
Massachusetts	221	52.52	97.80	99.97	0.455	59.14	4	2
Michigan	90	54.43	98.26	91.13	0.560	64.74	5	3
Minnesota	-21	63.94	97.68	100.00	0.502	66.90	4	2
Mississippi	28	71.08	99.14	84.99	0.730	58.93	6	3
Missouri	128	67.67	94.07	98.31	0.522	56.14	6	3
Montana	3	57.87	92.87	77.80	0.646	60.09	6	3
Nebraska	32	62.17	99.15	100.00	0.561	64.54	6	3
Nevada	12	63.79	99.66	95.51	0.553	68.02	6	3
New Hampshire	-169	68.34	95.96	95.27	0.508	55.07	4	2
New Jersey	80	64.83	99.54	100.00	0.446	58.61	5	2
New Mexico	-237	60.50	97.54	95.97	0.631	54.36	5	3
New York	242	58.46	94.39	98.00	0.366	63.67	5	2
North Carolina	-994	47.14	99.78	71.87	0.487	65.04	3	2
North Dakota	29	66.79	97.87	84.90	0.677	56.52	6	3

**Table A-2. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)**

Must Pass at Least Four of the Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^c

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (≥ 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (≥ 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (≥ 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (≥ 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage ^g (≥ .52)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (≥ 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
Northern Mariana Islands	6	63.93	71.79	64.29	N/A	7.14	4	2
Ohio	399	60.38	97.32	99.99	0.618	46.18	5	3
Oklahoma	-89	43.78	94.05	91.71	0.609	64.62	4	3
Oregon	-113	65.09	98.47	82.81	0.567	74.89	5	3
Pennsylvania	233	58.34	96.76	99.99	0.518	57.48	5	2
Puerto Rico	-132	78.25	95.98	78.08	0.652	88.74	5	3
Rhode Island	9	58.89	92.62	100.00	0.527	64.78	6	3
South Carolina	743	64.56	99.48	96.00	0.607	67.34	6	3
South Dakota	1	62.73	98.14	97.16	0.539	60.07	6	3
Tennessee	-76	62.96	93.35	92.05	0.533	65.68	5	3
Texas	-1516	56.25	99.38	82.50	0.492	53.82	4	2
Utah	-30	72.57	98.26	96.87	0.608	65.79	5	3
Vermont	4	64.65	98.28	99.72	0.590	42.98	5	3
Virginia	356	59.94	92.59	98.99	0.430	49.97	4	2
Virgin Islands	12	86.36	97.37	75.68	0.491	64.86	5	2
Washington	-138	54.71	98.42	100.00	0.501	58.66	3	2

**Table A-2. Employment Outcomes (Evaluation Standard 1) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined^b, by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007 (continued)**

Must Pass at Least Four of the Six Indicators and Two of Three Primary Indicators^c

Agency	Indicator 1.1: Change in Total Employment Outcomes ^d (≥ 0)	Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Employment Outcomes After Provision of VR Services (≥ 55.8%)	Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Employment Outcomes in Competitive Employment ^e (≥ 72.6%)	Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Have Significant Disabilities ^f (≥ 62.4%)	Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average Hourly Earnings of Individuals Who Achieved Competitive Employment After Receiving VR Services to State Average Hourly Wage ^g (≥ .52)	Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Earnings as Primary Source of Support at Competitive Employment Outcome Versus at Application (≥ 53.0)	Number of Indicators in Standard 1 That Were Passed	Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 That Were Passed
West Virginia	-764	62.95	91.05	97.16	0.682	75.22	5	3
Wisconsin	548	42.02	98.23	97.49	0.572	45.06	4	3
Wyoming	26	67.77	98.71	74.82	0.588	63.61	6	3

Table A-3. Equal Access to Service (Evaluation Standard 2) of State VR^a Agencies Serving Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired, by Indicator and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Year 2007

Agency ^b	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio (≥ .80) ^c	Minorities Exiting the VR Program ^d * Indicates fewer than 100 individuals from minority populations exiting program.
Arkansas	0.918	140
Connecticut	0.839	55*
Delaware	1.231	12*
Florida	0.909	634
Idaho	0.860	20*
Iowa	0.854	24*
Kentucky	0.936	59*
Maine	0.608	2*
Massachusetts	1.022	59*
Michigan	0.803	158
Minnesota	0.872	98*
Missouri	0.752	106
Nebraska	0.925	27*
New Jersey	0.860	316
New Mexico	0.950	56*
New York	0.791	538
North Carolina	0.944	583
Oregon	1.209	34*
South Carolina	0.968	252
South Dakota	0.612	32*
Texas	0.904	1,814
Vermont	1.073	2*
Virginia	0.881	174
Washington	0.915	94*

^a VR — Vocational Rehabilitation

^b Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

^c Minority service rate ratio is the ratio of the percentage of minorities exiting the VR program who received services to the percentage of nonminorities exiting the program who received services. Minimum performance level criterion for this standard and indicator (as shown in parentheses) was established by RSA and published in the *Federal Register* on Monday, June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d Total number of individuals from minority populations exiting the VR program during the performance period.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a

**Table A-4. Equal Access to Service (Evaluation Standard 2) of State VR^a Agencies—
General and Combined,^b by Indicator and Jurisdiction, Fiscal Year 2007**

Agency	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio ($\geq .80$) ^c	Minorities Exiting the VR Program ^d <i>* Indicates fewer than 100 individuals from minority populations exiting program.</i>
Alabama	0.998	5,824
Alaska	0.812	578
American Samoa	N/A	69
Arizona	0.874	2,756
Arkansas	0.820	1,871
California	1.000	20,094
Colorado	0.943	2,274
Connecticut	0.738	971
Delaware	0.983	1,033
District of Columbia	0.742	2,094
Florida	0.861	13,114
Georgia	0.982	6,378
Guam	N/A	71
Hawaii	1.128	1,661
Idaho	0.864	753
Illinois	0.879	6,665
Indiana	0.845	2,498
Iowa	0.744	975
Kansas	0.844	1,540
Kentucky	0.893	2,557
Louisiana	0.843	3,016
Maine	0.617	162
Maryland	0.867	5,707
Massachusetts	0.898	3,309
Michigan	0.850	6,970
Minnesota	0.772	1,731
Mississippi	0.826	4,227
Missouri	0.879	3,736

^a VR — Vocational Rehabilitation

^b General agencies serve individuals with various disabilities other than blindness and/or other visual impairments. Combined agencies serve all individuals with disabilities including individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

^c Minority service rate ratio is the ratio of the percentage of minorities exiting the VR program who received services to the percentage of nonminorities exiting the program who received services. Minimum performance level criterion for this standard and indicator (as shown in parentheses) was established by RSA and published in the Federal Register on Monday, June 5, 2000 (34 CFR Part 361).

^d Total number of individuals from minority populations exiting the VR program during the performance period.

Table A-4. (Continued)

Agency	Indicator 2.1: Minority Service rate ratio ($\geq .80$)	Minorities Exiting the VR Program <i>*Indicates fewer than 100 individuals from minority populations exiting program.</i>
Montana	0.867	505
Nebraska	0.791	764
Nevada	0.853	1,121
New Hampshire	0.905	120
New Jersey	0.926	5,438
New Mexico	0.881	3,087
New York	0.869	18,283
North Carolina	0.972	11,112
North Dakota	0.777	425
Northern Mariana Islands	0.410	164
Ohio	0.819	6,712
Oklahoma	0.945	2,488
Oregon	0.871	1,505
Pennsylvania	0.902	6,552
Puerto Rico	1.345	7,376
Rhode Island	0.854	639
South Carolina	0.947	9,900
South Dakota	0.821	501
Tennessee	0.884	2,580
Texas	0.987	17,905
Utah	0.907	1,243
Vermont	0.974	135
Virginia	0.982	68
Virgin Islands	1.897	4,298
Washington	0.907	3,117
West Virginia	0.861	331
Wisconsin	0.744	4,062
Wyoming	0.882	254

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
U.S. Total	2007	2,798,725,315	205,447	190,027	92.49
	2006	2,687,087,415	205,791	189,709	92.19
	Percentage Change	4.15	-0.17	0.17	
Total-General and Combined Agencies ^e	2007	2,577,054,888	198,525	183,216	92.29
	2006	2,479,231,394	198,921	182,947	91.97
	Percentage Change	3.95	-0.20	0.15	
Total-Agencies for the Blind ^f	2007	221,670,427	6,922	6,811	98.40
	2006	207,856,021	6,870	6,762	98.43
	Percentage Change	6.65	0.76	0.72	
GENERAL AND COMBINED AGENCIES					
Alabama	2007	57,890,480	7,802	7,053	90.40
	2006	55,857,717	7,792	7,073	90.77
	Percentage Change	3.64	0.13	2.82	
Alaska	2007	9,450,153	529	452	85.44
	2006	8,993,999	527	443	84.06
	Percentage Change	5.07	0.38	2.03	
American Samoa	2007	738,967	32	15	46.88
	2006	891,016	18	15	83.33
	Percentage Change	-17.06	77.78	0.00	
Arizona	2007	56,406,863	2,096	2,010	95.90
	2006	51,413,359	2,005	1,964	97.96
	Percentage Change	9.71	4.54	2.34	

^a VR — Vocational Rehabilitation.

^b Total number of individuals with disabilities exiting the VR program and securing employment during current performance period.

^c Significant disabilities are severe physical or mental impairments caused by certain conditions that seriously limit one or more functional capacities and require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

^d Percentage =
$$\frac{\text{Employment outcomes of individuals with significant disabilities}}{\text{Total employment outcomes}}$$

^e General agencies serve individuals with various disabilities other than blindness and/or other visual impairments. Combined agencies serve all individuals with disabilities including individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

^f Separate agencies in 24 states providing specialized services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, RSA 2007a

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Arkansas	2007	32,114,858	2,309	2,003	86.75
	2006	30,872,284	2,502	2,218	88.65
	Percentage Change	4.02	7.71	9.69	
California	2007	277,134,998	13,282	13,267	99.89
	2006	260,883,309	14,226	14,207	99.87
	Percentage Change	6.23	-6.64	-6.62	
Colorado	2007	34,772,217	2,509	2,382	94.94
	2006	32,547,661	2,209	2,147	97.19
	Percentage Change	6.83	13.58	10.95	
Connecticut	2007	13,511,966	1,319	1,319	100.00
	2006	16,543,233	1,258	1,258	100.00
	Percentage Change	-18.32	4.85	4.85	
Delaware	2007	8,057,739	850	634	74.59
	2006	7,653,262	840	571	67.98
	Percentage Change	5.29	1.19	11.03	
District of Columbia	2007	12,633,414	575	563	97.91
	2006	12,250,059	695	679	97.70
	Percentage Change	3.13	-17.27	-17.08	
Florida	2007	127,910,117	11,605	8,440	72.73
	2006	115,823,065	10,794	8,355	77.40
	Percentage Change	10.44	7.51	1.02	
Georgia	2007	76,685,255	4,545	4,039	88.87
	2006	81,908,688	4,591	3,905	85.06
	Percentage Change	-6.38	-1.00	3.43	
Guam	2007	2,052,208	21	20	95.24
	2006	1,289,427	14	14	100.00
	Percentage Change	59.16	50.00	42.86	
Hawaii	2007	11,254,618	577	488	84.58
	2006	10,749,158	667	566	84.86
	Percentage Change	4.70	-13.49	-13.78	
Idaho	2007	13,768,856	2,120	2,101	99.10
	2006	12,956,248	1,996	1,959	98.15
	Percentage Change	6.27	6.21	7.25	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Illinois	2007	106,346,174	5,603	5,603	100.00
	2006	100,712,441	5,413	5,412	99.98
	Percentage Change	5.59	3.51	3.53	
Indiana	2007	66,226,265	5,046	3,896	77.21
	2006	63,748,728	5,616	3,845	68.47
	Percentage Change	3.89	-10.15	1.32	
Iowa	2007	25,580,503	2,130	1,992	93.52
	2006	23,868,336	2,126	1,992	93.70
	Percentage Change	7.17	0.19	0.00	
Kansas	2007	27,641,991	1,853	1,832	98.87
	2006	25,965,641	1,746	1,686	96.56
	Percentage Change	6.46	6.13	8.66	
Kentucky	2007	44,254,159	5,063	5,059	99.92
	2006	42,142,960	5,012	5,010	99.96
	Percentage Change	5.01	1.02	0.98	
Louisiana	2007	43,077,993	2,375	1,922	80.93
	2006	54,442,404	1,582	1,532	96.84
	Percentage Change	-20.87	50.13	25.46	
Maine	2007	12,451,831	697	697	100.00
	2006	12,262,221	643	642	99.84
	Percentage Change	1.55	8.40	8.57	
Maryland	2007	39,862,465	3,097	3,097	100.00
	2006	39,360,338	3,082	3,082	100.00
	Percentage Change	1.28	0.49	0.49	
Massachusetts	2007	39,518,244	3,871	3,870	99.97
	2006	38,114,514	3,650	3,649	99.97
	Percentage Change	3.68	6.05	6.06	
Michigan	2007	82,668,519	7,680	7,011	91.29
	2006	80,194,706	7,590	6,933	91.34
	Percentage Change	3.08	1.19	1.13	
Minnesota	2007	35,537,121	2,502	2,502	100.00
	2006	34,225,892	2,523	2,523	100.00
	Percentage Change	3.83	-0.83	-0.83	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Mississippi	2007	42,112,807	4,544	3,860	84.95
	2006	40,552,314	4,516	4,233	93.73
	Percentage Change	3.85	0.62	-8.81	
Missouri	2007	53,103,546	4,280	4,212	98.41
	2006	51,479,764	4,152	4,047	97.47
	Percentage Change	3.15	3.08	4.08	
Montana	2007	11,147,011	912	722	79.17
	2006	10,650,000	909	746	82.07
	Percentage Change	4.67	0.33	-3.22	
Nebraska	2007	15,063,937	1,530	1,530	100.00
	2006	14,459,977	1,498	1,498	100.00
	Percentage Change	4.18	2.14	2.14	
Nevada	2007	15,547,425	1,161	1,109	95.52
	2006	16,597,632	1,149	641	55.79
	Percentage Change	-6.33	1.04	73.01	
New Hampshire	2007	10,799,787	1,213	1,156	95.30
	2006	10,238,071	1,382	1,343	97.18
	Percentage Change	5.49	-12.23	-13.92	
New Jersey	2007	43,339,798	4,369	4,369	100
	2006	41,924,081	4,289	3,996	93.17
	Percentage Change	3.38	1.87	9.33	
New Mexico	2007	18,628,198	1,705	1,636	95.95
	2006	17,641,922	1,942	1,839	94.7
	Percentage Change	5.59	-12.20	-11.04	
New York	2007	122,752,578	13,198	12,920	97.89
	2006	94,981,323	12,956	12,631	97.49
	Percentage Change	29.24	1.87	2.29	
North Carolina	2007	73,870,252	6,270	4,509	71.91
	2006	70,522,109	7,269	4,781	65.77
	Percentage Change	4.75	-13.74	-5.69	
North Dakota	2007	9,342,387	893	761	85.22
	2006	8,957,227	864	740	85.65
	Percentage Change	4.30	3.36	2.84	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Northern Mariana Islands	2007	1,126,126	39	27	69.23
	2006	1,054,614	33	21	63.64
	Percentage Change	6.78	18.18	28.57	
Ohio	2007	118,396,849	8,988	8,987	99.99
	2006	114,993,706	8,589	8,586	99.97
	Percentage Change	2.96	4.65	4.67	
Oklahoma	2007	40,564,976	2,218	2,045	92.20
	2006	39,001,716	2,307	2,229	96.62
	Percentage Change	4.01	-3.86	-8.25	
Oregon	2007	28,998,533	2,871	2,377	82.79
	2006	29,107,057	2,984	2,496	83.65
	Percentage Change	-0.37	-3.79	-4.77	
Pennsylvania	2007	125,030,800	11,228	11,227	99.99
	2006	118,963,780	10,995	10,988	99.94
	Percentage Change	5.10	2.12	2.18	
Puerto Rico	2007	68,548,083	2,590	2,032	78.46
	2006	60,973,560	2,722	2,074	76.19
	Percentage Change	12.42	-4.85	-2.03	
Rhode Island	2007	10,276,323	745	745	100
	2006	9,972,213	736	736	100
	Percentage Change	3.05	1.22	1.22	
South Carolina	2007	44,147,385	8,765	8,416	96.02
	2006	41,834,211	8,022	7,628	95.09
	Percentage Change	5.53	9.26	10.33	
South Dakota	2007	7,614,808	860	836	97.21
	2006	7,214,029	859	824	95.93
	Percentage Change	5.56	0.12	1.46	
Tennessee	2007	66,251,309	2,828	2,618	92.57
	2006	62,256,590	2,904	2,620	90.22
	Percentage Change	6.42	-2.62	-0.08	
Texas	2007	169,713,850	11,024	9,101	82.56
	2006	161,415,745	12,540	10,504	83.76
	Percentage Change	5.14	-12.09	-13.36	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Utah	2007	26,821,027	3,156	3,056	96.83
	2006	25,154,464	3,186	3,068	96.3
	Percentage Change	6.63	-0.94	-0.39	
Vermont	2007	8,328,656	1,456	1,452	99.73
	2006	7,919,318	1,452	1,440	99.17
	Percentage Change	5.17	0.28	0.83	
Virginia	2007	1,965,456	38	29	76.32
	2006	1,935,920	26	12	46.15
	Percentage Change	1.53	46.15	141.67	
Virgin Islands	2007	55,373,102	4,277	4,235	99.02
	2006	52,965,797	3,921	3,821	97.45
	Percentage Change	4.55	9.08	10.83	
Washington	2007	41,750,094	1,831	1,831	100
	2006	40,155,006	1,969	1,966	99.85
	Percentage Change	3.97	-7.01	-6.87	
West Virginia	2007	25,539,997	1,587	1,544	97.29
	2006	25,010,537	2,351	2,215	94.22
	Percentage Change	2.12	-32.50	-30.29	
Wisconsin	2007	54,831,961	3,165	3,084	97.44
	2006	52,853,689	2,617	2,569	98.17
	Percentage Change	3.74	20.94	20.05	
Wyoming	2007	8,519,853	696	523	75.14
	2006	8,193,581	670	454	67.76
	Percentage Change	3.98	3.88	15.20	
AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND					
Arkansas	2007	4,412,599	347	347	100
	2006	4,114,176	344	344	100
	Percentage Change	7.25	0.87	0.87	
Connecticut	2007	3,030,581	127	127	100
	2006	2,919,215	116	116	100
	Percentage Change	3.81	9.48	9.48	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
Delaware	2007	1,421,425	13	13	100
	2006	1,350,482	13	13	100
	Percentage Change	5.25	0.00	0.00	
Florida	2007	26,198,458	710	708	99.72
	2006	24,746,893	694	689	99.28
	Percentage Change	5.87	2.31	2.76	
Idaho	2007	1,955,753	91	88	96.70
	2006	1,767,193	79	77	97.47
	Percentage Change	10.67	15.19	14.29	
Iowa	2007	6,806,302	124	124	100
	2006	6,560,058	129	129	100
	Percentage Change	3.75	-3.88	-3.88	
Kentucky	2007	7,122,770	377	377	100
	2006	6,860,482	425	425	100
	Percentage Change	3.82	-11.29	-11.29	
Maine	2007	2,837,179	184	184	100
	2006	2,784,778	206	204	99.03
	Percentage Change	1.88	-10.68	-9.80	
Massachusetts	2007	6,959,312	191	191	100
	2006	6,724,870	200	200	100
	Percentage Change	3.49	-4.50	-4.50	
Michigan	2007	13,571,736	285	283	99.30
	2006	12,413,785	272	272	100
	Percentage Change	9.33	4.78	4.04	
Minnesota	2007	8,267,505	81	81	100
	2006	7,729,380	104	102	98.08
	Percentage Change	6.96	-22.12	-20.59	
Missouri	2007	7,935,013	256	254	99.22
	2006	7,629,682	246	246	100
	Percentage Change	4.00	4.07	3.25	
Nebraska	2007	2,883,974	57	57	100
	2006	2,652,382	71	71	100
	Percentage Change	8.73	-19.72	-19.72	

Table B. Amount of Grant Awards to State VR^a Agencies, Number and Percentage of Individuals With Disabilities Employed, and Percentage Change, by Type of Agency and Jurisdiction: Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (continued)

Agency	Fiscal Year and Percentage Change	Amount of Grant Award (\$) and Percentage Change	Total Employment Outcomes ^b and Percentage Change	Employment Outcomes of Individuals With Significant Disabilities ^c and Percentage Change	Percentage of Individuals With Employment Outcomes Who Have Significant Disabilities ^d
New Jersey	2007	11,334,949	303	292	96.37
	2006	10,481,020	303	289	95.38
	Percentage Change	8.15	0.00	1.04	
New Mexico	2007	4,232,935	42	42	100
	2006	4,251,945	42	42	100
	Percentage Change	-0.45	0.00	0.00	
New York	2007	24,381,444	665	632	95.04
	2006	23,467,798	705	705	100
	Percentage Change	3.89	-5.67	-10.35	
North Carolina	2007	14,885,132	700	667	95.29
	2006	14,220,681	700	671	95.86
	Percentage Change	4.67	0.00	-0.60	
Oregon	2007	6,111,933	113	111	98.23
	2006	4,158,151	112	112	100
	Percentage Change	46.99	0.89	-0.89	
South Carolina	2007	6,447,310	301	289	96.01
	2006	6,021,879	264	247	93.56
	Percentage Change	7.06	14.02	17.00	
South Dakota	2007	1,903,281	100	98	98.00
	2006	1,803,507	96	94	97.92
	Percentage Change	5.53	4.17	4.26	
Texas	2007	42,428,463	1,385	1,384	99.93
	2006	40,353,936	1,332	1,332	100
	Percentage Change	5.14	3.98	3.90	
Vermont	2007	1,135,502	101	100	99.01
	2006	1,079,869	97	95	97.94
	Percentage Change	5.15	4.12	5.26	
Virginia	2007	8,276,446	197	197	100
	2006	7,914,434	182	180	98.9
	Percentage Change	4.57	8.24	9.44	
Washington	2007	7,130,425	172	165	95.93
	2006	6,751,827	138	136	98.55
	Percentage Change	5.61	24.64	21.32	

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

DEFINITION OF “*INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY*” AS LISTED IN SECTION 7(20) OF THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

(A) In general

Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (B), the term “individual with a disability” means any individual who:

- (i) has a physical or mental impairment which for such individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
- (ii) can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services provided pursuant to title I, III, or VI.

(B) Certain programs; limitations on major life activities

Subject to subparagraphs (C), (D), (E), and (F), the term “individual with a disability” means, for purposes of Sections 2, 14, and 15, and titles II, IV, V, and VII of this act, any person who:

- (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;
- (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or
- (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.

(C) Rights and advocacy provisions

- (i) In general; exclusion of individuals engaging in drug use

For purposes of Title V, the term “individual with a disability” does not include an individual who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs, when a covered entity acts on the basis of such use.

- (ii) Exception for individuals no longer engaging in drug use

Nothing in clause (i) shall be construed to exclude as an individual with a disability an individual who:

- (I) has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs, or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully and is no longer engaging in such use;
- (II) is participating in a supervised rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in such use; or
- (III) is erroneously regarded as engaging in such use, but is not engaging in such use; except that it shall not be a violation of this act for a covered entity to adopt or administer reasonable policies or procedures, including but not limited to drug testing, designed to ensure that an individual

described in subclause (I) or (II) is no longer engaging in the illegal use of drugs.

(iii) Exclusion for certain services

Notwithstanding clause (i), for purposes of programs and activities providing health services and services provided under titles I, II, and III, an individual shall not be excluded from the benefits of such programs or activities on the basis of his or her current illegal use of drugs if he or she is otherwise entitled to such services.

(iv) Disciplinary action

For purposes of programs and activities providing educational services, local educational agencies may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use of possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student who is an individual with a disability and who currently is engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that such disciplinary action is taken against students who are not individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the due process procedures at Section 104.36 of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) shall not apply to such disciplinary actions.

(v) Employment; exclusion of alcoholics

For purposes of Sections 503 and 504 as such sections relate to employment, the term “individual with a disability” does not include any individual who is an alcoholic whose current use of alcohol prevents such individual from performing the duties of the job in question or whose employment, by reason of such current alcohol abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others.

(D) Employment; exclusion of individuals with certain diseases or infections

For the purposes of Section 503 and 504, as such sections relate to employment, such terms does not include an individual who has a currently contagious disease or infection and who, by reason of such disease or infection, would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or who, by reason of the currently contagious disease or infection, is unable to perform the duties of the job.

(E) Rights provision; exclusion of individual on basis of homosexuality or bisexuality

For purposes of Sections 501, 503, and 504—

- (i)** for purposes of the application of subparagraph (B) to such sections, the term “impairment” does not include homosexuality or bisexuality; and
- (ii)** therefore the term “individual with a disability” does not include an individual on the basis of homosexuality or bisexuality.

(F) Rights provisions; exclusion of individuals on basis of certain disorders

For the purposes of Sections 501, 503, and 504, the term “individual with a disability” does not include an individual on the basis of—

- (i)** transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, or other sexual behavior disorders;
- (ii)** compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania; or
- (iii)** psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from current illegal use of drugs.

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