

Fiscal Year 2007 Monitoring Report on the  
Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent  
Living Programs in the State of Georgia



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## CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
CHAPTER 1: RSA’S REVIEW PROCESS .....	7
CHAPTER 2: VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.....	9
CHAPTER 3: FISCAL REVIEW OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM.....	23
CHAPTER 4: INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM .....	27
CHAPTER 5: INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR OLDER BLIND PROGRAM.....	29
CHAPTER 6: PROGRESS ON ISSUES RAISED IN PREVIOUS REVIEWS .....	30
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY CONCLUSION .....	31
APPENDIX: TABLES A, B, C AND D.....	38

## Executive Summary

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) reviewed the performance of the following programs of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act) in the state of Georgia (GA):

- the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, established under Title I;
- the supported employment (SE) program, established under Title VI, Part B;
- the independent living (IL) programs, authorized under Title VII, Part B; and
- the Independent Living Services Program for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB), established under Title VII, Chapter 2.

In GA, the Georgia Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation Program (GDOLVR) is responsible for administering the four programs.

RSA's review began in the fall of 2006 and ended in the summer of 2007. During this time, RSA's GA state team:

- gathered and reviewed information regarding each program's performance;
- identified a wide range of VR and IL stakeholders and invited them to provide input into the review process;
- conducted an on-site visit, and held multiple discussions with state agency staff, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) members, State Independent Living Council (SILC) members, and stakeholders to share information, identify effective practices and areas for improvement;
- provided technical assistance;
- worked with GDOLVR to develop goals, strategies, and evaluation methods to address performance and compliance issues; and
- identified the technical assistance that RSA would provide to help improve program performance.

As a result of the review, RSA:

- identified effective practices;
- identified performance issues;
- discussed with GDOLVR performance and compliance goals and strategies related to selected issues;
- identified the technical assistance that it would provide to assist the agency to achieve the goals identified as a result of the review; and
- identified potential issues for further review.

Strengths and Challenges:

GADOLVR is committed to assisting individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment and independent living outcomes. GADOLVR has effective working relationships with community rehabilitation programs. It recently worked towards, and was able to successfully

facilitate, the establishment of a newly constituted SRC and SILC consisting of well-qualified active members. It has a sophisticated public hearing strategy through which it works in collaboration with its SRC to solicit meaningful public comment during its annual state plan development process. It places emphasis on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, particularly in the area of supported employment. It has a successful assistive work technology program. It successfully partners with other agencies, such as the state education agency, which allows it to effectively leverage resources for individuals with disabilities. In addition, its leadership is committed to the VR program's mission of improving the lives of individual's with disabilities, and effectively works with staff towards the implementation of a successful program.

The major challenges faced by GADOLVR include: 1) increasing the number of individuals with disabilities served and placed into competitive employment; 2) increasing hourly wages for individuals with disabilities; and 3) increasing resources for the VR field services program. According to data submitted to RSA, and taking into consideration state population and funds expended on the VR program, GADOLVR needs to focus efforts on increasing the number of individuals served and placed into employment that pay competitive wages. This is evident when comparing GADOLVR's results with the mean results for general and combined agencies under measures (such as applicants per million population, number of eligible cases open per million population, competitive employment outcomes per million population, applicants per million dollars spent, number receiving services under an IPE per million dollars spent, and competitive employment outcomes per million dollars spent) that assess efficiency and the extent to which coverage under the VR program is maximized.

The challenges faced by GADOLVR in the IL and OIB programs involve: improving communication between GADOLVR and IL in order to maximize services and the number of individuals served under IL; expanding services; and improving the coordination of services between the VR, IL, and OIB programs.

## Introduction

Section 107 of the Act, requires the Commissioner of the RSA to conduct annual reviews and periodic on-site monitoring of programs authorized under Title I of the Act to determine whether a state VR agency is complying substantially with the provisions of its State Plan under section 101 of the Act and with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established under section 106. In addition, the Commissioner must assess the degree to which VR agencies are complying with the assurances made in the Supplement for Supported Employment under Title VI of the Act and programs offered under Title VII of the Act are substantially complying with their respective state plan assurances and program requirements.

In order to fulfill its monitoring responsibilities, RSA:

- reviews the state agency's performance in assisting eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve high-quality employment and independent living outcomes;
- develops, jointly with the state agency, performance and compliance goals as well as strategies to achieve those goals; and
- provides technical assistance (TA) to the state agency in order to improve its performance, meet its goals, and fulfill its state plan assurances.

### Scope of the Review

RSA reviewed the performance of the following programs of the Act:

- the VR program, established under Title I;
- the SE program, established under Title VI, Part B;
- the IL programs, authorized under Title VII, Part B; and
- the OIB, established under Title VII, Chapter 2.

In addition, RSA also reviewed GADOLVR's progress on:

- the assurances that GADOLVR made to RSA in conjunction with its FY 2007 state plan.

### Georgia Administration of the VR, SE, IL, and OIB Programs

The Georgia Department of Labor Rehabilitation Services (GADOLRS) operates the VR, IL, OIB, and the State's SE program as integrated and interdependent programs. The largest of these programs is the VR Program. In addition to VR, IL, OIB, and SE, the GADOLRS operates the State's Disability Adjudication Services, the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation, the Business Enterprise Program, and Georgia Industries for the Blind. GADOLRS is managed by an assistant commissioner. On July 1, 2001, the state's Division of Rehabilitation Services was merged with the Georgia Department of Labor by an act of the state legislature. Prior to the merger, the GADOLVR was under the administration of the Georgia Department of Human Resources. Independent living services in Georgia are provided by local

non-profit, consumer organizations through grants administered by GADOLVR and the SILC. Services can also be obtained through centers for independent living (CILs) located in Athens, Augusta, Bainbridge, Decatur, Gainesville, Macon, Rome, and Savannah.

For the four programs listed above, this report describes RSA's review of GADOLVR, provides information on the agency's performance, identifies effective practices, identifies performance and compliance issues, and identifies the related goals, strategies, and technical assistance that RSA will provide to GADOLVR to address each of the issues identified during the review.

### Appreciation

RSA wishes to express appreciation to the representatives of the GADOLRS and GADOLVR, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and the stakeholders who assisted the RSA monitoring team in the review of GADOLVR.

## **Chapter I: RSA's Review Process**

### Data Used During the Review

RSA's review of GADOLVR began in the fall of 2006 and ended in the summer of 2007. RSA's data collections are finalized and available at different times throughout the year. During this review, RSA and the state agency used the most recent data that was available from FY 2005. However, the program highlight and trend data tables and figure incorporated within this report capture data from FY 2006 and prior years.

### Review Process Activities

During the review process RSA's GA state team:

- gathered and reviewed information regarding GADOLVR's performance;
- identified a wide range of VR and IL stakeholders and invited them to provide input into the review process;
- conducted one on-site visit, and held multiple discussions with state agency staff, SRC members, SILC members, and stakeholders to share information, identify effective practices and areas for improvement;
- provided technical assistance to GADOLVR;
- worked with GADOLVR to develop goals and strategies to address performance improvement;
- identified potential issues for further review; and
- identified the technical assistance that RSA would provide to help GADOLVR improve its performance.

### RSA GA State Team Review Participants

Members of RSA's GA state team included representatives from each of RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division's (SMPID's) five functional units. The RSA GA state team was led by RSA's interim state liaison to GA, Pedro Romero (State Teams Coordinator) and the following RSA GA team members: Pamela Hodge (Independent Living Unit), Brian Miller (Vocational Rehabilitation Unit), Tony Glover (Fiscal Unit), Joan Ward (Data Collection and Analysis Unit), Thomas Dolan (Technical Assistance Unit), Jerry Elliott (Office of Policy and Planning), and Regina Luster (Fiscal Unit).

### Information Gathering

During FY 2007, RSA began its review of GADOLVR by analyzing information including, but not limited to, RSA's various data collections, GADOLVR's VR and IL state plans, and GADOLVR's State Rehabilitation Council's (SRC's) Annual Report. After completing its internal review, the RSA team carried out the following information gathering activities with GADOLVR and stakeholders in order to gain a greater understanding of GADOLVR's strengths and challenges:

- the RSA GA interim state liaison and state liaison conducted a series of individual teleconferences with the GADOLRS and GADOLVR managers as well as stakeholders;
- the RSA GA state team conducted a series of teleconferences with the GADOLRS and GADOLVR management;
- the RSA GADOLVR state team held four teleconferences with stakeholders;
- the RSA GA state team conducted one on-site monitoring visit, which was conducted from May 21, 2007 through May 25, 2007;
- the RSA GA state team also held several teleconferences and on-site meetings focused on the SRC and IL services;
- the RSA GA state team Independent Living unit representative conducted teleconferences with the SILC chairperson; and
- the RSA GA state team participated in public hearings related to the FY 2008 VR state plan submission.



## Chapter 2: Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs

### Program Organization

GADOLVR has 14 regional offices statewide, as well as 53 local offices with expert teams who work in the community and are knowledgeable about the marketplace and the support services available. GADOLVR's director reports to the GADOLRS assistant commissioner.

Table 1 provides fiscal and program data for fiscal years 2002 through 2006. These data provide an overview of the VR program's costs, outcomes, and efficiency. The table identifies the amount of funds used by the agency, the number of individuals who applied, and the number who received services. It also provides information about the quality of the agency's employment outcomes and its transition services.

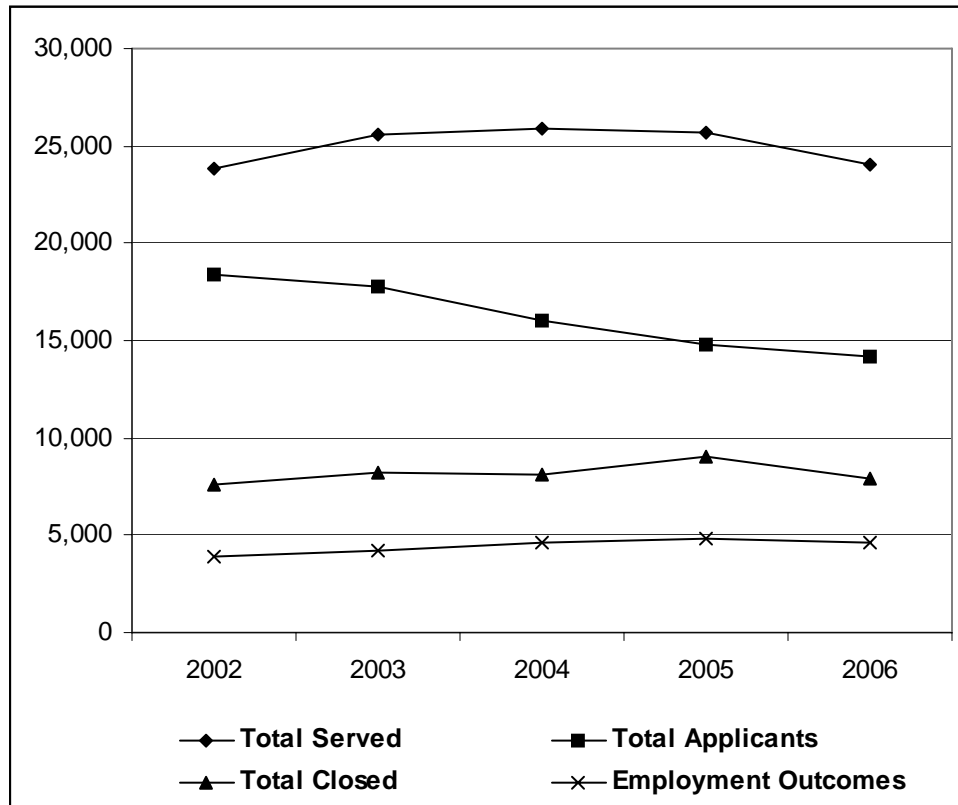
**Table 1 –Trend Data  
Performance Measures by Year: GADOLVR**

GEORGIA	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total funds used	\$95,384,912	\$99,888,441	\$95,062,805	\$96,365,002	\$94,785,560
Individuals served during year	23,790	25,632	25,844	25,703	23,991
Applicants	18,439	17,734	16,057	14,807	14,164
Closed after receiving services	7,625	8,228	8,069	9,000	7,905
Closed with employment outcomes	3,912	4,161	4,586	4,828	4,591
Employment outcomes without supports in an integrated setting	2,872	2,974	3,485	3,867	3,778
Average cost per individual served	\$4,009.45	\$3,897.02	\$3,678.33	\$3,749.17	\$3,950.88
Average cost per employment outcome	\$24,382.65	\$24,005.87	\$20,728.92	\$19,959.61	\$20,645.95
Employment outcomes per \$million spent	41.01	41.66	48.24	50.10	48.44
Competitive employment outcomes per \$million spent	33.93	35.60	42.55	45.54	45.14
Average hourly earnings for paid employment outcomes	\$7.70	\$8.02	\$8.04	\$8.05	\$8.40

**Table 2 – Trend Data Continued  
Performance Measures by Year: GADOLVR**

GEORGIA	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Average state hourly earnings	\$17.18	\$17.60	\$17.96	\$18.65	\$19.31
Average hours worked per week for paid employment outcomes	33.82	33.57	33.61	34.06	34.41
Percent of transition age served to total served	37.36	38.62	38.72	43.64	44.35
Employment rate for transition age served	49.81	50.85	55.54	52.75	55.88
Average time between application and closure (in months) for individuals with successful paid employment outcomes	23.10	22.40	22.20	24.20	24.10
Average number of individuals served per total staff	25.75	26.90	28.62	28.56	27.64

**Figure 1 –Trend Data  
Performance Measures by Year: GADOLVR**



## Provision of Technical Assistance to the VR Program During the Review Process

RSA provided technical assistance to GADOLVR in a number of VR program areas during the review process. RSA:

- verified the agency's RSA 911 case record data for FY 2004, FY 2005, and FY 2006;

The RSA-911 verification process consisted of using a custom computer application to compare the data reported on the RSA-911 Case Service Report submitted to RSA by the GADOLVR to the data obtained by reviewing the actual service records on site. The RSA GA state team looked at 42 data elements reported on the RSA-911 Case Service Report. The 42 data elements included the date of application, gender, date of birth, race, ethnicity, source of referral, impairment code and cause of impairment for both primary and secondary impairments, weekly earning at application and closure, hours worked in a week at application and closure, primary source of support at application and closure, level of education attained at application and closure, employment status at application and closure, type of public support at application and closure, date of eligibility determination, date of individualized plan for employment, date of closure, and type of closure.

The RSA GA state team reviewed 29 total service records. Eighteen of the records were closed in FY 2006: seven were closed with a successful employment outcome and eleven were closed unsuccessfully. Seven of the records were closed in FY 2005: six were closed with a successful employment outcome and one was closed unsuccessfully. Four of the records were closed in FY 2004: all four were closed unsuccessfully. The accuracy rate was 86 percent for FY 2006, 83 percent for FY 2005 and 68 percent for FY 2004. The numbers of discrepancies by data element for the 29 records reviewed are reflected in table A of the appendix.

- provided feedback to the agency on its case management system;

GADOLVR demonstrated their case management system. It is an Oracle based system that is difficult to enhance. While it serves a functional and useful purpose, it is administered and maintained by the Department of Labor IT department. GADOLVR has no administrative authority over the system, and is dependent on the Department of Labor IT office for basic functions such as running data reports.

- provided training on how to use RSA's Management Information System;

The RSA GA state team data unit representative demonstrated the use and navigation of the RSA Management Information System (MIS). The demonstration included how to locate the RSA-113/RSA-2 monitoring tables, RSA-911 monitoring tables, the standard and indicators, GADOLVR report cards, and the underlying report card tables. The RSA GA state team data unit representative also showed GADOLVR how to use the ad

hoc query function on the MIS to obtain information about their agency, and/or to compare and contrast their agency against other similar agencies.

- provided a detailed data analysis leading to the identification of performance improvement areas; and
- reviewed the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR's contracting practices;

This component included a review of several contracts and a meeting with appropriate representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR. The review indicated that the state legislature mandates dedicated funding for a contractor association consisting of contractors that work with GADOLVR. The review also revealed details related to contract management and evaluation. While some contracting practices are unique in GA in comparison to other states, the RSA GA state team's review did not result in any performance or compliance findings.

### Effective VR Practices Identified by GADOLVR and Stakeholders During the Review Process

RSA's review process solicited input from GADOLVR and stakeholders about effective practices. The following effective practices were identified:

#### 1. Assistive Work Technology (AWT)

GADOLVR's AWT unit provides a variety of services to address the assistive technology needs of eligible adults. Specialized staff of rehabilitation engineers, occupational therapists, rehabilitation technologists, and rehabilitation technicians work as a team with vocational rehabilitation counselors and their clientele to improve the individual's work-related independence in the home, school or work environment. The Rehabilitation Engineer provides assessment, but focuses on design of home and vehicle modifications, adaptations to commercially available technologies, and design of custom assistive technology when necessary. The Occupational Therapist provides clinical perspective performing ergonomic assessments, occupational safety, and many other types of assessments to identify appropriate work goals and simple devices to improve performance of work-related goals. The Rehabilitation Technologist provides assessments focusing on commercially available assistive technology and computer access technology. The Rehabilitation Technician fabricates, sets-up, and troubleshoots equipment. By removing many barriers to going to work and successful employment, AWT is a vital part of the vocational rehabilitation work team.

Assistive work technology includes high tech devices such as voice activated computers, environmental controls, and sophisticated vehicle modifications, and low tech devices as simple as jar openers or hand held magnifiers.

Tools for Life, an assistive technology resource available to all Georgians with disabilities, supports AWT by providing a Lending Library where many AT devices can be tested to see what works best.

## 2. GADOLVR's Partnership with GA's High School High Tech Program (HS/HT)

GADOLVR provides resources, and is engaged in a partnership with the GA HS/HT program. In 1997, the Georgia Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (the Committee) was created to act as Georgia's liaison with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Through the Georgia State Rehabilitation Council, the Committee developed the HS/HT initiative, building a comprehensive service delivery system of career development, education, training, leadership, and growth for youth with disabilities.

The Committee realized that a new approach to the HS/HT concept was needed. Existing sites in other states were limited to perhaps one city within that state. The opportunities to create a new system, using existing resources at the state and local level, were compelling. The Committee put together a "statewide/grass roots" structure and began organizing individual HS/HT sites throughout the state. It marshaled existing resources from several state agencies, including the Georgia Departments of Labor, Education, and Human Resources, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and others. The Committee wrote grants, developed funding sources, and allocated funds among various sites according to their activities and needs.

In 2002, a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), enabled HS/HT to formally become a part of the Georgia Department of Labor. The most recent statewide expansion of the HS/HT model has resulted in more focused alignment of HS/HT with services for workforce development and VR customers.

### VR Issues Identified by GADOLVR and Stakeholders During the Review Process

RSA's review process solicited input from GADOLVR and stakeholders about VR and SE performance and compliance issues. The following issues were identified in priority order:

#### 1. Position Vacancies:

- the number of VR agency counselor vacancies and the time it takes the designated state agency (the Georgia Department of Labor) to approve selections made by GADOLVR;
- the length of time the Older Blind Program coordinator position remained vacant;
- low counselor salaries;
- the impact of CRC certification on recruiting; and
- the need for specialty counselors for transition, deaf, blind, and deaf-blind consumers.

#### 2. The equitability of services and the fees paid under contracts to service providers;

#### 3. Improving consumer intake, delivery and availability of services:

- increasing specialty services especially for deaf-blind and traumatic brain injury (TBI) populations;

- increasing and improving services to transition age youth and young adults with disabilities who have cognitive impairments, including placement services into supported employment;
- the extent to which informed choice is promoted; and
- the needs of those consumers who would benefit from a self-employment outcome, and the length of time it takes to approve a self-employment work plan.

#### 4. The Georgia Department of Labor's administrative oversight of GADOLVR:

- restrictive fiscal oversight; and
- restrictive oversight on personnel matters.

Following compilation and discussion with GADOLVR about the issues, RSA worked with GADOLVR to identify which issues had merit, and addressed as many of these issues as possible either directly or by consolidating the issue into a broader issue area.

#### VR and SE Performance Issues, Goals, Strategies, and Technical Assistance

RSA and GADOLVR agreed on the following performance goals, strategies to achieve those goals, and technical assistance that RSA would provide to assist GADOLVR achieve each goal. These goals and strategies have been included in GADOLVR's FY 2008 state plan, and progress on achieving these goals will be reported in GADOLVR's FY 2010 annual state plan submission.

#### Issue 1. Increasing the number of consumers served and placed into employment by GADOLVR

The RSA GA state team presented a detailed data analysis, which demonstrated that GADOLVR could maximize the effectiveness of the GA VR program by increasing the number of individuals served under an individual plan for employment (IPE). As reflected in Table 3, GADOLVR was significantly below the national mean and median for general and combined VR agencies with regard to applications, individuals served, and competitive employment outcomes per million state population and per million dollars spent. This trend of finding, serving and rehabilitating relatively few individuals in relation to the size of the state and in relation to the funds expended has been the practice for several years (see the RSA MIS report card tables dating back to FY 2002 and RSA monitoring tables showing data as far back as FY 1995).

The trend seems to have reversed itself in recent years and the total number of employment outcomes has exceeded 4,000 since FY 2003, as opposed to being in the 3,000 range for some years before that. However, the results shown in table 3 for FY 2005 when total employment outcomes reached 4,828 (one of the highest results for GADOLVR in recent years) show that even at this recent high level, GADOLVR is still significantly below the national average in the numbers served and rehabilitated.

There could be many explanations for this result. RSA summary data suggests that one possibility is that GADOLVR counseling staff may be working with fewer individuals at any one

time than counselors in other state VR general and combined agencies. For example, the average caseload for VR counselors nationally is approximately 100 active cases. GADOLVR indicated that the agency had 281 caseload carrying VR counselors in FY 2005. If each VR counselor carried the national average of cases, then one would expect about 28,100 active cases. GADOLVR reported on the FY 2005 RSA-113 serving 25,703 under an IPE. Recent GADOLVR information indicates that of the 252 counselors in FY 2007, 99 (53 general caseloads, 46 specialty caseloads) had caseloads of less than 100, and 16 (5 general caseloads, 11 specialty caseloads) had caseloads of less than 50. At the other end of the spectrum, 53 GADOLVR counselors (36 general caseloads, 17 specialty caseloads) reported caseloads of over 150. In considering counselor caseloads, GADOLVR may want to raise the low end, lower the high end, and aim at an overall balance that increases the average caseload size to a reasonable range for the particular assignment while accomplishing an overall increase in the number of individuals served.

**Table 3**  
**Applications, Individuals Served, and Competitive Employment Outcomes Per Million State Population and Per Million Dollars Spent**

<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>GADOLVR result (FY2005)</b>	<b>Mean result, general and combined VR agencies (FY 2005)</b>	<b>Median result, general and combined VR agencies (FY 2005)</b>
Applicants per million population	1341	2363	2325
Number of eligible cases open per million population	2314	3462	3221
Competitive employment outcomes per million population	484	865	685
Applicants per million dollars spent	126	188	189
Number receiving services under an IPE per million dollars spent	267	302	292
Competitive employment outcomes per million dollars spent	46	62	60

During the RSA GA state team's presentation of its detailed data analysis (see tables B, C, and D of the appendix for additional data elements addressed during this review), RSA staff offered this type of information in order to generate discussion with representatives from GADOLRS and GADOLVR about the low number of individuals served and rehabilitated relative to resources and population available. In addition GADOLVR was trained to access the data tables on the

RSA MIS from which the RSA presentation was derived so that GADOLVR staff can look at this information for their own purposes. As a result of the team's presentation, GADOLVR agreed that successful efforts to increase the number of individuals served would strengthen the GADOLVR program. To that end, the following goals, strategies and technical assistance were identified.

Goal 1. GADOLVR will increase counselor caseload size, as appropriate.

GADOLVR has recently provided RSA with information about caseload size and type of VR counselor assignment for FY 2007. Based on the numbers provided (GADOLVR reports that it has approximately 281 caseload carrying counselors in FY 2007), counselors may not, on average, be carrying a sufficient number of cases. GADOLVR should assess actual caseloads and should make adjustments as appropriate. GADOLVR would also have to consider adding money for purchase of services for individuals, so that counselors would be able to fund services for the additional individuals they serve.

Strategy 1. GADOLVR will analyze VR counselor caseloads and staff allocations and will reallocate positions, as appropriate, to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery system.

Technical Assistance: RSA staff will provide technical assistance to GADOLVR by:

- updating and presenting the data analysis conducted for this review to a retreat meeting of GADOLVR senior management staff;
- working with the management team to explore state level data and provide input for possible strategies for staff reallocation, for caseload size and performance expectations, and for any other strategies identified that might allow GADOLVR to serve more individuals with disabilities; and
- training the new GADOLVR business manager on use of the RSA MIS system, including accessing and analyzing tables and databases available on-line.

Goal 2. GADOLVR will increase efforts to recruit, train and retrain qualified staff.

During the review process, stakeholders and GADOLVR shared that hiring and retaining staff can be difficult due to arduous hiring processes, and low salaries (Note, that GADOLVR has adopted the national CRC standard as the qualification standard for VR counselors under the GADOLVR Comprehensive System of Personnel Development plan). In addition to the reallocation of positions to be examined in Strategy 1 above, increasing the number of specialty counselors (counselors who are native speakers and counselors focusing on specialty populations such TBI, deaf, blind and deaf-blind populations) in the field may result in increases in the number of individuals served, and may help improve service provision and employment outcomes for groups served by specialty counselors.



### Strategies to Recruit

Strategy 1. GADOLRS and GADOLVR will collaboratively work with the Georgia Department of Labor to improve the recruitment and selection processes and increase their efficiency. GADOLVR will conduct an historical analysis (based on a sample of previously vacant GADOLVR positions) covering the recruitment and selection process, including the amount of time taken by the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to complete their respective steps in the processes, and will recommend changes to process based on the results of the analysis.

Strategy 2. GADOLVR will intensify recruitment efforts for Spanish-speaking VR counselors.

Strategy 3. GADOLVR will encourage Historically Black Colleges and Universities to develop degree programs for VR counselors, and will conduct special recruitment efforts focusing upon minority students, including students with disabilities.

Strategy 4. GADOLVR will create a State VR Sensory Unit that will be lead by Directors of Deafness and Blindness and a Coordinator of Deaf/Blindness to provide leadership, quality assurance and technical assistance to VR program field staff and community partners.

Strategy 5. GADOLVR will establish and fill specialized deaf, blind, and deaf-blind VR counselor and AWT positions.

Strategy 6. GADOLVR will establish a VR counselor position that will coordinate services with each VA hospital in GA.

Strategy 7. GADOLVR will conduct an analysis that assesses the need to establish and fill a TBI services coordinator position.

### Strategies to Train and Re-train

Strategy 8. GADOLVR will provide quality training statewide that is job specific and targeted to address deficiencies identified in quality assurance reviews, federal performance indicator results and training needs assessments.

Strategy 9. GADOLVR will provide specialized staff training and resources to improve service for individuals with limited English proficiency, including those who use sign language.

Strategy 10. GADOLVR will provide multicultural training to increase sensitivity, awareness and celebrate diversity.

Strategy 11. GADOLVR will provide specialized sensory disability training for new specialized staff positions as well as existing staff positions.

Strategy 12. GADOLVR will provide specialized training opportunities for staff members to increase their knowledge and expertise in the latest trends, technology, and techniques to improve services for clients with TBI and spinal cord injuries.

Technical Assistance: The RSA GA state team has requested that the historical analysis covering the recruitment and selection process be shared with RSA once completed. Based on the results of that analysis, the RSA GA state team will meet for technical assistance purposes with appropriate representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to help resolve impediments to hiring GADOLVR personnel. Technical assistance in other areas related to hiring personnel and training will be provided as needed, once those needs have been identified by GADOLVR.

Goal 3. GADOLVR will implement and carryout effective outreach efforts that lead to increases in the number of individuals served.

Strategy 1. GADOLVR will develop and expand relationships with advocacy groups and coalitions to identify and implement specific ways to improve services and outreach to potential consumers from disability groups that have historically been underserved.

Strategy 2. GADOLVR will perform outreach activities with potential referral sources such as physicians, hospitals, and other service providers for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, TBI, and individuals with spinal cord injuries.

Strategy 3. GADOLVR will coordinate services with the Georgia Department of Labor's Local Veteran Employment Representatives and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist.

Strategy 4. GADOLVR will increase the overall number of transitioning youth served, by focusing recruitment efforts on 504 students through outreach with parents, school nurses, school counselors, teachers and administrators.

Goal 4. GADOLVR will increase employment outcomes for disability groups that have historically achieved low employment outcome numbers.

Strategy 1. GADOLVR will augment services for individuals who are blind, deaf or deaf-blind resulting in a 5 percent increase to employment outcomes for these disability groups.

Strategy 2. GADOLVR will augment services to transition students with disabilities resulting in a 5 percent increase in employment for this disability group.

Technical Assistance: RSA staff will provide technical assistance to GADOLVR by:

- updating and presenting the data analysis conducted for this review to a retreat meeting of GADOLVR senior management staff;
- working with the management team to explore state level data and provide input for possible strategies for staff reallocation, for caseload size and performance expectations,

- and for any other strategies identified that might allow GADOLVR to serve more individuals with disabilities; and
- training the new GADOLVR business manager on use of the RSA MIS system, including accessing and analyzing tables and databases available on-line.

Issue 2. Increasing resources to the field services program to maximize the number of individuals served and placed into employment

During this review process, it became apparent that GADOLVR is limited in its ability to initiate budget revisions that could lead to increases in field services funding. There are three state program budgets within the Georgia Department of Labor among which Title I funds are allocated. The RSA GA state team was informed that transfers within these program budgets are easy to facilitate in comparison to transfers between these program budgets. The Georgia Department of Labor, and thus GADOLVR, are limited to two opportunities to request transfers between budgets per year by the Georgia state legislature. Despite these budget revision constraints, it is important to note that GADOLVR may be able to improve performance related to service provision and job placement by examining its use of existing resources and assessing the feasibility of rebudgeting some of those resources in order to increase funding for its field services program.

Goal 1. GADOLVR will work within existing Georgia Department of Labor and state law parameters to strengthen its field services program through increases in resources.

Strategy: GADOLVR will analyze budget allocations and explore all available funding sources to determine how field services funds may be increased for the purpose of increasing the number of individuals with disabilities served.

Technical Assistance: In an attempt to identify how Title I funds have been allocated across the three budgets, the RSA GA state team requested budget information with the appropriate detail. Once this information is received and reviewed, the RSA GA state team will meet with appropriate representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to provide technical assistance related to budget revisions and transfers.

Issue 3. Improving the accuracy with which Information and Data is Reported to RSA

During the RSA GA state team's presentation of its data analysis, and the discussions that ensued with representatives from GADOLVR, data reporting errors were identified that resulted in several inaccurate conclusions about the data submitted by GADOLVR. The RSA GA state team and GADOLVR agreed that efforts should be focused on accurate information and data reporting.

Goal 1. GADOLVR will develop a plan that outlines steps to prevent and correct data and information reporting errors.

Strategy: GADOLVR will work with its programmers to improve its management information systems, and will develop data entry review processes for managers that will help correct and prevent coding and information errors

Technical Assistance: The RSA GA state team provided guidance while on site related to coding issues, which helped representatives from GADOLVR in developing a better understanding of how to code data that could not be easily tied to existing codes. The RSA GA state team will continue these discussions with GADOLVR during an onsite technical assistance and training session that will focus upon performance improvement.

### VR and SE Recommendations

RSA GA state team discussed the expansion of GADOLVR's quality assurance system to include a component that evaluates for performance based on measurable goals. GADOLVR has shared that it has a quality assurance system in place that evaluates for compliance and for performance, but is seeking to enhance the system by exploring innovative evaluation methods that may strengthen its existing system.

As GADOLVR explores innovative evaluation methods, the RSA GA state team recommends that GADOLVR keeps its focus on methods that allow for the periodic assessment of the progress made toward achieving goals identified within this report. In addition, the evaluation methods should include the use of objective measures that are clearly related to the intended performance outcomes. The measures should also result in quantitative and qualitative data that allows GADOLVR to assess the effectiveness of the strategies identified for each goal.

### VR and SE Issues for Further Review and Additional Technical Assistance Areas

RSA plans on conducting further review of the following VR and SE issues:

- examining the GADOLVR quality assurance system to assess the extent to which it evaluates performance based on measurable goals;
- examining the extent to which GADOLVR is able to effectively conduct its administrative responsibilities in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(B) of the Act and in 34 CFR 361.13(c); and
- improving the quality of employment outcomes by: 1) narrowing the gap between the average hourly earnings for GADOLVR participants and the average hourly wage for Georgia; and 2) increasing the average weekly earnings for GADOLVR participants exiting the program with a paid employment outcome.

GADOLVR has had difficulty in passing performance indicator 1.5 (the ratio of average hourly VR wage to average state hourly wage). In fact, GADOLVR has consistently failed this indicator since 2000. In 2005, the average hourly wage of competitively employed individuals in GA was \$8.32, the state average hourly wage was \$18.65, and the ratio of the average hourly VR wage to the average state hourly wage was only .446. The minimum performance level required by RSA for this

indicator is .52. Between 2000 and 2004 the GA ratio for indicator 1.5 hovered between .460 and .475.

One explanation for GADOLVR's difficulty in meeting and exceeding performance indicator 1.5 may be the focus it places on serving transition age individuals with disabilities. The percentage of transition age individuals with disabilities served in comparison to the total number of individuals served in GA in 2005 is approximately 60 percent higher than the national average. In 2005, 43.6 percent of the total number of individuals served by GADOLVR were transition age individuals. The national average in 2005 was 26.4 percent. Transition age individuals with IEPs referred from secondary schools usually include high percentages of individuals with cognitive impairments or mental illness. For GADOLVR in FY 2006, 1,658 of the 2,182 transition age individuals who achieved an employment outcome were individuals with some type of mental impairment, and the majority of these were individuals with mental retardation and severe and chronic mental illness. These individuals are most often receiving SSI and relying on Medicaid for services that maintain them in the community. However, the need for Medicaid support means that individuals risk losing needed benefits if earnings exceed Medicaid eligibility guidelines. For a combination of reasons, these individuals typically earn low wages, and in GA they appear to be primarily placed into entry-level jobs that pay close to minimum wage.

Average weekly earnings in GA are also well below the national averages for general and combined agencies. In GA the mean weekly wage at closure for all employment outcomes was \$268.08 in 2005. The mean weekly wage at closure for competitive employment outcomes was \$290.89 in 2005. The national averages for general and combined agencies were \$321.28 and \$330.78 respectively. While the national averages for general and combined agencies reflects that the improvement of weekly wages needs to be a focus across all agencies, GA's low averages are highlighted here for the purpose of conveying that these averages will be positively impacted by increases in hourly earnings, to the extent that increases in weekly earnings do not have adverse consequences to the overall community support funding for the individual.

#### Interim Recommendations:

- GADOLVR should develop strategies that help identify higher paying positions.
- GADOLVR should track hour and wage data, and develop strategies with stakeholder input to improve wages.

#### Future Technical Assistance

RSA plans to provide the following technical assistance:

- An information sharing session focusing on the appropriate leveraging of resources by GADOLVR and Independent Living in order to maximize the number of individuals with disabilities served.
- An information sharing session focusing on the legal and documentation requirements for construction at Warm Springs and Cave Springs.
- Updating and presenting the data analysis conducted for this review to a retreat meeting of GADOLVR senior management staff.
- Working with the management team to explore state level data and provide input for possible strategies for staff reallocation, for caseload size and performance expectations, and for any other strategies identified that might allow GADOLVR to serve more individuals with disabilities.
- Training the new GADOLVR business manager on use of the RSA MIS system, including accessing and analyzing tables and databases available on-line.
- As needed, the RSA GA state team will provide assistance in identifying methods of evaluation to measure performance improvement.

## Chapter 3: Fiscal Review of the VR Program

RSA reviewed GADOLVR's fiscal management of the VR program. During the review process RSA provided technical assistance to the state agency to improve its fiscal management and identified areas for improvement. RSA reviewed the general effectiveness of the agency's cost and financial controls, internal processes for the expenditure of funds, use of appropriate accounting practices, and financial management systems.

The data in the following table, taken from fiscal reports submitted by the state agencies, speak to the overall fiscal performance of the agency. The data related to matching requirements are taken from the fourth quarter of the respective fiscal year's SF-269 report. The maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement data are taken from the final SF-269 report of the fiscal year (two years prior to the fiscal year to which it is compared). Fiscal data related to administration, total expenditures, and administrative cost percentage are taken from the RSA-2.

**Table 4**  
**Fiscal Data for GADOLVR for FY 2002 through FY 2006**

<b>Georgia (C)</b>					
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Grant Amount</b>	71,569,517	73,728,989	76,059,977	77,939,250	81,908,688
<b>Required Match</b>	19,370,149	19,954,606	20,585,483	21,094,105	22,168,425
<b>Federal Expenditures</b>	63,790,208	64,829,540	61,358,780	62,497,173	52,123,012
<b>Actual Match</b>	19,370,149	19,954,605	20,585,483	21,094,104	22,168,425
<b>Over (Under) Match</b>	0	(1)	0	(1)	0
<b>Carryover</b>	7,779,309	8,899,449	14,701,197	15,442,077	29,785,676
<b>Program Income</b>	5,396,189	1,138,467	1,050,979	2,347,968	2,587,524
<b>Maintenance of Effort (MOE)</b>	17,306,775	18,593,505	19,370,149	18,250,899	20,420,081
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	7,037,203	7,888,138	7,734,628	8,453,821	7,403,881
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	95,384,912	99,888,441	95,062,805	96,365,002	94,785,560
<b>Percent Admin Costs to Total Expenditures</b>	7.38percent	7.90percent	8.14percent	8.77percent	7.81percent

### Explanations Applicable to the Fiscal Profile Table

**Grant Amount:** The amounts shown represent the final award for each fiscal year, and reflect any adjustments for MOE penalties, reductions for grant funds voluntarily relinquished through the reallocation process, or additional grant funds received through the reallocation process.

**Match (Non-Federal Expenditures):** The non-Federal share of expenditures in the Basic Support Program, other than for the construction of a facility related to a community rehabilitation program, was established in the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act at 21.3 percent. As such, a *minimum* of 21.3 percent of the total allowable program costs charged to each year's grant must come from non-Federal expenditures from allowable sources as defined in program and administrative regulations governing the VR Program. (34 CFR 361.60(a) and (b); 34 CFR 80.24)

In reviewing compliance with this requirement, RSA examined the appropriateness of the sources of funds used as match in the VR Program, the amount of funds used as match from appropriate sources, and the projected amount of state appropriated funds available for match in each federal fiscal year. The accuracy of expenditure information previously reported in financial and program reports submitted to RSA was also reviewed.

**Carryover:** Federal funds appropriated for a fiscal year remain available for obligation in the succeeding fiscal year only to the extent that the VR agency met the matching requirement for those federal funds by September 30 of the year of appropriation. (34 CFR 361.64(b)) Either expending or obligating the non-federal share of program expenditures by this deadline may meet this carryover requirement.

In reviewing compliance with the carryover requirement, RSA examined documentation supporting expenditure and unliquidated obligation information previously reported to RSA to substantiate the extent to which the state was entitled to use any federal funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated.

**Program Income:** Program income means gross income received by the state that is directly generated by an activity supported under a federal grant program. Sources of state VR program income include, but are not limited to, payments from the Social Security Administration for rehabilitating Social Security beneficiaries, payments received from workers' compensation funds, fees for services to defray part or all of the costs of services provided to particular individuals, and income generated by a state-operated community rehabilitation program. Program income earned (received) in one fiscal year can be carried over and obligated in the following fiscal year regardless of whether the agency carries over federal grant funds. Grantees may also transfer program income received from the Social Security Administration for rehabilitating Social Security beneficiaries to other formula programs funded under the Act to expand services under these programs.

In reviewing program income, RSA analyzed the total amount (as compared to the total percentage of income earned by all VR agencies and comparable/like VR agencies), sources, and use of generated income.

**Maintenance of Effort (MOE):** The 1992 Amendments revised the requirements in section 111(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act with respect to maintenance of effort provisions. Effective Federal FY 1993 and each Federal fiscal year thereafter, the maintenance of effort level is based on state expenditures under the title I State plan from non-federal sources for the federal fiscal year two years earlier. States must meet this prior year expenditure level to avoid monetary sanctions outlined in 34 CFR 361.62(a)(1). The match and maintenance of effort requirements are two separate requirements. Each must be met by the state.

In reviewing compliance with this requirement, RSA examined documentation supporting fiscal year-end and final non-federal expenditures previously reported for each grant year.



**Administrative Costs:** Administrative costs means expenditures incurred in the performance of administrative functions including expenses related to program planning, development, monitoring and evaluation. More detail related to expenditures that should be classified as administrative costs is found in VR Program regulations at 34 CFR 361.5(b)(2).

**Provision of Technical Assistance to the VR and SE Programs During the Review Process:**

RSA provided technical assistance in the following fiscal areas during the review process. RSA:

- provided a synopsis of each requirement and reviewed with financial staff RSA's assessment of the agency's compliance with specific financial requirements – match, maintenance of effort (MOE), carryover, reallocation, program income, reversion to donor, liquidation of outstanding obligations and grant closeout;
- discussed with staff GADOLVR's financial participation in the One-Stop service delivery system, and verified that the agency's financial participation is limited to paying an equitable share of costs only in those Career Centers where staff are co-located;
- discussed sources of VR Program match and the distinction between third-party cooperative arrangements and funds received from school districts that "house" VR counselors (After clarification, RSA's internal Sources of Match Report, based upon information previously provided by GADOLVR was corrected.);
- discussed administrative costs and the reduction of staff positions and vacancies at the Central Office level (While GADOLVR's reported administrative costs are consistently lower than the national averages for all VR agencies and combined VR agencies, concerns surfaced related to the sufficiency of administrative staff to carryout mandated functions.);
- reviewed requirements for construction under the Rehabilitation Act and the dorm renovation project planned at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation;
- provided technical assistance related to the agency's practice of charging salary costs attributable to the Independent Living Services – Part B and Independent Living – Chapter 2 Programs to the VR Program (This is not an allowable expense of the VR Program. However, if sufficient Social Security reimbursements are available, this form of program income can be transferred to Independent Living programs to cover allowable costs of those programs. While salaries may initially be charged based upon budgeted amounts, appropriate time distribution records must be maintained to adjust these budgeted charges to actual.);
- discussed with staff the requirements for the timely and accurate submission of required financial and program reports, liquidation of outstanding obligations and submission of final reports, providing specific examples of where GADOLVR was not in compliance with federal requirements;
- assisted financial staff with the reconstruction of program expenditures for FYs 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, after review of supporting documentation and approved revised Financial Status Reports applicable to each of these fiscal years;

- advised agency of missing reports for the Supported Employment and Independent Living – Part B Programs and actions to be taken to finalize and submit these reports;
- explained requirements related to the liquidation of year-end non-federal obligations and the impact on GADOLVR’s ability to carryover and utilize unobligated federal funds in the subsequent fiscal year (To ensure future compliance with all requirements and provide maximum flexibility for the use of these remaining funds, GADOLVR has decided to expend 100 percent of the match required for its entire allotment by September 30 of each fiscal year.);
- discussed issues related to managing state match shortages and strategies utilized within GADOLVR to maximize the use of the Department’s resources for the benefit of the VR Program;
- reminded agency of the requirement to obligate all federal funds that have been carried over, no later than September 30 of the carryover year (Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the loss of these federal grant funds.);
- discussed the reallocation process and GADOLVR’s responsibility to identify and release for reallocation any federal funds that cannot be matched and/or utilized by the agency:  
This action must be taken within the year for which the federal funds were appropriated to permit RSA to reallocate these funds to other VR agencies. After reconstruction of expenditures, GADOLVR reported \$256,193 (FY 2002), \$8,854,773 (2003) and \$611,134 (2004) in unobligated federal funds when closing out these fiscal years. As a result, \$9,722,100 from this 3-year period that could have been used by other VR agencies reverted to the U.S. Treasury. Final reports have not been submitted for FYs 2005 or 2006.
- began review of segments of the agency’s budget to ascertain the total amount of funds available to carryout each program administered by GADOLVR.

#### VR and SE Fiscal Issues for Further Review

Throughout FY 2008, RSA will continue its monitoring activities focusing initially on:

- analysis of the three GADOLVR budgets, and the legislative statute that limits the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to two transfers between budgets per year;
- determining the total amount of state-appropriated funds available for VR Program match and the federal fiscal year(s) for which the funds are appropriated;
- reallocation process and strategies for releasing federal funds that cannot be matched;
- verifying the accuracy of the FY 2006 RSA-2 (Annual Vocational Rehabilitation Program/Cost Report) and Financial Status Reports (SF-269s) for FYs 2006 and 2007;
- reviewing the closeout of FY 2005; and
- exploring the use of budgetary and financial/program performance reports as a management tool to improve VR Program performance.

## Chapter 4: IL Program

### Program Organization

Georgia has eight CILs located throughout the state and all receive a combination of Part C and B funds. Part B funds are distributed to each center for operational purposes or purchase of adaptive equipment and home modifications. Two centers receive funding through a line item in the state budget, and one center receives Chapter 2 funding to provide IL services to the older blind population.

**Table 5**  
**FY 2006 GADOLVR IL Program Highlights**

	<b>Amounts of Funding</b>
Part B Funds	499,996
Older Blind	763,271
Other Federal Funds	0
State Funds	338,294
Local Government	0
Private/Other Funds	0
Total	1,601,561

### IL Issues Identified by Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation and Stakeholders During the Review Process

RSA's review process solicited input from GADOLVR and stakeholders about IL performance and compliance issues. The following issues were identified:

- improving and expanding VR and IL relationships at the local level;
- maximum and appropriate utilization of VR and IL funds to serve the greatest number of individuals with disabilities;
- timeliness of service provision; and
- timeliness of processing purchase requests and payment to vendors/contractors.

Following compilation of this list, the RSA GA state team member representing the IL unit worked with the representatives from GADOLVR and the SILC to address as many of these issues as possible either directly or by consolidating the issues into broader issue areas.

### IL Performance Issues, Goals, Strategies, and Technical Assistance

As a result of the review, the RSA GA state team and GADOLVR agreed on the following IL performance goals, strategies to achieve those goals, and technical assistance that RSA would provide to assist GADOLVR achieve each goal.

Issue 1. Develop clarity among the IL and VR programs regarding the use of VR and IL funds for the purchase of services benefiting IL consumers

Goal 1. Leverage VR and IL resources to their maximum potential and develop an understanding regarding the best use of funds to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities within the IL program.

Strategy. Identify training and opportunities for GADOLVR and IL to partner with each other in order to maximize resources.

Technical Assistance: An information sharing session focusing on the appropriate leveraging of resources by GADOLVR and Independent Living in order to maximize the number of individuals with disabilities served will be provided.

Issue 2. Improve and expand GADOLVR and IL relationships at the local level to ensure the appropriateness of referrals, services, and denial of services

Goal 1. Develop, implement and maintain a working communication system between VR and IL that will help ensure ongoing effective communication related to referrals, services and other issues.

Strategy: Establish ongoing meetings between GADOLVR, the SILC and CILs to identify training needs, and for information sharing purposes.

Technical Assistance: An information sharing session focusing on the appropriate leveraging of resources by GADOLVR and Independent Living in order to maximize the number of individuals with disabilities served will be provided.

## **Chapter 5: OIB Program**

### Program Organization

Georgia's OIB Program is administered through the GADOLVR. There are seven contractors who are responsible for providing IL services to the older blind population. One of the service providers is a center for independent living in Augusta, Georgia.

### OIB Issues Identified by Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation and Stakeholders During the Review Process

RSA's review process solicited input from GADOLVR and stakeholders about OIB performance and compliance issues. The following issues were identified:

- timeliness of service provision; and
- timeliness of purchase/payment processing.

### OIB Recommendations

RSA recommends that Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation establish goals and strategies to address the following OIB issues:

- develop and implement ways to expand and improve the provision of OIB services; and
- implement an effective system to improve the processing of purchase requests and payments to OIB vendors.

## **Chapter 6: Progress on Issues Raised in Previous Reviews**

As a result of the RSA review conducted with GADOLVR in FY 2003-2004, the agency developed a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). A summary of the progress that GADOLVR has made on the CAP is described below.

### **Corrective Action Plan**

Through the implementation of its CAP, GADOLVR successfully resolved all compliance findings identified in FY 2003-2004 related to the following topic:

- presumption of eligibility of social security beneficiaries;
- policies establishing residency requirements; and
- postsecondary academic and vocational training policies that establish a requirement for work expectancy as a requisite for the provision of such services.

## **Chapter 7: Summary Conclusion**

The following strengths were noted by the RSA GA state team during this review:

- GADOLVR has a strong and effective working relationship with its community rehabilitation programs, and is able to maximize services as result of these relationships;
- GADOLVR has a newly constituted SRC and SILC consisting of well qualified and active members;
- GADOLVR has a sophisticated public hearing strategy through which it works in collaboration with its SRC to solicit meaningful public comment during its annual state plan development process;
- The emphasis GADOLVR places on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, particularly in the area of supported employment;
- GADOLVR has a successful assistive work technology program;
- GADOLVR has effective partnerships with other state agencies, such as the state education agency, which allows it to effectively leverage resources for individuals with disabilities; and
- GADOLVR's leadership is committed to the VR program's mission of improving the lives of individual's with disabilities, and effectively works with staff towards the implementation of a successful program.

The following challenges were noted by the RSA GA state team during this review:

- increasing the number of individuals with disabilities served and place into competitive employment by GADOLVR;
- increasing hourly wages for individuals with disabilities;
- increasing resources for the VR field services program;
- counselor salaries;
- improving communication between GADOLVR and IL; and
- expanding and improving the coordination of services between GADOLVR, IL and OIB.

GADOLVR's performance related to VR standards and performance indicators for 2005:

GADOLVR met and/or exceeded the required performance on VR standards and performance indicators.

Table 6 summarizes the results of RSA’s review.

**Table 6  
RSA Review Summary**

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
<b>Program: VR</b>		
1. GADOLVR will increase counselor caseload size, as appropriate.	1. GADOLVR will analyze VR counselor caseloads and staff allocations and will reallocate positions, as appropriate, to achieve an efficient and effective service delivery system.	RSA staff will provide technical assistance to GADOLVR by: 1) updating and presenting the data analysis conducted for this review to a retreat meeting of GADOLVR senior management staff; 2) working with the management team to explore state level data and provide input for possible strategies for staff reallocation, for caseload size and performance expectations, and for any other strategies identified that might allow GADOLVR to serve more individuals with disabilities; and 3) training the new GADOLVR business manager on use of the RSA MIS system, including accessing and analyzing tables and databases available on-line.
2. GADOLVR will increase efforts to recruit, train and retrain qualified staff.	<p><u>Strategies to Recruit</u></p> <p>1. GADOLRS and GADOLVR will collaboratively work with the Georgia Department of Labor to improve the recruitment and selection processes and increase their efficiency. GADOLVR will conduct an historical analysis (based on a sample of previously vacant GADOLVR positions)</p>	The RSA GA state team has requested that the historical analysis covering the recruitment and selection process be shared with RSA once completed. Based on the results of that analysis, the RSA GA state team will meet for technical assistance purposes with appropriate representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to help



<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
	<p>covering the recruitment and selection process, including the amount of time taken by the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to complete their respective steps in the processes, and will recommend changes to process based on the results the analysis.</p> <p>2. GADOLVR will intensify recruitment efforts for Spanish-speaking VR counselors.</p> <p>3. GADOLVR will encourage Historically Black Colleges and Universities to develop degree programs for VR counselors, and will conduct special recruitment efforts focusing upon minority students, including students with disabilities.</p> <p>4. GADOLVR will create a State VR Sensory Unit that will be lead by Directors of Deafness and Blindness and a Coordinator of Deaf/Blindness to provide leadership, quality assurance and technical assistance to VR program field staff and community partners.</p> <p>5. GADOLVR will establish and fill specialized deaf, blind, and deaf-blind VR counselor and AWT positions.</p> <p>6. GADOLVR will establish a VR counselor position that will coordinate services with each VA hospital in GA.</p>	<p>resolve impediments to hiring GADOLVR personnel. Technical assistance in other areas related to hiring personnel and training will be provided as needed, once those needs have been identified by GADOLVR.</p>

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
	<p>7. GADOLVR will conduct an analysis that assesses the need to establish and fill a TBI services coordinator position.</p> <p><u>Strategies to Train and Retrain</u></p> <p>8. GADOLVR will provide quality training statewide that is job specific and targeted to address deficiencies identified in quality assurance reviews, federal performance indicator results and training needs assessments.</p> <p>9. GADOLVR will provide specialized staff training and resources to improve service for individuals with limited English proficiency, including those who use sign language.</p> <p>10. GADOLVR will provide multicultural training to increase sensitivity, awareness and celebrate diversity.</p> <p>11. GADOLVR will provide specialized sensory disability training for new specialized staff positions as well as existing staff positions.</p> <p>12. GADOLVR will provide specialized training opportunities for staff members to increase their knowledge and expertise in the latest trends, technology, and techniques to improve services for clients with TBI and spinal cord injuries.</p>	

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
<p>3. GADOLVR will implement and carryout effective outreach efforts that lead to increases in the number of individuals served.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>1. GADOLVR will develop and expand relationships with advocacy groups and coalitions to identify and specific ways to improve services and outreach potential consumers from disability groups that have historically been under served.</p> <p>2. GADOLVR will perform outreach activities with potential referral sources such as physicians, hospitals, and other service providers for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, TBI, and individuals with spinal cord injuries.</p> <p>3. GADOLVR will coordinate services with the Georgia Department of Labor’s Local Veteran Employment Representatives and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist.</p> <p>4. GADOLVR will increase the overall number of transitioning youth served, by focusing recruitment efforts on 504 students through outreach with parents school nurses, school counselors, teachers and administrators.</p>	<p>None Identified</p>

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
<p>4. GADOLVR will increase employment outcomes for disability groups that have historically achieved low employment outcome numbers.</p>	<p>1. GADOLVR will augment services for individuals who are blind, deaf or deaf-blind resulting in a 5percent increase to employment outcomes for these disability groups.</p> <p>2. GADOLVR will augment services to transition students with disabilities resulting in a 5percent increase in employment for this disability group.</p>	<p>RSA staff will provide technical assistance to GADOLVR by: 1)updating and presenting the data analysis conducted for this review to a retreat meeting of GADOLVR senior management staff; 2) working with the management team to explore state level data and provide input for possible strategies for staff reallocation, for caseload size and performance expectations, and for any other strategies identified that might allow GADOLVR to serve more individuals with disabilities; and 3)training the new GADOLVR business manager on use of the RSA MIS system, including accessing and analyzing tables and databases available on-line.</p>
<p>5. GADOLVR will work within existing Georgia Department of Labor and state law parameters to strengthen its field services program through increases in resources.</p>	<p>1. GADOLVR will analyze budget allocations and explore all available funding sources to determine how field services funds may be increased for the purpose of increasing the number of individuals with disabilities served.</p>	<p>In an attempt to identify how Title I funds have been allocated across the three program budgets, the RSA GA state team requested budget information with the appropriate detail. Once this information is received and reviewed, the RSA GA state team will meet with appropriate representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor and GADOLVR to provide technical assistance related to budget revisions and transfers.</p>

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
6. GADOLVR will develop a plan that outlines steps to prevent and correct data and information reporting errors.	1. GADOLVR will work with its programmers to improve its management information systems, and will develop data entry review processes for managers that will help correct and prevent coding and information errors.	The RSA GA state team provided guidance while on site related to coding issues, which helped representatives from GADOLVR in developing a better understanding of how to code data that could not be easily tied to existing codes. The RSA GA state team will continue these discussions with GADOLVR during an onsite technical assistance and training session that will focus upon performance improvement.
<b>Recommendations</b>		
1. As GADOLVR explores innovative evaluation methods, the RSA GA state team recommends that GADOLVR focus upon methods that allow for the periodic assessment of the progress made toward achieving goals identified within this report. In addition, the evaluation methods should include the use of objective measures that are clearly related to the intended performance outcomes. The measures should also result in quantitative and qualitative data that allows GADOLVR to assess the effectiveness of the strategies identified for each goal.		
<b>Program: IL</b>		
1. Leverage VR and IL resources to their maximum potential and develop an understanding regarding the best use of funds to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities within the IL program.	1. Identify training and opportunities for GADOLVR and IL to partner with each other in order to maximize resources.	An information sharing session focusing on the appropriate leveraging of resources by GADOLVR and Independent Living in order to maximize the number of individuals with disabilities served will be provided

<b>Agency: GADOLVR</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Technical Assistance</b>
2. Develop, implement and maintain a working communication system between VR and IL that will help ensure ongoing effective communication related to referrals, services and other issues.	1. Establish ongoing meetings between GADOLVR, the SILC and CILs to identify training needs, and for information sharing purposes.	An information sharing session focusing on the appropriate leveraging of resources by GADOLVR and Independent Living in order to maximize the number of individuals with disabilities served will be provided.
<b>Program: OIB</b>		
Recommendations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement ways to expand and improve the provision of OIB services.</li> <li>2. Implement an effective system to improve the processing of purchase requests and payments to OIB vendors.</li> </ol>		

# **APPENDIX**

## **Data Analysis Summary Tables**

**TABLE A**  
**TABLE B**  
**TABLE C**

**Table A**

**Number of Discrepancies Between RSA-911 Data Submitted by Georgia DOL/VR to RSA and Georgia DOL/VR RSA-911Data Reviewed On Site - May 2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total Service Records Reviewed</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>
Gender	1	0	1	2
DOB	1	0	1	2
Appl Date	2	2	1	5
Clos Date	2	1	0	3
Elig Date	1	1	2	4
IPE Date	6	2	1	9
White	1	0	1	2
Black	1	0	1	2
Amer Indian	0	0	1	1
Asian	0	0	1	1
Hawaiian	0	0	1	1
Hispanic	1	0	1	2
Referral Source	5	1	1	7
Primary Disability	12	4	3	19
Seceondary Disability	16	5	3	24
Weekly Earnings at Appl	8	5	4	17
Weekly Earnings at Clos	8	4	4	16
Hours Worked in a Week at Clos	7	5	3	15
Hours Worked in a Week at Appl	1	1	1	3
Primary Source of Support at Appl	4	1	1	6
Primary Source of Support at Clos	4	0	1	5
Level of Education at Appl	5	2	1	8
Level of Education at Clos	4	1	2	7
Employment Status at Appl	2	2	1	5
Employment Status at Clos	0	2	1	3
SSI Support at Appl	1	0	1	2
SSI Support at Clos	1	0	1	2
TANF Support at Appl	0	1	1	2
TANF Support at Clos	1	1	1	3
General Assistance Support at Appl	1	1	1	3
General Assistance Support at Clos	2	0	1	3
SSDI Support at Appl	1	1	1	3
SSDI Support at Clos	1	0	1	2
Veterans' Disability Benefits at Appl	0	1	1	2
Veterans' Disability Benefits at Clos	1	0	1	2
Workers' Compensation at Appl	0	1	1	2
Workers' Compensation at Clos	1	1	1	3
Other Public Support at Appl	1	2	1	4
Other Public Support at Clos	2	1	1	4
Type of Closure	0	1	1	2



**Table B  
Resource Utilization**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>GADOLVR percent FY 2005</b>	<b>General and Combined Agency Mean FY 2005</b>
Percent of Total Expenditures Spent on Services to Individuals	43.98	48.62
Percent of Total Expenditures Spend on Administrative Costs	8.77	11.65
Mean Expenditure for Services to Individuals with Signed IPEs	1,631	1,665
Mean Life of Case Cost of Purchased Services – Employment Outcomes with Earnings	3,018	4,472
Mean Life of Case Cost of Purchased Services – Cases Without Employment Outcome After Services	1,775	2,725

<sup>1</sup>Source: 2005 RSA 911 Data Report Card

**Table C  
Service Mix**

<b>Services</b>	<b>GADOLVR percent FY 2005</b>	<b>General and Combined Agency Mean FY 2005</b>
Physical Restoration	16.92	42.34
College or University Training	8.02	14.27
Occupational/Vocational Training	9.94	14.64
Job Readiness Training	2.96	8.10
On The Job Supports	9.55	21.10
Information and Referral Services	0	26.99

<sup>2</sup>Source: 2005 RSA 911 Data Table 2.1

**Table D**  
**Percentage of Employment Outcomes**

<b>Physical Impairments</b>	<b>GADOLVR percent FY 2005</b>	<b>General and Combined Agency Mean FY 2005</b>
All Physical Impairments	21.31	29.16
Sensory/Communicative Impairments	GADOLVR percent FY 2005	General and Combined Agency Mean FY 2005
All Sensory/Communicative Impairments	15.20	16.01
Mental Impairments	GADOLVR percent FY 2005	General and Combined Agency Mean FY 2005
All Mental Impairments	63.48	54.83

<sup>3</sup>Source: 2005 RSA 911 Data Tables 4.1a, 4.1b, and 4.1c

Please take a moment to participate in a survey about RSA's performance on the FY 2007 monitoring of Vocational Rehabilitation agencies.

Visit <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/2007/survey.html>