



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

July 25, 2014

Dear Colleague:

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which reauthorizes programs that had been previously authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), as well as programs under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act). The amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, in title IV of WIOA, took effect on enactment. The new statutory provisions make significant improvements for individuals with disabilities, especially youth with disabilities as they make the transition from education to employment, by helping to ensure that these individuals have opportunities to acquire the skills and training they need to maximize their potential and enter competitive integrated employment.

WIOA increases the accountability of core WIOA programs, including the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, placing emphasis on results through the establishment of common employment outcome measures across the core WIOA programs, including the VR program under the Rehabilitation Act; promotes better alignment among Federal job training programs through a unified State plan; emphasizes serving youth with disabilities by providing them with more opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills, including participation in internships and apprenticeships; promotes youth with disabilities' participation in postsecondary education to enable them to obtain and advance in high-demand jobs and careers, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers; reserves at least 15 percent of VR program funds allotted to each State for the provision of pre-employment transition services to help youth with disabilities make the transition from secondary school to postsecondary education and competitive integrated employment; dedicates supported employment funds to help youth with the most significant disabilities receive the supports needed, including extended services, to enable them to succeed in employment; and promotes employer engagement to expand employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

These are some of the many changes in WIOA that are designed to strengthen and improve employment for individuals with disabilities served by the VR and Supported Employment programs. These new provisions provide an exciting opportunity for the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and WIOA programs to work together to implement these improvements for the benefit of individuals with disabilities. Your input is critical to the success of WIOA implementation, and we will provide specific details on how you can best convey your input in

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this process. In the near future, RSA, in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, will provide more details regarding implementation plans, including information about training resources and opportunities to learn more about the impact of these changes.

WIOA also transfers the State Independent Living Services (IL, Part B) and Centers for Independent Living (IL, Part C) programs, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the programs under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 to the Administration for Community Living in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). RSA is committed to working with our colleagues at HHS to ensure an orderly and timely transfer of these programs. To minimize any disruption in grantee operations or service delivery to individuals with disabilities who are served by these programs, HHS and ED have decided that RSA will continue to administer them until an orderly transfer is completed as soon as reasonably possible.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to working with you as we implement WIOA amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.

Sincerely,

/s/

Janet L. LaBreck
Commissioner