

Department of Education
REHABILITATION SERVICES
Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request

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State tables reflecting final 2018 allocations and 2019 and 2020 estimates are posted on the Department's webpage at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/index.html>

Appropriations Language
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For carrying out, to the extent not otherwise provided, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Helen Keller National Center Act, [~~\$3,657,189,000~~] \$3,719,527,000, of which [~~\$3,521,990,000~~] \$3,610,040,000 shall be for grants for vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act¹ [*Provided*, That the Secretary may use amounts provided in this Act that remain available subsequent to the reallocation of funds to States pursuant to Section 110(b) of the Rehabilitation Act for innovative activities aimed at improving the outcomes of individuals with disabilities as defined in Section 7(20)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, including activities aimed at improving the education and post-school outcomes of children receiving Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") and their families that may result in long-term improvement in the SSI child recipient's economic status and self-sufficiency: *Provided further*, That States may award subgrants for a portion of the funds to other public and private, nonprofit entities: *Provided further*, That any funds made available subsequent to reallocation for innovative activities aimed at improving the outcomes of individuals with disabilities shall remain available until September 30, 2020].² (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2019.*)

NOTE

Each language provision that is followed by a footnote reference is explained in the "Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes" table, which follows the appropriations language.

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Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p>¹ ...of which [\$3,521,990,000] <u>\$3,610,040,000</u> shall be for grants for vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>	<p>This language earmarks funds provided for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program.</p>
<p>²[: <i>Provided</i>, That the Secretary may use amounts provided in this Act that remain available subsequent to the reallocation of funds to States pursuant to section 110(b) of the Rehabilitation Act for innovative activities aimed at improving the outcomes of individuals with disabilities as defined in section 7(20)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, including activities aimed at improving the education and post-school outcomes of children receiving Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") and their families that may result in long-term improvement in the SSI child recipient's economic status and self-sufficiency: <i>Provided further</i>, That States may award subgrants for a portion of the funds to other public and private, nonprofit entities: <i>Provided further</i>, That any funds made available subsequent to reallocation for innovative activities aimed at improving the outcomes of individuals with disabilities shall remain available until September 30, 2020].</p>	<p>This language, which allows the Secretary to use amounts that remain available subsequent to the reallocation of funds to States under the VR State Grants program for innovative activities designed to improve the outcomes of individuals with disabilities, is deleted because it is no longer needed. No unobligated VR State Grant funds remained at the end of fiscal years 2016, 2017, or 2018 and all available funds were reallocated to States before the end of their respective fiscal years. The Department expects to be able to reallocate all available grant funds to other State VR agencies in fiscal year 2020.</p>

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Appropriation, Adjustments, and Transfers
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2018	2019	2020
Discretionary:			
Appropriation.....	<u>\$134,199</u>	<u>\$135,199</u>	<u>\$109,487</u>
Total, discretionary appropriation	134,199	135,199	109,487
Mandatory:			
Appropriation.....	3,452,931	3,521,990	3,610,040
Sequester (P.L. 112-25).....	<u>-227,893</u>	<u>-218,363</u>	<u>0</u>
Total, adjusted mandatory appropriation ...	3,225,038	3,303,627	3,610,040
Total, discretionary and adjusted mandatory appropriation.....	3,359,237	3,438,826	3,719,527

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Summary of Changes

(dollars in thousands)

2019.....	\$3,657,189 ¹
2020.....	<u>3,719,527</u>
Net change.....	+62,338

¹ Excludes the 6.2 percent reduction of mandatory VR State Grant funds pursuant to the Budget Control Act (P.L. 112-25) that went into effect on October 1, 2018. The reduced level for 2019 subsequent to the 6.2 percent sequester is \$3,438,826, a reduction of \$218,363 million.

Increases:	<u>2019 base</u>	<u>Change from base</u>
<u>Built in</u>		
Increase in funding for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State grants, consistent with the inflation increase specified in the authorizing statute.	\$3,521,990	+\$88,050
Decreases:		
<u>Program:</u>		
Eliminate funding for Supported Employment State grants because there is no longer a need for a separate supported employment funding stream and its elimination would reduce unnecessary administrative burden and streamline program administration at the Federal and State levels.	\$22,548	-\$22,548
Decrease in funding for Helen Keller National Center to provide funding for other Administration priorities.	13,500	<u>-3,164</u>
Subtotal, decreases		-25,712
Net change		+62,338

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Authorizing Legislation

(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2019 Authorized	2019 Estimate	2020 Authorized	2020 Request
Vocational rehabilitation (VR) State grants:				
Grants to States (RA-I A, B-110 and 111)	\$3,521,990 ¹	\$3,184,849 ²	\$3,610,040 ³	\$3,565,940
Grants for Indians (RA-I-C)	(1, 4) 40,189	40,189 ²	(3,4) 44,100	44,100
Client assistance State grants (RA-I-112)	13,805	13,000	14,098	13,000
Supported employment State grants (RA-VI)	31,691	22,548	32,363	0
Training (RA-III-302)	38,719	29,388	39,540	29,388
Demonstration and training programs (RA-III-303)	6,668	5,796	6,809	5,796
Services for older blind individuals (RA-VII-2)	38,328	33,317	39,141	33,317
Protection and advocacy of individual rights (RA-V-509)	20,305	17,650	20,735	17,650
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNCA)	<u>0</u> ⁵	<u>13,500</u>	<u>0</u> ⁵	<u>10,336</u>
Total definite authorization	3,671,506		3,667,259	
Total discretionary appropriation		135,199		109,487
Total mandatory appropriation		3,521,990		3,610,040
Total appropriation		3,657,189		3,719,527
Portion of request not authorized				10,336
Total appropriation including required mandatory reduction		3,438,826 ²		3,719,527

¹ The authorizing legislation specifies that the amount to be appropriated for VR State grants for a fiscal year be at least at the level of the prior fiscal year increased by the 12-month percentage change from October to October in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPIU). In FY 2019, this amount was \$3,521,990 thousand.

² The amount reflects the 6.2 percent reduction of mandatory programs that went into effect on October 1, 2018, pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).

³ The authorizing legislation specifies that the amount to be appropriated for a fiscal year be at least the level of the prior fiscal year increased by the 12-month percentage change from October to October in the CPIU. In FY 2020, this amount is \$3,610,040 thousand.

⁴ The Rehabilitation Act requires that 1.0 percent to 1.5 percent of the appropriation for Vocational Rehabilitation State grants be set aside for Grants to Indians.

⁵ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; continued funding is proposed for this program in fiscal year 2020 under appropriations language.

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Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2010	\$3,500,735	\$3,504,305	\$3,507,322 ¹	\$3,506,861
2011	3,565,326	3,501,766 ²	3,542,510 ¹	3,474,718 ³
2012	3,541,111	3,522,686 ⁴	3,511,735 ⁴	3,511,281
2013	3,517,710	3,511,281 ⁵	3,626,380 ⁵	3,622,925
2014	3,655,577	N/A ⁶	3,698,174 ¹	3,680,497
2015	3,683,335	N/A ⁶	3,722,853 ⁷	3,709,853
2016	3,532,109	3,529,605 ⁸	3,487,864 ⁸	3,529,605
2017	3,541,389	3,534,027 ⁹	3,536,389 ⁹	3,535,589 ⁹
2018	3,563,008	3,562,582 ¹⁰	3,562,418 ¹⁰	3,361,143 ¹⁰
2019	3,634,977	3,657,689 ¹¹	3,656,189 ¹¹	3,657,189 ¹¹
2020	3,719,527			

¹ The levels for the Senate allowance reflects Committee action only.

² The levels for the House allowance reflects the House-passed full-year continuing resolution.

³ The level for appropriation reflects the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

⁴ The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill and the level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Committee action only.

⁵ The level for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2013 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 112th Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

⁶ The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.

⁷ The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

⁸ The levels for House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2016 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 114th Congress only through the House Committee and Senate Committee.

⁹ The levels for House and Senate allowances reflect Committee action on the regular annual 2017 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects the Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2017.

¹⁰ The levels for the House reflect floor action on an Omnibus appropriation bill; Senate allowances reflect Committee action on the regular annual 2018 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects the annualized Continuing Resolution level.

¹¹ The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect Committee action on the regular annual 2019 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects enactment of the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245)

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2020 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(in thousands of dollars)

	Cat Code	2018 Appropriation	2019 Appropriation	2020 President's Budget	2020 President's Budget Compared to 2019 Appropriation	
					Amount	Percent
Rehabilitation Services						
1. Vocational rehabilitation State grants:						
(a)	Grants to States (RA Title I-A, sections 110 and 111)	M	3,184,849	3,260,627	3,565,940	305,313 9.36%
(b)	Grants to Indians (RA Title I-C)	M	40,189	43,000	44,100	1,100 2.56%
	Subtotal ¹		3,225,038	3,303,627	3,610,040	306,413 9.28%
	Mandatory baseline	M	3,452,931	3,521,990	3,610,040	88,050 2.50%
2.	Client assistance State grants (RA section 112)	D	13,000	13,000	13,000	0 0.00%
3.	Training (RA section 302)	D	29,388	29,388	29,388	0 0.00%
4.	Demonstration and training programs (RA section 303)	D	5,796	5,796	5,796	0 0.00%
5.	Protection and advocacy of individual rights (RA section 509)	D	17,650	17,650	17,650	0 0.00%
6.	Supported employment State grants (RA VI)	D	22,548	22,548	0	(22,548) -100.00%
7.	Independent living services for older blind individuals (RA VII, Chapter 2)	D	33,317	33,317	33,317	0 0.00%
8.	Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNCA)	D	12,500	13,500	10,336	(3,164) -23.44%
	Subtotal		134,199	135,199	109,487	(25,712) -19.02%
	Total		3,359,237	3,438,826	3,719,527	280,701 8.16%
	Discretionary	D	134,199	135,199	109,487	(25,712) -19.02%
	Mandatory	M	3,225,038	3,303,627	3,610,040	306,413 9.28%

NOTES: D = discretionary program; M = mandatory program
Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

¹ For the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program the level shown in the 2019 Appropriation column reflects the 6.2 percent reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2018, pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Summary of Request

People with disabilities represent a vital and integral part of our society. Giving workers with disabilities the support and the opportunity to acquire the skills that they need for in-demand jobs and careers is critical to growing our economy, ensuring that everyone who works hard is rewarded, and building a strong middle class. To help achieve this goal, the Rehabilitation Act seeks to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society. The Rehabilitation Act was reauthorized by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), enacted in July 2014. WIOA supports the Nation's workforce development system through programs and investments in employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation.

The Administration's 2020 request for the Rehabilitation Services account provides \$3.7 billion to support comprehensive and coordinated vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities through direct services, training and technical assistance, and model demonstrations, as well as direct services to help older individuals who are blind live more independently.

The \$3.6 billion request for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program includes an increase of \$88.1 million over the fiscal year 2019 mandatory level, consistent with the inflationary increase specified in the authorizing statute, to assist States and Tribal governments in increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. WIOA strengthened the alignment of the VR program with other components of the workforce development system to promote a coordinated and streamlined system. As an integral partner in this system, the VR program is the primary Federal vehicle for assisting individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, or advance in high quality employment.

No funds are requested for the Supported Employment State Grants program. The Administration recognizes that supported employment can be an effective strategy in assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain competitive employment in integrated settings. However, a separate supported employment program is unnecessary because it duplicates services that are available under the VR State Grants program. In addition, the proposed elimination would reduce administrative burden and streamline program administration at the Federal and State levels.

The \$10.3 million request for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC), a decrease of \$3.2 million, or 23 percent, would provide sufficient resources to support independent living and employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf-blind while also maintaining the fiscal discipline necessary to support the President's goal of increasing support for national security and public safety without adding to the Federal budget deficit.

The request would maintain support for all other programs in the Rehabilitation Services account at the 2019 appropriation level.

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(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Parts A, B (Sections 110 and 111), and C)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$3,610,040¹

Budget Authority:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change from 2019 Mandatory</u>
State grants	\$3,478,238	\$3,565,940	+\$87,702
Indian set-aside	<u>43,752</u>	<u>44,100</u>	<u>+348</u>
Total	3,521,990 ²	3,610,040	+88,050

¹ The authorizing statute specifies that the amount to be appropriated for a fiscal year be at least the level of the prior fiscal year increased by the 12-month percentage change (from October to October) in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPIU). For fiscal year 2020 this amount is \$3,610,040 thousand, an increase of 2.5 percent. The authorizing statute also requires that not less than 1.0 percent, and not more than 1.5 percent, of the appropriation for each fiscal year for VR State Grants be set aside for Grants for American Indians.

² The levels shown in the 2019 column are the mandatory amounts for the VR State Grants program and do not include the sequester reduction for mandatory programs pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011. The reduced level for fiscal year 2019 subsequent to the 6.2 percent sequester that went into effect on October 1, 2018 is \$3,303,626,620, a reduction of \$218.4 million from the mandatory level.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program supports formula grants to 56 States, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to provide individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, the services they need to obtain competitive integrated employment. Grant funds are administered by VR agencies designated by each State. There are currently a total of 78 State VR agencies. Thirty-four States operate a “combined” agency serving all disability categories. Twenty-two States operate a separate agency for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and a “general” agency for all other disability categories. The authorizing legislation requires the program to be funded at no less than the prior year level, increased by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers.

Workforce Development System

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program was reauthorized in July 2014 in Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which supports a comprehensive, accessible, high-quality workforce development system that includes programs and investments in employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation and is aligned with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and

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regional employers. WIOA's one-stop system, established under Section 121(e) of WIOA, operates through a network of centers in each State that provide a variety of services to assist individuals to meet their employment and training needs, while also assisting local employers in meeting their needs for qualified personnel.

The VR State Grants program is a core program and a required partner in the one-stop service delivery system, and is governed by provisions in both the Rehabilitation Act (Title IV of WIOA) and Title I of WIOA. For a State to be eligible to receive Federal funds for the core programs of WIOA (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Formula programs (Title I of WIOA), Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (Title II of WIOA), Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program (Title III of WIOA), and VR program (Title IV of WIOA)), the Governor must submit a unified State plan, including the VR plan. After approval of the VR portion of the plan by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the unified State plan is subject to the approval of both the Secretaries of Labor and Education.

VR agencies provide a wide range of services designed to help persons with disabilities prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment, to the extent of their capabilities. Individuals who are eligible for assistance include those with a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment, but who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome and also require VR services. Program services are tailored to the specific needs of the individual through an individualized plan for employment (IPE). The VR program provides a variety of services, such as vocational evaluation, counseling, education, vocational training, job placement, rehabilitation technology, supported employment services, and treatment of mental or physical conditions, that may reasonably be expected to reduce or eliminate one or more barriers to employment. Priority is given to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Pre-employment transition services may be provided to students with disabilities who are in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program and are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

This program provides financial assistance to States to cover the cost of direct services and program administration. The State matching requirement is 21.3 percent, except for the cost of construction of a facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, in which case the non-Federal share is 50 percent. If a State has met all matching requirements for the fiscal year in which funds were appropriated, the State may carry over unobligated Federal funds for an additional year. States must also maintain non-Federal expenditures at no less than the level spent during the fiscal year 2 years earlier. Amendments made by WIOA to Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act allow the Department to reduce a State's VR grant by the amount of a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) deficit from any previous fiscal year.

The Department allocates funds to States through a formula that takes into account population and per capita income. Each State is required to reserve and expend at least 15 percent of its Federal VR State Grant allotment to support pre-employment transition services to all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for services under Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act. Each State is also required to reserve and use a portion of the Federal funds received under the VR State Grants program for innovation and expansion activities authorized in Section 101(a)(18).

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The fiscal year 2018 State distributions were based on the July 1, 2016, population estimates published in December 2016 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The fiscal year 2019 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2017 populations estimates published in December 2017. The fiscal year 2020 State distributions are based on the July 1, 2018 population estimates published December 19, 2018. Per capita income averages for fiscal year 2018 and 2019 distributions are based on Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) revised estimates for calendar years 2013, 2014, and 2015 released by the Department of Commerce on September 28, 2016. Per capita income averages for fiscal year 2020 distributions are based on BEA revised estimates for calendar years 2015, 2016, and 2017 updated on September 25, 2018.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to reserve between 1.0 percent and 1.5 percent of the funds appropriated for the VR State grants program for the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program (Section 121 of the Act). Service grants for up to 5 years are awarded to Indian tribes on a competitive basis to help tribes develop the capacity to provide VR services to American Indians with disabilities living on or near reservations. The Department also must use between 1.8 percent and 2.0 percent of AIVRS funds to provide training and technical assistance to governing bodies of Indian tribes located on Federal and State reservations.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015.....	\$3,091,614 ¹
2016.....	3,161,130 ¹
2017.....	3,164,054 ¹
2018.....	3,225,038 ¹
2019.....	3,303,627 ¹

¹ The amounts shown for 2014 through 2019 reflect the sequester reduction for mandatory programs pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25). The mandatory appropriation was reduced by 7.3 percent in 2015, 6.8 percent in 2016, 6.9 percent in 2017, 6.6 percent in 2018, and 6.2 percent in 2019.

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$3.6 billion for the VR State Grants programs, \$88.1 million over the fiscal year 2019 mandatory level, to help States and Tribal governments increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The fiscal year 2020 request reflects the current estimate of the mandatory amount required by the authorizing statute. Of the amount requested, \$44.1 million will be set aside to support grants under the AIVRS program.

Individuals with disabilities are a vital and integral part of American society; however, some face particular barriers to obtaining employment. Although many people with disabilities find and retain jobs, the overall unemployment rate for people with disabilities is very high. For example, 2017 employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that of those aged 16-64

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(i.e., U.S. working age population), people with sensory, physical, mental, and/or self-care disabilities are significantly less likely to be employed (either full-time or part-time) than people without such disabilities (29.3 percent versus 73.5 percent, respectively). Of those people with disabilities who were employed, 27.7 percent usually worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) compared to 16.1 percent of people without such disabilities. In addition, employed persons with a disability were more likely to be self-employed (10.6 percent) than those with no disability (6.0 percent).¹

Through the workforce development system, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) fosters new opportunities for innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and employers. WIOA also promotes increased access to employment, education, training, and support services to assist individuals with disabilities and youth, as well as others who experience employment barriers, to succeed in the competitive labor market. The VR State Grants program is a critical component of the workforce development system and continues to be the primary Federal vehicle for assisting individuals with disabilities—particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities—to obtain competitive integrated employment. Nationally, there are approximately 1.3 million eligible individuals with disabilities in various phases of the vocational rehabilitation process within the VR system, about three-quarters of whom had an individualized plan for employment (IPE) during fiscal year 2017. Approximately 94 percent of these individuals were individuals with significant disabilities.

One example of VR services is support for apprenticeships that offer youth and adults with disabilities a career pathway that provides competitive integrated employment. The inclusion of mentoring and on-the-job training components make apprenticeships a highly successful vehicle for recruiting, training, and retaining individuals with disabilities in both traditional and high-growth industries.

State VR agencies play an important role in working with apprenticeship programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities can successfully participate in such programs. For example, State agencies can provide a variety of services and supports that are beneficial to both employers and eligible individuals participating in or seeking apprenticeships including, vocational assessment, career exploration, job readiness training, identifying assistive technology devices and accommodations, job coaching, job restructuring, and/or post-employment services, as necessary.

While the Administration is optimistic that changes resulting from WIOA will improve performance of the VR program in the long-term, we recognize that State VR agencies face significant implementation challenges, particularly where such changes are likely to increase program costs and the demand for services. In fiscal year 2019, 64.3 percent of the 56 general and combined State VR agencies (1 more than in fiscal year 2017) and 13.6 percent of the 22 State VR agencies serving blind individuals established an “order of selection,” consistent with program regulations at 34 CFR 361.36, because they cannot

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.htm>

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serve all eligible persons and must first serve those individuals with the most significant disabilities. Without additional resources, increased costs coupled with new set-asides and workforce infrastructure supports will strain resources for providing direct services to VR consumers. The requested increase, although subject to the sequestration of mandatory programs under the Budget Control Act of 2011, will provide some assistance to States in addressing these resource challenges.

Disability Innovation Fund

Beginning with the fiscal year 2012 appropriation, Congress provided authority to use amounts that remained available following the reallocation of funds to States under Section 110(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act to conduct innovative activities aimed at improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities (“Disability Innovation Fund” or DIF). Absent authority provided in appropriations language, these annual funds would lapse and no longer be available for Federal obligation. The Department funded a variety of DIF projects in prior years, including projects to: improve the education and employment outcomes of children receiving Supplemental Security Income and their families; ensure that individuals with disabilities can access web-based computer information with personalized accommodations at home, school, or the workplace; and to develop work-based learning transition demonstrations for students with disabilities. Additional information about these projects is provided in the Program Performance Information section of this request.

However no unobligated VR State Grant funds remained at the end of fiscal years 2016, 2017, or 2018 and all available funds were reallocated to States before the end of their respective fiscal years. The Department expects to be able to reallocate all available grant funds to other State VR agencies in fiscal years 2019 and 2020; consequently, the request does not include continued authority for the Disability Innovation Fund in fiscal year 2020.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The request would provide \$44.1 million for grants under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program, allowing the Department to support 88 tribal VR projects, including 30 new awards and 58 continuation awards. These funds enable Tribal governments to provide a program of VR services in a culturally relevant manner to American Indians with disabilities residing on or near reservations. Consistent with Section 121(c) of the Rehabilitation Act, the Department plans to reserve 1.8 percent of these funds to support training and technical assistance to governing bodies of Indian tribes located on Federal and State reservations.

Fiscal year 2019 is the final year of funding for the AIVRS Training and Technical Assistance Center initially funded in fiscal year 2015 to meet a new requirement in the reauthorized Rehabilitation Act. The Department will hold a competition for a new center in fiscal year 2020.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Individuals receiving VR services under an IPE	939,000	939,000	940,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of all individuals receiving services	94%	94%	94%
Eligible individuals whose case files were closed	447,000	447,000	448,000
Individuals whose cases were closed and received VR services	326,000	326,000	328,000
Individuals achieving an employment outcome	170,000	170,000	172,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of individuals achieving employment outcomes	94%	94%	94%

Note: Data shown for fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are projections based on actual data for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 from the RSA Quarterly Cumulative Caseload Report (RSA-113) and program year 2017 from the RSA-911 Case Service Report (RSA-911).

American Indian vocational rehabilitation services

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Project funding:			
New awards	0	\$21,262	\$14,053
Continuation awards	\$39,466	20,954	29,242
Technical assistance	723	774	794
Peer review of new awards applications	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	40,189	43,000	44,100
Number of AIVRS projects:			
New projects	0	45	30
Continuation projects	<u>88</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>58</u>
Total projects	88	87	88

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by this program.

VR State Grants

WIOA requires States that operate core programs of the publicly funded workforce system, including the VR State Grants program, to meet common performance accountability requirements, including the submission of common performance data to demonstrate that specified performance levels are achieved. Required data for the core programs include those related to the primary performance indicators, participant counts and costs, and barriers to employment. Data definitions were changed by WIOA, limiting the validity of comparisons to performance data reported under the old law.

State VR agencies began to collect and report quarterly data on the joint performance measures and other data for program year (PY) 2017 on July 1, 2017 (the PY runs from July 1 to June 30). Data from PYs 2017 and 2018 will be used to develop performance targets for inclusion in 2020 Unified/Combined State Plan submissions. Baseline data will also be used to provide output and outcome estimates, as well as projections for subsequent program years.

For GPRA reporting for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017, the Department developed interim GPRA measures that are aligned with the WIOA joint performance measures until State performance data on those measures are available.

For the purposes of the interim measures, a VR participant is an eligible individual who has an approved and signed IPE and has begun to receive services. A VR participant is reported to have exited the program when the participant's record of service is closed. Competitive integrated employment is work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting, and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other individuals who are not disabled and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills, including eligibility for the same level of benefits. (See 34 CFR 361.5(c)(9)).

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Interim VR Measures

Goal: Individuals with disabilities served by the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program will achieve high quality employment.

Objective: *Ensure that individuals with disabilities who are served by the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program achieve competitive integrated employment consistent with their particular strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.*

Measure: Percentage of participants who exited the VR program in competitive integrated employment.

In fiscal year 2017, 48.1 percent of the 350,938 participants who exited the VR program obtained competitive integrated employment. State performance varies considerably on this measure. For example, performance ranged from a low of 24 percent to a high of 70 percent in fiscal year 2017. Among those individuals who exited the VR program in FY 2017 with an employment outcome, 97.4 percent obtained competitive integrated employment.

Measure: Median weekly earnings for participants who exited the VR program with a competitive integrated employment outcome.

Median weekly earnings are based on State reported data for all 56 States, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The median weekly earnings for participants who exited the VR program with a competitive integrated employment outcome in fiscal year 2017 were \$320, compared to \$315 in fiscal year 2016. Among States, median weekly earnings at exit ranged from \$236 to \$462 in fiscal year 2017.

Objective: *Ensure that youth with disabilities who are served by the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant program receive the education and training needed to achieve competitive integrated employment.*

Measure: Percent of youth participants who exit the VR program who received at least one of seven specified training services.

In fiscal year 2017, 42,902 of the 135,606 youth participants (31.6 percent) who exited the VR program in fiscal year 2017 received at least one of seven specified training services. However, State performance varies considerably on this measure; excluding the four territories, performance ranged from a high of about 74 percent to a low of about 9 percent in fiscal year 2017. Of the seven training services, the most frequently received was occupational or vocational training followed closely by 4-year college or university training.

For the purpose of this measure, youth participants are youth with a disability between the ages of 14 and 24 at the time of application to the VR program. Training services, for the purpose of this measure, include: (1) graduate college or university training; (2) 4-year college or university training; (3) junior or community college training; (4) occupational or vocational training;

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

(5) apprenticeship training; (6) basic academic remedial or literacy training; or (7) miscellaneous training.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Performance Measures

Goal: To improve employment outcomes of American Indians with disabilities who live on or near reservations by providing effective tribal vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective: *Ensure that eligible American Indians with disabilities receive vocational rehabilitation services and achieve employment outcomes consistent with their particular strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, and interests.*

Measure: The percentage of individuals who leave the program with employment outcomes, after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	66%	68%
2016	66	67
2017	67	68
2018	67	
2019	67	
2020	68	

Additional information: Data for fiscal year 2017 show that 2,363, or 68.2 percent, of the 3,465 individuals with disabilities who exited the program after receiving services in that year achieved an employment outcome. However, the percentage of individuals who exited the AIVRS program with an employment outcome ranged from 18 percent to 100 percent. Fiscal year 2018 data will be available in May 2019.

Efficiency Measures

The Department established two efficiency measures to ensure that AIVRS projects demonstrate effective fiscal management. These include cost per employment outcome and cost per participant.

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Objective: *Ensure that AIVRS projects demonstrate effective fiscal management.*

Measure: The percentage of AIVRS projects that demonstrate an average annual cost per employment outcome of no more than \$35,000.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	76%	68%
2016	76	72
2017	76	77
2018	76	
2019	76	
2020	76	

Additional information: The cost per employment outcome varied significantly across projects, ranging from \$2,000 to \$151,000.

Measure: The percentage of AIVRS projects that demonstrate an average annual cost per participant of no more than \$10,000.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	86%	71%
2016	86	76
2017	80	74
2018	80	
2019	75	
2020	75	

Additional information: The median annual cost per participant for the 87 projects reporting data was \$6,634 in fiscal 2017, \$476 more than the median cost in fiscal year 2016 of \$6,158. Performance on this measure is likely to continue to fall below the targets that were established based on performance in prior years. Targets for fiscal year 2019 and 2020 have been lowered to reflect increased costs in serving American Indians with disabilities.

Disability Innovation Fund

Promoting Readiness of Minors in Social Security Income

In fiscal year 2013, VR funds remaining from the 2012 appropriation were used to award 5-year grants to five States and a consortium of six States for model demonstration projects (MDPs) under the Promoting Readiness of Minors in Social Security Income (PROMISE) program. PROMISE is a joint initiative with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Labor. Under the PROMISE program, States have developed partnerships and are implementing interventions designed to improve the provision and coordination of services and supports for children who receive SSI and their families and achieve outcomes that lead to increased economic self-sufficiency and a reduction in their

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dependence on SSI payments. A rigorously designed national evaluation of PROMISE is being conducted under a contract with SSA, in collaboration with the Department.

In fiscal year 2014, the Department used \$92.5 million in unobligated VR funds that became available from the fiscal year 2013 appropriation for the VR State Grants program to cover continuation costs of the PROMISE MDPs, as well as the costs of the PROMISE technical assistance center grant awarded in fiscal year 2014. By the end of the recruitment period in April 2016, all six projects met their project recruitment goals, with a total of 13,444 participants enrolled across the six projects. Approximately one-half of the children and families enrolled were placed in the treatment group and receive project services. Program participants in the intervention group are receiving services that include paid competitive employment opportunities. Examples of project accomplishments as of July 2018 are provided below. Additional information can be found on the PROMISE technical assistance center's website.¹

As of December 2018, the evaluation contractor has prepared MDP-specific process analysis reports. These reports have documented PROMISE program implementation and service delivery experiences of the different MDPs through August 2017, including an analysis of the interactions with formal and informal partnerships under PROMISE. Reports are available on SSA's website.² Key findings, in addition to the reports, are provided on Mathematica Policy Research's website³. The evaluator will use these reports to inform the interim services and impact reports due in fiscal year 2019. The evaluation contractor has published two PROMISE special topics briefs, *The Role of PROMISE in the Landscape of Federal Programs Targeting Youth with Disabilities*⁴ and the *PROMISE Programs' Use of Effective Transition Practices in Serving Youth with Disabilities*.⁵

Automatic Personalization Computing Project

In fiscal year 2015, the Department used about \$37.2 million of unobligated fiscal year 2014 VR funds to fully fund a 5-year innovative Automated Personalization Computing Project (APCP) (\$20 million) and to provide supplemental awards to support PROMISE activities (\$17.2 million).

The goal of the APCP is to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access computer information with personalized accommodations whether at home, school, or the workplace, as long as there is web access. Examples of such personalization could include font size or color, line-spacing, text-to-speech functionality, overall cognitive access (such as site simplification, or simple language), translation from one language to another, and volume levels of audio features. The 5-year project will develop an information technology infrastructure on which Internet-capable computers automatically run assistive technology solutions customized for

¹ <http://www.promisetacenter.org/>.

² Reports documenting PROMISE program implementation and service delivery experiences are available at <https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/promise.htm>.

³ These reports will be available at <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/evaluate-the-promoting-readiness-of-minors-in-supplemental-security-income-promise-grants>.

⁴ <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/the-role-of-promise-in-the-landscape-of-federal-programs-targeting-youth-with-disabilities>

⁵ <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/promoting-readiness-of-minors-in-supplemental-security-income-promise-program-use>

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individual users with disabilities according to their preferences. The Department is partnering with the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research which is now administered by the Administration for Community Living in HHS, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Access Board, among others, in overseeing this initiative.

During fiscal year 2018, the APCP began transitioning from pre-pilot testing to pilot work with selected American Job Centers; in fiscal year 2019, pilot testing will expand to several high schools, a community college, and a community job center. The purpose of this pilot is to test the capabilities of the software's automatic transfer of preference settings to determine the role it can play in supporting transition of individuals from high school to the community college, and from the community college to job settings.

During 2020, the fifth and final year of the grant, the project will create support materials for use by organizations and individuals implementing the software beyond the pilot sites. The project will then be disseminated to increase public awareness of the results of the APCP. The project will then increase the reliable scaling of the software to handle up to 10 million simultaneous users. The final activities of the APCP will be to oversee privacy policy and conformance when it transitions from the institutional review board to cover non-research related data. Lastly, the University of Maryland will operate the transfer of the technology to users' sites.

Transition Work-Based Learning Demonstrations (FY 2015 VR Funds)

Students with disabilities often have lower high school graduation rates, lower postsecondary enrollment rates, and higher unemployment rates than peers without disabilities.¹ To help address this problem, WIOA expanded the available services as well as the population of students with disabilities who may receive these services under the VR program. In particular, States are required to reserve 15 percent of their VR allotment to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. These pre-employment transition services include job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, and instruction in self-advocacy. Research indicates that work experiences for youth with disabilities, especially paid employment, can be effective in influencing post-school employment. However, strategies and interventions that are based on the most promising evidence of effectiveness in providing work-based learning experiences are needed.

Through the DIF authority, the Department awarded 5-year demonstration projects to five State VR agencies in fiscal year 2016. The goal of these projects is to identify and demonstrate work-based learning interventions for students with disabilities that are supported by research and are rigorously evaluated.

A brief description of the five projects is provided below.

¹ Luecking, D.M., & Luecking, R.G. (2015, May). Translating Research Into a Seamless Transition Model. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38(1), 4-13.

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- The *Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative (Way2Work Maryland)* project is improving career outcomes for youth with disabilities by incorporating early referral to the VR agency, work-based learning experiences, integrated employment, and collaboration among the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, local educational agencies, community rehabilitation programs, America's job centers, and employers. The model includes a randomized control design implemented across eight diverse school districts. (<https://www.way2workmd.net>)
- *Vermont's Linking Learning to Careers* project is assisting students with disabilities to transition to early career success by connecting community college career consultants with VR services and school programming. These connections are enhanced by the provision of a targeted continuum of work-based learning opportunities, statewide assistive technology specialists, college mentors, expanded postsecondary college courses during high school, and additional transportation funding and training. This model includes a quasi-experimental design. (<https://vocrehab.vermont.gov/linking-learning-careers-llc>)
- The *Massachusetts Transition Pathway Services* project provides a coordinated set of services to improve career and academic planning skills so that high school students with disabilities will be successful in achieving competitive integrated employment and post-secondary outcomes upon completion of their secondary education. The project and its community partners, including more than a dozen local education agencies, are providing work based learning experiences and a menu of services to students. Through a person-centered collaborative team-based approach, students' career goals will be thoughtfully planned and supported. The model includes a quasi-experimental design. (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/transition-pathway-services>)
- *Maine's Transition Work-Based Learning Model* project is partnering with Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG), the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, American Institutes for Research, and the Council for Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation to evaluate two innovative interventions using a progressive employment model. The project plans to expand employer relationships and align its dual customer community-based strategy with enhanced JMG programs for students with disabilities. The model includes a quasi-experimental design. (<https://www.explorevr.org/progressive-employment-maine-transition-work-based-learning-model>)
- The *California Career Innovations* project incorporates a career-relevant focus in the attainment of competitive integrated employment (CIE) and post-secondary education for students with disabilities with the goal of increasing economic self-sufficiency, work-based learning experiences, and CIE for students with disabilities. The program provides paid and volunteer career-focused work experiences in four California regions to help students with disabilities gain entrance into post-secondary education and/or competitive integrated employment. The program also includes basic life skills training to assist with job readiness, such as computer literacy, and organization and communication skills. The model includes a randomized control design. (<https://www.ci-california.org>)

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Client assistance State grants
(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Section 112)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$14,098

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$13,000	\$13,000	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides grants to States for services to assist eligible individuals and applicants for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program and other programs, projects, and services funded under the Rehabilitation Act (the Act). CAP focuses on promoting understanding of the rehabilitation services and benefits available under the Act, and advising eligible individuals of their rights and responsibilities in connection with those benefits. The program also offers eligible individuals and applicants a variety of other kinds of assistance, including assistance and advocacy in pursuing legal and administrative remedies to ensure the protection of their rights. State VR agencies are required to inform VR consumers about the services available from the CAP and how to contact the CAP. Also, States must operate a CAP in order to receive VR State grant funds.

States and outlying areas have adopted different organizational structures for meeting the requirement to establish a CAP in each State. 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 Act, except in cases where the Act “grandfathered” agencies providing such services under the Act. If one of these “grandfathered” agencies should be restructured, the Governor is required to re-designate the CAP to an agency that does not provide services under the Act.

Designations for the 57 CAPs, including the CAP for the American Indian consortium, are as follows:

- 8 of the Governors have designated the CAP to external State agencies;
- 8 of the Governors have designated CAP agencies internal to the VR agency; and
- 41 of the Governors have designated CAP to private or non-profit organizations.

When the appropriation exceeds \$7.5 million, the CAP formula grant program distributes funds on the basis of population (using the most recent estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau), with a minimum allotment of \$100,000 to each of the 50 States, D.C., and Puerto Rico and \$45,000 to each of the outlying areas. When the appropriation increases, the Act also requires the Department to increase the minimum allotments for States and outlying areas by an amount not greater than the percentage increase in the appropriation.

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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act also requires that funds be set aside under this program for two activities before awarding grants to eligible States and outlying areas with the remaining funds. The first set-aside reserves funds, at the same amount as provided to outlying areas, for an award to the eligible system established under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act to serve the American Indian consortium. In addition, if the appropriation is equal to or exceeds \$14 million, the Department must set aside between 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent of the amount appropriated for training and technical assistance to CAPs established under this program.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015.....	\$13,000
2016.....	13,000
2017.....	13,000
2018.....	13,000
2019.....	13,000

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$13 million for CAP, the same as the fiscal year 2019 appropriation. CAPs promote understanding of the rehabilitation services and benefits available under the Rehabilitation Act and advise applicants and individuals who have been determined eligible for such services of their rights and responsibilities. The request will help ensure that individuals with disabilities who are applying for or receiving services funded under the Rehabilitation Act receive appropriate services and have access to administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies needed to protect their rights.

Data collected by the Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for fiscal year 2017 from the most recent available RSA Annual Client Assistance Program Report (RSA-227) show that, nationwide, CAPs responded to 34,488 requests for information and referral (I&R). While the average number of I&R requests that States responded to was 616, the median number was 73 because of the significant range in the number of I&R requests reported by CAPs. Approximately 26 percent of all I&R requests were for information regarding the VR program.

In addition, CAPs provided extensive services, such as assisting and advocating on behalf of a client, to 4,608 individuals in fiscal year 2017. Approximately 96 percent of the cases in which extensive services were provided by the CAP involved applicants for, or recipients of, services from the VR program. In 95 percent of all cases, issues raised were related to the VR process or delivery of VR services. Of the 3,576 cases closed in fiscal year 2017, 1,394 cases (or 39 percent) were resolved by explaining the controlling policies to the individual; 741 cases (21 percent) resulted in the development or implementation of an individualized plan for employment (IPE); and 507 cases (14 percent) resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties. Of the cases closed, 72 percent were resolved in the individual's favor.

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Specific examples of CAP activities are described below. Funds requested in fiscal year 2020 would support similar activities.

- In Texas, the CAP represented a 25-year-old male pursuing a baccalaureate degree in meteorology at a university in Texas with the goal of becoming a meteorologist. The client has a form of muscular dystrophy, uses a power wheelchair and requires an attendant for activities of daily living, as well as accommodations and assistive services in college. The VR agency had been assisting with a portion of the attendant care costs while the Medicaid Waiver program paid for the remaining attendant care charges. The client was informed without notice that support from the VR agency would end because the amount paid to the attendant was approaching a \$5,000 indicator. The VR agency informed the client that an attendant care requisition needed to go out for bidding before assistance could continue.

The client still needed attendant care services during this time and called the CAP in Texas. The CAP communicated with the counselor, manager, and regional office, learned of an exception procedure that avoided the need to obtain an attendant through a bidding process, and won agreement from the VR Agency to continue paying for attendant care going forward.

- In Arizona, the CAP represented a 19-year-old female with an attention deficit disorder who was pursuing a baccalaureate in music with the goal of becoming a music teacher. Due to her disability, the client required additional study and practice time. She had difficulty with time management and needed to follow a strict schedule each day to accomplish all her required school work. The client's IPE with the VR agency included payment for her college tuition, dorm room and meal plan. Upon review by a new VR counselor and a VR supervisor, however, the client was informed that the VR agency would no longer pay for her on-campus housing and meal plan, in part based on the agency's policy of paying room and board only for students whose residence is more than 50 miles from the school (the student lives 36 miles from her school).

The CAP successfully represented the client at a mediation hearing before the Office of the Arizona Attorney General, asserting that living on campus was required for the client both to successfully complete her course requirements without the additional stress and anxiety of daily commuting, and to achieve her IPE goal of becoming a music teacher. As a result, the VR agency agreed to make an exception to the policy and paid for the client's dorm room and meal plan.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	34,500	34,500	34,500
Individuals provided case services	4,800	4,800	4,800

NOTE: Data for fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are projected from actual final data reported for fiscal years 2015 through 2017 on requests for information and the provision of extensive service through the RSA Annual Client Assistance Program Report (RSA-227). Final data for fiscal year 2018 will be available in May of 2019.

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Client assistance State grants

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by this program.

Goal: To provide assistance and information to help individuals with disabilities secure the benefits available under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program and other programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Objective: *Accurately identify problem areas requiring systemic change and engage in systemic activity to improve services under the Rehabilitation Act.*

Measure: The percentage of CAPs that reported that their systemic advocacy resulted in changes in policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	74%	72%
2016	74	68
2017	74	63
2018	72	
2019	68	
2020	68	

Additional information: Performance on this measure has been gradually declining since fiscal year 2014. RSA discussed this issue with the CAP Directors at the June 2018 CAP conference. While many CAP Directors cited the lack of resources as a significant factor, many of the directors and advocates were not clear on what would constitute systemic advocacy, and some CAPs appear to be using a higher reporting standard than necessary. The conference provided an opportunity for RSA to address potential errors and inconsistencies in reporting by explaining what types of CAP activities can result in systemic change, and we expect that performance on this measure will improve over time. Performance data for fiscal year 2018 will be available in June 2019.

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Client assistance State grants

Objective: *Resolve cases at lowest possible level.*

Measure: The percentage of cases resolved through the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

Year	Target	Actual
2015	98%	98%
2016	98	99
2017	98	98
2018	98	
2019	98	
2020	98	

Additional information: The percentage of cases being resolved through the use of ADR strategies, such as technical assistance, negotiation and mediation, has consistently ranged from about 97 to 99 percent. The use of such intervention strategies to resolve consumer complaints reduces the need for lengthy and costly interventions such as formal hearings and litigation. Performance data for fiscal year 2018 will be available in June 2019.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 302)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$39,540

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$29,388	\$29,388	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Training program is to ensure that skilled personnel are available to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities assisted through other vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living programs. The program supports training and related activities designed to increase the number of qualified personnel providing rehabilitation services. Grants and contracts are awarded to States and public and nonprofit agencies and organizations, including institutions of higher education (IHEs), to pay all or part of the cost of conducting training programs.

Awards may be made in any of 30 long-term training fields, in addition to awards for short-term training, experimental and innovative training, training interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons who are deaf-blind, and technical assistance centers offering training-related services. These training programs vary in terms of content, methodology, and type of trainee. For example, the Long-Term Training program supports academic training grants that must direct 65 percent of the funds to trainee scholarships. Students who receive financial assistance from projects funded under the program are required to either work in public or private non-profit rehabilitation agencies for a period of time after they complete their training or repay the cost of their training. Grantees report data on fulfillment of these requirements after gathering information from students and their employers. Beginning in fiscal year 2020, the Department will implement a new system to collect payback information directly from students, grantees and employers, which will allow the Department to obtain more timely and accurate information.

The Training program authority requires recipients of grants under the Long-Term Training program to build closer relationships between training institutions and State VR agencies, promote careers in public vocational rehabilitation programs, identify potential employers who would meet students' payback requirements, and ensure that data on student employment are accurate. Training of statewide workforce systems personnel is also authorized, and such training may be jointly funded by the Department of Labor. Statewide workforce systems personnel may be trained in evaluation skills to determine whether an individual with a disability may be served by the VR State grants program or another component of the statewide workforce system.

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Training

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015.....	\$30,188
2016.....	30,188
2017.....	29,388
2018.....	29,388
2019.....	29,388

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$29.4 million for the Training program, the same as the fiscal year 2019 appropriation. In fiscal year 2020, approximately \$14.1 million would be used to support new awards, \$14.9 million would be used to support continuation awards, and \$340 thousand would be used to support other activities including peer review and minority outreach.

The Training program supports projects that provide training to new VR staff or upgrade the qualifications of existing staff. In recent years, in response to dramatic turnover at State VR agencies created by the retirement of a large number of qualified counselors, the Department has targeted funding for long-term training (LTT) programs on training new counselors. Similar shortages, though not as severe, have also been affecting other VR providers. The Department believes that the LTT program is the best mechanism for recruiting new graduates into the rehabilitation field, in part because 65 percent of the LTT funds awarded to universities go directly to students for tuition assistance and stipends, providing a strong incentive for students to enter the field. The Department plans to award approximately \$15.6 million in LTT grants and \$350 thousand in contracts in this area in fiscal year 2020, including \$6.6 million in new awards.

The request also includes \$6.0 million for technical assistance to State VR agency personnel and their partners to improve use of promising practices that have the potential to improve the performance of the VR program. Beginning in fiscal year 2014, the Department shifted its technical assistance strategy under this program from a network of comprehensive, regionally based centers to supporting a series of targeted, topical centers that focus on providing a wide range of support to State VR agency personnel nationwide on a specific set of issues. This change resulted in the centers providing extensive targeted and intensive technical assistance to numerous States. For example, the WINTAC (www.wintac.org) has provided technical assistance to 28 agencies in 26 States, on topics including pre-employment transition services and peer mentoring, and has provided training and technical assistance for four pilot projects.

The request also includes \$2.4 million for continuations for Training for Interpreters for Individuals who are Deaf and Deaf-Blind to increase the number of interpreters and improve their skills; \$4.3 million for Experimental and Innovative Training grants, including \$1.6 million in new awards; and \$436 thousand to support continuations for the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials to gather and disseminate rehabilitation information and training materials.

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Training

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Program Funding:			
Long-Term Training:			
New	0	\$9,292	\$6,564
Continuations	<u>\$19,682</u>	<u>8,050</u>	<u>9,398</u>
Subtotal	19,682	17,342	15,962
Technical Assistance:			
New	0	0	6,000
Continuations	5,758	5,758	0
Minority Outreach ¹	<u>376</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	6,134	5,758	6,000
Short-Term Training:			
Continuations	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>0</u> ²
Subtotal	200	200	0
Training for Interpreters for Individuals who are Deaf and Deaf-Blind:			
Continuations	2,400	2,400	2,400
Experimental and Innovative Training:			
New	0	2,700	1,550 ²
Continuations	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>2,700</u>
Subtotal	500	3,200	4,250
National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials:			
Continuations	472	454	436

¹ Amounts shown do not include minority outreach contributions from the Supported Employment program of \$35 thousand in fiscal year 2018, and \$352 thousand from Demonstrations and Training and \$60 thousand from Supported Employment in fiscal year 2019.

² The Department is considering extending by one year the Short-Term Training award. If the award is extended, \$200 thousand will be used to fund a Short-Term Training continuation award in fiscal year 2020 and \$1,350 thousand will be used to fund new Experimental and Innovative Training awards in fiscal year 2020.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Other Activities:			
Peer review	0	\$34	\$46
Minority Outreach	--- ¹	<u>0</u>	<u>294</u>
Subtotal	<u>0</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>340</u>
Program Totals:			
New	0	11,992	14,114
Continuations	\$29,388	17,362	14,934
Other Activities	<u>0</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>340</u>
Total	<u>29,388</u>	<u>29,388</u>	<u>29,388</u>

¹ The Rehabilitation Act allows RSA flexibility in determining how it will meet the 1 percent set-aside for Minority Outreach activities required under Section 21. Minority Outreach includes approximately \$376 thousand of Training's minority outreach contribution to the Technical Assistance continuations in fiscal year 2018.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To provide the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) sector with well-trained staff and to maintain and upgrade the skills of current staff.

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

Annual Performance Measures

This program has two annual performance measures. Both of these measures are designed to provide information on various aspects of the program, including its contribution to addressing the shortage of State VR agency counselors and staff and the proportion of scholars fulfilling their payback requirements. While these measures alone do not provide a comprehensive view of the Training program, the Department believes that they do provide evidence as to the efficacy of the program and its expenditures.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

Measure: The percentage of Masters level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through employment in State vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	47%	30%
2016	47	30
2017	45	36
2018	45	36
2019	40	
2020	40	

Additional Information: Data reported for fiscal years 2016 and earlier were based on all Masters level counseling graduates and the percentage meeting requirements through employment in State vocational rehabilitation agencies in a given year. Beginning with data reported for fiscal year 2017, the methodology was refined to look at the cohort of scholars who graduated 3 years earlier and exclude those scholars with waivers provided in accordance with 34 CFR §386.41. This revised methodology provides a more accurate representation of the program's impact because it takes into account that scholars have a 2-year grace period to obtain employment and excludes those scholars that were not required to obtain employment because they had obtained waivers.

Measure: The percentage of Masters level counseling graduates fulfilling their payback requirements through qualifying employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	80%	74%
2016	83	73
2017	85	88
2018	85	90
2019	85	
2020	85	

Additional Information: Data reported for fiscal years 2016 and earlier were based on all Masters level counseling graduates and the percentage meeting requirements for qualifying employment in a given year. Beginning with data reported for fiscal year 2017, the methodology was refined to look at the cohort of scholars who graduated 3 years earlier and exclude those scholars with waivers provided in accordance with 34 CFR §386.41. This revised methodology provides a more accurate representation of the program's impact because it takes into account that scholars have a 2-year grace period to obtain qualifying employment and excludes those scholars that were not required to obtain qualifying employment because they had obtained waivers.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

Efficiency Measures

Measure: The Federal cost per Masters level RSA supported rehabilitation counseling graduate.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	\$24,000	\$21,576
2016	24,000	29,605
2017	24,000	48,823
2018	24,000	
2019	24,000	
2020	24,000	

Additional Information: The measure is calculated for individual cohorts of grantees by dividing the total funding given to each grant over the life of the grant by the number of Masters level scholars who successfully completed funded training programs ending in that year. Scholars who did not complete the program during the life of the grant (e.g., dropped out or were expelled) and scholars who graduated with degrees other than a Master's (Doctoral and certificate) are excluded from the denominator. Only those grants with at least 90 percent of the scholars in a Master's program are included. One grant with only five completers closed in fiscal year 2017, leading to the high Federal cost per RSA-supported graduate in fiscal year 2017.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 303)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$6,809

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$5,796	\$5,796	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Demonstration and Training programs are designed to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by expanding and improving the availability and provision of rehabilitation and other services. These competitively awarded projects are intended to increase employment outcomes for individuals for whom vocational rehabilitation services were previously unavailable or who previously did not take advantage of such services.

Specific activities include:

- Section 303(b) of the Rehabilitation Act authorizes the support of activities to demonstrate methods of service delivery to individuals with disabilities, as well as activities such as technical assistance, systems change, studies and evaluation, and dissemination and utilization of project findings. Eligible entities include State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, community rehabilitation programs, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations, and for-profit organizations. Competitions may be limited to one or more type of entity.
- Section 303(c) of the Act authorizes a parent information and training program to enable individuals with disabilities, and the parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives of these individuals to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting their vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs.
- Section 303(d) of the Act authorizes a Braille training program to support the cost of training in the use of braille for personnel providing vocational rehabilitation services or educational services to youth and adults who are blind.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015	\$5,796
2016	5,796
2017	5,796
2018	5,796
2019	5,796

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

The request would provide \$5.8 million for the Demonstration and Training programs, the same as the fiscal year 2019 appropriation. The request would support \$345 thousand in continuation awards for braille training, at least \$789 thousand for technical assistance programs, and at least \$1.1 million for parent information and training programs.

The request also includes approximately \$3.6 million in funding for new awards. The Department is considering the following options for improving employment outcomes and services for individuals with disabilities in fiscal year 2020:

- expansion of the Parent Information and Training Centers to allow implementation of a regional approach, which would significantly expand access to transition-related services nationwide;
- consolidation of transition-related technical assistance into a single center to improve coordination of services and reduce the Department's administrative burden; and
- model demonstrations to provide early intervention services to populations at risk of dependence on Social Security Disability Insurance.

The Department may take actions in fiscal year 2019 to promote the alignment of activities and funding streams in support of one or more of these options in fiscal year 2020, as described in the Output Measures table below.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Program funding:			
Model demonstrations			
New awards	0	0	TBD
Continuation awards	\$3,410	\$3,406	0
Technical assistance			
New award	0	581 ¹	TBD ¹
Continuation awards	400 ²	0	789
Braille training			
New awards	0	345	0
Continuation awards	328	0	345
Parent information and training			
New awards	0	1,100 ³	TBD
Continuation awards	1,165	0	1,100
Peer review of new award applications	0	12 ⁴	4
Minority Outreach	<u>493⁵</u>	<u>352⁵</u>	<u>58</u>
Total, Program funding	5,796	5,796	5,796

NOTE: Amounts listed as "TBD" in fiscal year 2020 reflect topical areas for which decisions on fiscal year 2020 competitions are not yet final.

¹ The Department is considering extending by one year the Technical Assistance award provided to the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition to enable RSA to realign and more strategically compete its technical assistance awards in fiscal year 2020. If the award is extended, \$300 thousand will be used to fund its continuation award in fiscal year 2019 and \$2,000 thousand will be used to fund a new award in fiscal year 2020.

² The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition is jointly funded with the Office of Special Education programs, which provides the majority of the funding for this activity.

³ The Department is considering extending by one year the 7 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and the 1 National PTI Center that are scheduled to be competed in fiscal year 2019. If the awards are extended, \$1,165 thousand will be used to fund continuation awards in fiscal year 2019 and \$2,700 thousand will be used to fund new awards in fiscal year 2020.

⁴ If the Department extends the Technical Assistance award and the PTI awards by one year, the peer review of new applications will be \$3 thousand in fiscal year 2019 and \$93 thousand in fiscal year 2020.

⁵ The amount shown for fiscal year 2018 includes contributions to the 1 percent set-aside for Minority Outreach under Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act for the Demonstration and Training Programs (\$57,960) and the Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals program (\$333,170), as well a portion of the 1 percent required for the Supported Employment State Grants program (\$101,856). The fiscal year 2019 amount includes \$57,960 for the Demonstration and Training program and \$293,880 for the Training Program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Number of awards:			
New awards	0	10 ¹	TBD ¹
Continuation awards	<u>16</u>	<u>4</u> ¹¹	<u>TBD</u> ¹
Total, Number of awards	16	14	TBD

¹ If the Department extends the Technical Assistance award and the PTI awards by one year, there will be 3 new and 13 continuation awards in fiscal year 2019, and 12 new and 3 continuation awards in fiscal year 2020.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by this program.

Approximately 60 percent of the funds provided for the Demonstration and Training program are used to support model demonstration projects. Therefore, the Department's GPRA measures for this program are focused on these projects.

Vocational Rehabilitation Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) Demonstration Projects

Goal: To develop replicable promising practices in the use of career pathways by VR State agencies to assist eligible individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities, to acquire marketable skills and recognized postsecondary credentials, and thus and secure competitive integrated employment in high-demand, high-quality occupations.

***Objective:** Increase the number of career pathways accessible to individuals with disabilities, the number of individuals who obtain competitive employed through those career pathways, and the weekly earnings, and benefits of those who obtain competitive employment through CPID-funded activities.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Measure: The total number of distinct career pathways accessed or created through CPID.

Year	Target	Actual
2016		29
2017	72	78
2018	114	103
2019	121	
2020	131	

Additional Information: Grantees report the number of pathways that CPID participants enter as a result of CPID project activities. Using the baseline established in the first year of project data collection (fiscal year 2016), each grantee, in consultation with the project officer, determines a target number of career pathways that CPID participants will enter for each succeeding project year against which the grantee's progress will be measured. Annual targets and actual performance data for grantees are aggregated in order to assess annual program performance under this measure. Data for fiscal year 2019 are expected to be available by November 2019.

Measure: The total number of VR-eligible individuals who achieve competitive integrated employment through CPID-accessed or created career pathways.

Year	Target	Actual
2016		10
2017	50	70
2018	150	201
2019	200	
2020	250	

Additional Information: Using the baseline established in the first year of project data collection (fiscal year 2016), each of the four grantees, in consultation with the project officer, determines a target number of VR-eligible individuals who will achieve competitive integrated employment through the career pathways entered by project participants for each succeeding project year against which a grantee's progress is measured. Annual targets and actual performance data for each grantee are aggregated in order to assess annual program performance under this measure.

Competitive integrated employment is work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting, and for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other individuals who are not disabled and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have the similar training, experience, and skills, including eligibility for the same level of employee benefits. Data for fiscal year 2019 are expected to be available by November 2019.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Measure: The average weekly wages of VR-eligible CPID participants who obtained competitive integrated employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2016	n/a	n/a
2017	\$600	\$543
2018	\$600	650
2019	\$630	
2020	\$680	

Additional Information: The average weekly wage for this measure is calculated based on the weekly wages reported for each of the CPID project participants who obtained competitive integrated employment across all four projects for each reporting year. The average weekly wage for the 201 participants who achieved competitive integrated employment in fiscal year 2018 was \$650. This represents a 20 percent increase in the average weekly earnings reported for fiscal year 2017 (\$543), the first full year of operation for the CPID projects. These aggregate weekly earnings reflect individual weekly earnings that vary widely according to CPID participants' age, significance of disability, and degree of career readiness—ranging from students and youth working a few hours per week on their first job to employed professionals moving up the career ladder through advanced education and training. Data for fiscal year 2019 are expected to be available by November 2019.

Other VR-CPID Measures

VR-CPID grantees are expected to report on two additional measures beginning in August 2019: (1) the numbers of competitive integrated employment and employer-provided benefits obtained by CPID participants will be compared to those obtained by VR consumers in their State outside of CPID; (2) the average weekly earnings of CPID participants who obtained competitive integrated employment will be compared to the average weekly earnings of VR consumers in their State who obtained competitive integrated employment outside of the CPID project.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 509)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$20,735

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$17,650	\$17,650	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR) program supports statewide systems that provide assistance and information to eligible individuals with disabilities and conduct advocacy to ensure the protection of their rights under Federal law. These systems protect the legal and human rights of individuals with disabilities who are ineligible for protection and advocacy (P&A) services provided under Part C of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, or who need P&A services that are beyond the scope of the Client Assistance Program. States may use these funds to plan and carry out P&A programs for eligible individuals with disabilities and to develop outreach strategies to inform individuals with disabilities of their rights.

The program also requires the Department to reserve between 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent of the amount appropriated for training and technical assistance to eligible systems established under this program. In addition, the Department must award \$50,000 to the eligible system established under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act to serve the American Indian consortium. Remaining funds are allocated to eligible systems within the States and outlying areas based on population estimates (using the most recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau).

The Act establishes a minimum allotment of \$100,000 for States, or one-third of 1 percent of funds remaining after the technical assistance set-side and grant for the American Indian consortium, whichever is greater. The outlying areas receive a minimum allotment of \$50,000. The program is current-funded, but States and outlying areas may carry over unobligated Federal funds for an additional year.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015	\$17,650
2016	17,650
2017	17,650
2018	17,650
2019	17,650

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$17.7 million for the PAIR program, the same as the fiscal year 2019 appropriation. The request will assist PAIR programs in providing information and P&A services to over 46,000 individuals with disabilities in fiscal year 2020. The Department plans to reserve 1.8 percent of the funds requested (\$317,700) to provide training and technical assistance to eligible statewide systems established under this program, as required by the authorizing statute.

During fiscal year 2017, PAIR programs nationwide reported handling 10,256 cases and responded to 36,300 requests for information or referral. Of the individual cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, most were related to education (18 percent), health care (15 percent), employment (14 percent), government benefits/services (13 percent), housing (12 percent), and transportation (12 percent). Over half (55 percent) of these individuals were between the ages of 23 and 59. The most frequent primary disability categories (i.e., the ones directly related to the issues/complaints raised) reported for such individuals were orthopedic impairments (28 percent), neurological impairments (16 percent), and sensory disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments (15 percent).

In addition to providing representation to individuals, PAIR programs address systemic issues faced by persons with disabilities through a variety of methods, including negotiations with public and private entities and class action litigation. In fiscal year 2017, 51 out of the 57 PAIR programs (89 percent) reported that these activities resulted in changes in policies and practices benefiting individuals with disabilities.

The following examples of case services provided in fiscal year 2017 illustrate how PAIR programs assist individuals and, in some cases, bring about systemic change. Funds requested in fiscal year 2020 would support similar activities.

- The Minnesota PAIR served as a member of the Target Center Accessibility Advisory Committee during a \$140 million renovation of the Target Center in the summer of 2017. Prior to the renovation, the Accessibility Committee, which included people with disabilities, city and state representatives, and disability advocates, provided design and policy suggestions to ensure that the renovated stadium meets and exceeds Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. As a result of the Committee's work, various accessibility improvements were made to the facility, including improved placement of wheelchair accessibility seating, and improved access coming to and from

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

the building. The Minnesota Disability Law Center estimates that the committee's work will affect approximately 232,000 PAIR eligible clients.

- During the 2017 Legislative Session, Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) successfully educated policy makers on bills affecting Oregonians experiencing disabilities, including proposals regulating the use of abbreviated school days and improvements on the guardianship process. Other protection and advocacy issues affecting individuals with disabilities in which DRO has been involved include pay equity, keeping students safe from abuse, banning discrimination in organ transplants, and duties of Intellectual/Developmental Disability case managers in end-of-life decisions.

DRO's work resulted in a law that limits a school district's ability to shorten child's school day because of behavior problems that are part of his or her disability. A companion law sets out procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessments and for developing, reviewing, and revising behavior intervention plans for students with individualized education programs or 504 Plans. DRO also successfully advocated for HB 2630, which was designed to limit the power of guardians, which in Oregon may be appointed without a court hearing and who previously could make major changes to a person's life without the opportunity for the affected individual to object. The new law, which became effective on January 1, 2018, requires a person who asks to be the guardian for an adult to tell the court what less-restrictive alternatives to guardianship were considered and why they were inadequate. Additionally, it provides for notifications that ensure the adult and other concerned parties are informed about the proposed guardianship and changes to the adult's abode or placement.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	37,300	37,300	37,300
Individuals provided case services	11,000	11,000	11,000

NOTE: Data are projected from actual data reported by PAIRs for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017 on the number of requests for information and provision of case services to individuals with disabilities. Final data for fiscal year 2018 will be available in June 2019.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by this program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

Goal: To provide assistance and information to individuals with disabilities eligible for the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights program and conduct advocacy to ensure the protection of their rights under Federal law.

Objective: Identify problem areas requiring systemic change and engage in systemic activities to address those problems.

Measure: The percentage of PAIR programs that reported that their systemic advocacy resulted in a change in policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	91%	86%
2016	91	91
2017	91	89
2018	89	
2019	89	
2020	89	

Additional information: 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. Based on a review of the last 4 years of data and other program information, RSA has reduced the targets for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 to 89 percent (51 of 57 PAIR programs). Final fiscal year 2018 data will be available in June 2019.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$32,363

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$22,548	0	-\$22,548

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Supported Employment (SE) State Grants program assists States in developing collaborative programs with appropriate public and private non-profit organizations to provide supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. More specifically, the program provides formula-based supplemental funding to State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to assist VR consumers with the most significant disabilities in achieving the employment outcome of supported employment. Section 7(38) of the Rehabilitation Act defines “supported employment” as competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment; and that is individualized and customized, consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice, including with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Supported employment uses a “place-train” model in which individuals with the most significant disabilities are placed in a job and provided intensive services and supports. These services are typically provided by a job coach in conjunction with supports provided by the employer to train the individual on the job site, followed by extended services after the individual’s ability to perform the job with support has stabilized. These services and support enable individuals with the most significant disabilities who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need ongoing support to engage in and maintain competitive integrated employment.

An individual’s potential for supported employment must be considered as part of the assessment to determine eligibility for the Title I VR State Grants program. VR funds are used to pay the costs associated with assessment and the determination of eligibility, as well as other needed VR services prior to placement in supported employment. Ongoing services are provided by the VR agency, using funds under the Supported Employment program and/or the VR program, from the time of job placement until the transition to extended services, and thereafter by one or more extended services providers. Amendments to Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) extended the time frame for the provision of supported employment services from 18 months to 24 months. A State VR agency may support an individual’s supported employment services solely with VR

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

State Grant funds, or it may support these services in whole or in part with funds under the SE State Grants program.

State VR agencies must demonstrate evidence of their efforts to identify and make arrangements with other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services. State VR agencies must make extended services available to youth with the most significant disabilities with funds available under the SE program, based upon the individual needs of the youth for a period not to exceed 4 years. Furthermore, Section 604(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act permits VR agencies to use VR program funds to pay for extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years to youth with the most significant disabilities who have received supported employment services. Extended services are those services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities by a State agency, a private non-profit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource once an individual has concluded services from the State VR agency. State VR agencies were previously prohibited from using the Federal funds received under the VR and SE programs for extended services. State VR agencies are still prohibited from providing extended services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are not youth with significant disabilities using SE or VR program funds.

In addition, States are required to use one-half of their SE program funding allotment to provide supported employment and extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities and to provide a match of 10 percent for the SE allotment portion used to serve such youth.

Supported employment funds are distributed on the basis of population, using the most recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, with no State receiving less than \$300,000, or one-third of 1 percent of the sums appropriated, whichever is greater. The minimum allotment for territories remains one-eighth of 1 percent of the appropriation.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015	\$27,548
2016	27,548
2017	27,548
2018	22,548
2019	22,548

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

No funds are requested for the SE State Grants program. The Administration recognizes that supported employment can be an effective strategy in assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain competitive employment in integrated settings. However, because supported employment is now an integral part of the VR State Grants program, the Administration believes that there is no longer a need for a separate funding stream to ensure the provision of such services. The proposed elimination would reduce unnecessary administrative burden and streamline program administration at the Federal and State levels, allowing State VR agencies to continue to provide supported employment services in fiscal year 2020 to roughly the same number of individuals as they did under the two separate authorities. However, maintaining these levels will require State VR agencies to use an increased portion of their VR State grant allocation to provide supported employment services or seek additional support from State and local resources.

The SE State Grants program was first authorized under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986 to provide supplemental grants to assist States in developing collaborative programs with public agencies and private nonprofit organizations for training and time-limited post-employment services for individuals with the most severe disabilities. At that time, supported employment was a new promising practice in employing individuals who traditionally would not have achieved employment in the integrated labor market. Initially, many rehabilitation professionals were skeptical about its feasibility and concerned about the potential costs. As a supplemental source of dedicated funds, the SE State grant program was designed to provide an incentive for State VR agencies to provide supported employment services. State VR agencies now recognize supported employment as a viable employment option for individuals with the most significant disabilities, and an individual's potential for supported employment must be considered as part of the assessment to determine eligibility for the Title I VR State Grants program. Consequently, States no longer require such an incentive, as demonstrated by the fact that in fiscal year 2017, State agencies spent nearly \$183 million in VR State grant funds on supported employment services.

In addition, recent amendments to Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act by WIOA made changes to the SE Grants program that have negatively affected the provision of supported employment services and significantly increased the Federal and State cost and burden of administering the program. More specifically, States are now required to reserve and expend one-half of their SE program allotment to provide supported employment and extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities and to provide a non-Federal share of 10 percent to match the reserved funds.

Many States have been slow to implement these new requirements, resulting in the lapse of funds. For example, in fiscal year 2018 several States did not provide any matching funds and one State and one outlying area relinquished their entire annual SE awards. Of those States that did not provide any matching funds for their SE allotments, one State did not expend any of its fiscal year 2018 funds and did not relinquish those funds during reallocation for use by other States. In addition, one State that requested and received additional funds in reallocation did not expend or match any of its SE funds and two States improperly expended their full allotments without providing the required match.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

As a result, over \$1 million of Federal SE fiscal year 2018 funds were left unexpended by the States that did not provide any matching funds. This data does not include agencies that may have only partially matched their award, already spent funds they provided no match for, or any SE funds that should have been relinquished based on the State's Standard Financial Report. Funds that are not expended or relinquished for reallocation are lost to the program and return to the Treasury.

The WIOA requirements have also significantly increased the Federal and State cost and burden of administering the program because they essentially require the administration of a second formula grant that requires duplicative efforts on the part of State VR agencies, including separate tracking of financial data, different matching requirements, and separate accounts for drawing down funds. These requirements also increase burden at the Federal level, including additional monitoring and technical assistance efforts.

Under the Administration's proposal, the Department would monitor the provision of supported employment services under the VR State Grants program to ensure that State agencies invest appropriate levels of their VR resources in supported employment and to provide technical assistance where needed.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Individuals with a supported employment IPE goal when they exited the program	45,500	45,500	0
Employment outcomes:	25,000 ¹	25,000 ¹	0
Supported employment outcomes	18,100 ²	18,100 ²	0
Employment without supports in an integrated setting	6,860 ³	6,860 ³	0
Other employment outcomes	40 ⁴	40 ⁴	0
Minority outreach	\$275	\$225	0

NOTE: Estimates are based on actual FY 2017 data from the RSA-911 Case Service Report.

¹ Includes employment outcomes for all VR consumers who had a supported employment goal at exit.

² Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal at exit, the number who were employed in an integrated setting and receiving ongoing support services.

³ Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal at exit, the number who met the employment outcome criteria for the VR State Grants program but who were not receiving ongoing support services at exit.

⁴ Of the individuals who had a supported employment goal at exit, the number who met the employment outcome criteria for the VR State Grants program who were either self-employed or employed in a Business Enterprise Program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided for this program and the VR State Grants program in previous years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by these programs.

A State VR agency may support an individual's supported employment services solely with VR State Grant funds, or in whole or in part with funds under the SE State Grants program, therefore, data reported for these measures include outcomes for individuals with a supported employment goal/outcome, regardless of whether such services were paid from funds under the VR State Grants program or the SE State Grants program. Thus, while the measures provide information on the results of VR State agencies efforts in assisting individuals with significant disabilities to obtain supported employment outcomes, the measures cannot be used to assess the performance of the Supported Employment State Grants program, especially since most of the funds expended for these individuals are VR State Grant funds. The Department will continue to assess the outcomes of individuals receiving supported employment services through the VR State Grants program (i.e., competitive employment outcomes and earnings) in future years.

As discussed in the performance section of the request for the VR State Grants program, States will report performance data required by WIOA to RSA on a quarterly basis for the July to June program year (PY), rather than the annual fiscal year cycle (i.e., October to September) as it has done in the past. First quarter PY 2017 data were reported to the Department on November 15, 2017 for the period July 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017.

The transition to the new reporting requirements limits the usefulness of prior year data in making projections for fiscal years 2018, 2019, and 2020. The data collected under the RSA-911-16 follow new WIOA definitions thus making most comparisons to prior years invalid. The fiscal year 2017 performance information provided below is based on data reported for individuals whose case service records were closed during the first 9 months of the fiscal year (i.e., October 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017) after receiving services from the VR State agency. Performance data for 2018 will be reported quarterly by States based on the program year (i.e., July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019). Data for the 4th quarter of PY 2018 (i.e., April 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019) are due on August 15, 2019.

Targets for 2020 are not included because funding for this program is proposed for elimination.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

Goal: Individuals with significant disabilities with a goal of supported employment will achieve high quality employment.

Objective: *Ensure that individuals with significant disabilities with a supported employment goal achieve high quality employment.*

Measure: Of those individuals with significant disabilities who had a supported employment goal and achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who obtained competitive employment, including individuals who receive supported employment services funded under the VR State Grants program and/or the SE State Grants program.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	95%	95%
2016	95	95
2017	95	97
2018	96	
2019	96	

Additional information: Individuals with a supported employment goal who achieve an employment outcome may be working in competitive integrated employment (employment at least at the minimum wage in an integrated setting) or may be working in an integrated setting toward competitive employment at or above the minimum wage.

Measure: Average weekly earnings for individuals with significant disabilities who achieved a supported employment outcome.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	\$208	\$215
2016	208	219
2017	210	226
2018	215	
2019	215	

Additional information: Performance data for this measure are calculated by dividing the weekly earnings for all individuals who obtained a supported employment outcome with earnings by the total number of individuals who obtained a supported employment outcome with earnings. Unlike previous years, the data reported for this measure in 2017 include data on all individuals who obtained a supported employment outcome with earnings, and do not exclude individuals served by State VR agencies for the blind. As a result, performance data are not comparable to previous years. The average weekly earnings calculation for 2017 also does not include data for Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

Efficiency Measure

Objective: *Ensure that State VR agencies effectively use Supported Employment Grant funds to achieve supported employment outcomes.*

Measure: Percentage of State VR agencies that demonstrate at least 30 supported employment outcomes per \$100,000 received in SE State Grant funds.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	75%	65%
2016	75	73
2017	75	67
2018	70	
2019	70	

Additional information: This measure includes the 50 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, but excludes the four territories because they receive less than \$100,000 in SE State Grant funds.

The minimum State allotment (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) under the SE State Grants distribution formula is \$300,000. So, for example, a minimum allotment for a State whose final grant was \$300,000 would need a minimum of 90 supported employment outcomes to pass this measure. Because the cost of services for individuals with a supported employment outcome is supported through both the VR State Grants program and the SE State Grants program, this measure cannot be used to assess the impact of the performance of the SE State Grants program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living services for older blind individuals (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII, Chapter 2)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: \$39,141

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$33,317	\$33,317	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILOIB) program supports services to assist individuals aged 55 or older who have severe visual impairment making competitive employment extremely difficult to obtain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. Funds are used to provide independent living services, conduct activities that will improve or expand services for these individuals, and conduct activities to improve public understanding of the problems of these individuals. ILOIB services are designed to help eligible persons adjust to their blindness by increasing their ability to care for their individual needs.

Grantees are State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies for persons who are blind and visually impaired or, in States with no separate agency for persons who are blind, State combined VR agencies. States participating in the Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program must match 10 percent of their grant with non-Federal cash or in kind resources in the year for which the Federal funds are appropriated. Awards are distributed to States according to a formula based on the population of individuals who are 55 years of age or older (using the most recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau). The minimum allotment for each of the 50 States, D.C., and Puerto Rico is \$225,000, with each of the outlying areas receiving a minimum allotment of \$40,000.

Independent living services are typically provided through contracts with local providers administered by State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. Services most frequently provided to program participants through the ILOIB program include technology aids and devices (58 percent), daily living skills (53 percent) and low vision assessments (35 percent). These services allow older individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired to be more independent at home and in the community. Trained program personnel are knowledgeable about blindness and other visual impairments, as well as the needs of older individuals with such impairments, including adaptive strategies that can assist these individuals to adjust to their impairments and increase their ability to function more independently.

The Department also reserves 1.8 percent of the funds appropriated to the ILOIB program, consistent with the requirements of WIOA, to provide training and technical assistance to Designated State Agencies or other providers of ILOIB services that receive ILOIB program funds.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015	\$33,317
2016	33,317
2017	33,317
2018	33,317
2019	33,317

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$33.3 million for the ILOIB program, the same as the fiscal year 2019 appropriation. These funds will assist States in meeting the need for independent living services by older individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The Department would use nearly \$600,000 to provide training and technical assistance to the ILOIB program and its service providers.

In 2017, 56,849 individuals received services under the ILOIB program, over half of whom were over 80 years of age and about 82 percent of whom were still living in a private residence. Approximately 59 percent of the individuals served in fiscal year 2017 were either legally blind or totally blind, and 20 percent also had some degree of hearing impairment. Macular degeneration continues to be the most commonly reported eye condition, followed by glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

The prevalence of disability increases with age, and the occurrence of a sensory disability is more than six times greater among older adults than working-age people. Persons age 55 or older, the target population of this program, are projected to comprise a larger share of the population over the next decade and beyond. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates), 6.6 percent of individuals 65 and older (about 3.2 million people) have a vision-related disability. In addition, the percentage of individuals who have a disability that affects their independent living status (including vision-related disabilities) increases with age, with a dramatic increase for individuals in the 75 years and over category, where 24.8 percent report having a disability that affects their independent living status.

In fiscal year 2020, the Department will reserve approximately \$600,000 (1.8 percent of the funds appropriated for the ILOIB program) to support training and technical assistance, as required by the authoring statute. In fiscal year 2015, the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) at Mississippi State University was awarded the training and technical assistance grant for older individuals who are blind. (See <https://www.blind.msstate.edu/research/current-research/oib.php>). NRTC activities are designed to improve program and consumer outcomes and to enhance service providers' knowledge and skills in the areas of best practice, community outreach, budget management, and data collection. In fiscal year 2020, the Department plans to hold a new competition for a 5- year grant award to support training and technical assistance.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures:</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Number of Grantees	56	56	56
Minimum State award	\$225	\$225	\$225
Number of States at minimum	17	17	17
Average State award	\$626	\$620	\$620
Minority outreach	0 ¹	\$333	\$333
Training and technical assistance	\$600	\$600	\$600

¹ The Rehabilitation Act allows the RSA Commissioner flexibility in determining how it will meet the 1 percent set-aside for Minority Outreach activities required under Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act. In fiscal year 2018, no funds were used from this program to meet this requirement because the Department met the requirement through the use of available funds under the Demonstration and Training Programs.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by the program.

Goal: To promote and support a philosophy of independent living (IL)—including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy—in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

Objective: *Through the provision of services (either directly or through contracts), increase the percentage of consumers receiving services funded through the Older Blind program who report having access to services needed to improve their ability to live more independently and participate fully in their communities.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Older Blind program consumers who have access to previously unavailable assistive technology aids and devices.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	56%	57%
2016	56	61
2017	57	58
2018	57	
2019	58	
2020	58	

Additional information: In fiscal year 2016, the number of consumers who received assistive technology increased, and the total number of Older Blind program consumers decreased, resulting in a jump in performance as compared to fiscal year 2015. However, this increase was not sustained in fiscal year 2017. Data for 2018 are expected by summer of 2019.

Measure: The percentage of Independent Living Older Blind program consumers who report an improvement in daily living skills.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	61%	60%
2016	61	61
2017	61	60
2018	61	
2019	61	
2020	61	

Additional information: Daily living skills include activities such as bathing, moving around the home, getting out of bed or a chair, and eating a meal. State agencies collect and provide this data in their annual program reports. Data for 2018 are expected by summer 2019. Because of concerns about the subjectivity of this measure and the difficulty in isolating improvement on the basis of one of a number of services that may be received, the Department is considering alternative methods for assessing the functional improvement of consumers receiving services under the ILOIB that will not increase the overall data collection burden for grantees.

Helen Keller National Center
(Helen Keller National Center Act)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: 0 ¹

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$13,500	\$10,336	-\$3,164

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2020 through appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC) was created by Congress in 1967 and operates under the auspices of Helen Keller Services. The HKNC provides services on a national basis to youth and adults who are deaf-blind, their families, and service providers through on- and off-campus services, professional learning, and information on combined vision and hearing loss. HKNC's mission is to enable each person who is deaf-blind to live, work, and thrive in his or her community of choice. This includes having access to local resources for community living and employment opportunities.

HKNC provides direct services through a residential training facility at its national headquarters center (Center) located in Sands Point, New York, where deaf-blind individuals receive intensive specialized services. The Center provides comprehensive services for individuals with deaf-blindness to enhance their potential for employment and help them live independently in their home communities. The Center's residential programs provide consumers with an array of services, and supports, including adaptive skills training to help them achieve their vocational and independent living goals. The Center's programs emphasize a number of areas such as enhanced mobility; improved and accessible communication (including the use of adaptive technology); constructive participation in home and community settings; leadership and advocacy training through mentoring, ongoing social and professional opportunities, and employment.

HKNC also provides services through a network of 10 regional field offices staffed by 11 regional representatives and one associate regional representative. Through this network, HKNC provides assistance to deaf-blind individuals and their families as well as technical assistance to local service providers. The regional network offices provide counseling, information, transition assistance, and referral services for individuals who are deaf-blind and their families to assist them to achieve successful participation in their community and employment. Regional representatives provide a wide variety of services for individuals who are deaf-blind in their home communities, including training for State and local service agency staff, general technical assistance, program assessment, community advocacy, and assistance to vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors, mental health workers, special education personnel, and deaf-blind consumers with developing individualized service plans. Regional representatives also assist clients who have received training at the Center with making the transition back to their home community.

Regional representatives collaborate with States to increase local capacity in the areas of implementing support service provider (SSP) programs, professional development training for VR and blind/visually impaired counselors, developing VR case sharing models, identifying deaf-blind leaders for representation on task forces/advisory councils and program planning/training, developing online and webinar training, and expanding the vocational access service provider model.

The HKNC Community Services Program (CSP), a model collaboration between the Center and the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), provides comprehensive rehabilitation, vocational, and support services to eligible persons who are deaf-blind in their homes, worksites and communities. CSP is staffed by credentialed professionals in the fields of blindness and deafness including orientation and mobility specialists, low vision specialists, vision rehabilitation teachers, and vocational specialists. All CSP staff are proficient in American Sign Language and other alternative modes of communication.

HKNC also provides professional development, training and technical assistance, and consultation to other organizations, programs, and providers serving individuals who are deaf-blind. Through its Information, Research and Professional Development (IRPD) department, HKNC provides technical knowledge, expertise, training, and services to its partners across the United States. The IRPD department offers on-campus workshops and seminars in disciplines such as train-the-trainer seminars for adaptive technology instructors working to support the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, SSP services, and training for VR counselors. In collaboration with personnel preparation programs and research projects located at universities throughout the country, IRPD staff work to identify effective practices for working with youth and adults who are deaf-blind and disseminate these best practices nationally via professional training initiatives in collaboration with HKNC direct services and field service staff. In addition, HKNC has developed a Deaf-Blind National Community of Practice, a 52-member collaborative of professional organizations working together to improve the quality of services to individuals who are deaf-blind through learning, research and practice.

In fiscal year 2018, the Center offered three summer programs that focused on the needs and goals of transitioning youth who are deaf-blind. At the end of these programs, recommendations are provided to the student's school in order to continue vocational planning and support the development of an individualized plan for employment goals, as appropriate. Brief descriptions of these programs are provided below.

- Summer Youth Vocational Program – This 6-week program offers young adults their first paid work experience with an exploration into how strategies for communication, independent living, mobility, self-advocacy, and vocational readiness can foster their independence and success at work.
- Young Adult Summer Program (YASP) – This 2-week program offers transition-age students who are deaf-blind and completing their high school education the opportunity to learn about future options related to college, work, and apartment living, how to advocate, and to experience adult life in the residence and community. This program is facilitated by deaf-blind leaders who are graduates of HKNC.
- Comprehensive Summer Youth Assessment – This 8-week comprehensive assessment for transition-aged youth focuses on identifying goals for the remaining years of high school and college, including exploring vocational interests and identifying specific accommodations needed in college environments.

HKNC also offers a program called the Deaf-Blind Immersion Experience (DBIE), now in its second year, which provides consumers who are deaf-blind with intellectual disabilities, and their support team, a 5-day training experience that includes the consumer's participation in work experiences that match their interests, gifts, and abilities.

Sources of HKNC Revenue

For fiscal year 2018, HKNC reported total public support and revenues of \$18.9 million. Funds appropriated directly to HKNC through the Department's Rehabilitation Services account (\$12.5 million) made up 66 percent of its total revenue, and direct and indirect funds from other Federal sources (\$2.2 million) made up 11 percent of its total revenue. Training fees generated \$1.7 million (9 percent) and funding from State grants and contracts amounted to \$1.4 million (7 percent). HKNC received \$460,000 in donations and public support (2 percent), while other revenue generated by HKNC operations and investment income amounted to \$670,000 (4 percent). While the Center has sought to increase other sources of funding, the Federal appropriation remains its primary source of support.

For fiscal year 2018, HKNC incurred total operating expenses of \$17.5 million. Because most of the specialized services required by this population are provided by HKNC staff, salaries and fringe benefits (\$13.2 million) account for most expenses (75 percent). Building, utilities and rent (\$1.7 million) account for 10 percent of expenses; professional services (\$964,528), 5 percent; client related services (\$655,518), 4 percent; and other operating expenses (\$1 million), 6 percent.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015.....	\$9,127
2016.....	10,336
2017.....	10,336
2018.....	12,500
2019.....	13,500

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2020, the Administration requests \$10.3 million for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC), a decrease of \$3.2 million from the fiscal year 2019 appropriation and the same as the fiscal year 2019 request. The request would provide substantial resources to support independent living and employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf-blind while also maintaining the fiscal discipline necessary to support the President’s goal of increasing support for national security and public safety without adding to the Federal budget deficit.

The request would support services through HKNC’s regional offices to an estimated 1,600 individual consumers, 475 families, and 985 agencies and organizations while also helping to fund direct intensive services to approximately 63 consumers at HKNC’s residential training and rehabilitation program.

Approximately 30 percent of the funds requested would provide support to the HKNC for field services, community education, and professional development programs, including the activities of HKNC’s 10 regional offices and the Information, Research, and Professional Development (IRPD) department. These programs help reach consumers in their home communities and assist personnel at State agencies and other organizations to serve or develop the capacity to serve individuals who are deaf-blind through training, community education, and technical assistance.

The request also would continue to support HKNC activities that promote best practices and provide quality information and training to individuals who are deaf-blind, their families, and professionals. To address the shortage of professionals qualified to meet the unique needs of individuals who are deaf-blind, HKNC provides training for personnel such as teachers and vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors, rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, adaptive technology instructors, residential support staff, support service providers (SSP), and interpreters. One of the IRPD department’s main objectives, for example, is to support training for professionals in conjunction with HKNC headquarters staff members, regional representatives, and new deaf-blind specialists and consultants across the country. In fiscal year 2018, the IRPD department provided or supported headquarters and field staff with the tools for 54 in-service and professional development opportunities in a number of areas, such as Haptics (i.e., a standardized system of touch signals used to convey visual and environmental information), emergency and disaster preparedness, using SSPs, Deaf-Blind rights, strategies for creating successful employment options for deaf-blind workers, and orientation and mobility training. Information and training materials are disseminated through customized responses to requests for information, short-term and onsite individualized training, topical seminars, and small-scale, customized training at locations throughout the United States.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Number of individuals served at headquarters:			
Adult training program clients	76	65	63

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Specialized training services:			
Transition for high school students	20	20	20
Senior citizens	5	10	5
Individuals with intellectual disabilities	9	36	5
Targeted skills training	3	10	3
Community Services Program	40	70	30
Number of individuals served through regional representatives and deaf-blind specialists:			
Consumers	1,600	1,800	1,600
Families	400	500	475
Agencies/organizations	1,150	1,280	985
HKNC FTE staff	133	133	125

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years, those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by individuals served by this program.

Goal: Individuals who are deaf-blind will become independent and function as full and productive members of their local community.

Objective: *Individuals who are deaf-blind receive the specialized services and training they need to become as independent and self-sufficient as possible.*

Measure: The percentage of: (1) training goals set and achieved by adult consumers (both on and off campus); (2) adult consumers seeking employment who are placed in employment both on and off campus); and (3) adult consumers seeking to maintain their ability to live independently or move to less restrictive settings who achieve their goals.

Year	Target # of Adult Con- sumers	Actual # of Adult Con- sumers	Target % of Training goals met	Actual % of Training goals met	Target % Placed in Employ- ment	Actual % Placed in Employ- ment	Target % in Less Restrictive Settings	Actual % in Less Restrictive Settings
2015	71	55/30	95%	93%	48%	41/56%	87%	82%
2016	75	63/29	95	91	48	53/50	86	86
2017	75	60/36	95	89	48	47/78	86	87
2018	75	76/40	95	90	48	50/71	86	91
2019	75		95		48		86	
2020	80		95		60		86	

Additional information: In fiscal year 2018, HKNC served 76 consumers in the on-campus rehabilitation training programs and 40 additional off-campus consumers through its Community Services Program. HKNC points out that the number of consumers served may fluctuate from year to year due to factors beyond the control of the Center. For example, the length of time an individual participates in training may vary anywhere from two weeks to beyond one year due to differing levels of training intensity and individual needs.

The “less restrictive settings” measure refers to consumers who move from settings such as living with parents or guardians, assisted living settings, and nursing homes to more independent living arrangements such as their own home or apartment or group homes. In addition, this measure includes participants who achieved a less restrictive living environment by successfully acquiring skills in two or more core areas, resulting in the ability to maintain a home and more fully participate in community life. In 2018, 91 percent of consumers moved into, or remained in, less restrictive settings, and the target set for the fiscal year was met.

The Center evaluates the progress of consumers in achieving the goals stated in their individualized training plans (ITPs). This measure represents the percent of adult consumers served by the HKNC who successfully achieved identified training goals during the program year. The consumers and their instructors mutually develop these instructional objectives. To ensure that the measure is an accurate reflection of the Center’s performance, the Department and HKNC have agreed that it should only include the outcomes for adult consumers enrolled in the long-term formal program and the targeted skills training program. Consumers in the short-term programs for high school students are not included in the calculation. In 2018, 90 percent of training goals were met by adult consumers; however, the target (95 percent) was not met.

In fiscal year 2018, 50 percent of consumers in on-campus programs and 71 percent of off-campus consumers with an employment goal were placed in employment, and the target was met.

Objective: Increase the capacity of deaf-blind consumers to function more independently in the home community.

Measure: The number of individuals (or families on behalf of individuals) referred to State or local agencies or service providers by HKNC’s regional offices.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	265	551
2016	300	626
2017	500	472
2018	600	573
2019	600	
2020	600	

Additional information: In fiscal year 2018, HKNC’s regional offices referred 573 individuals to State or local agencies or service providers, which represents an increase from previous years and falls slightly short of the target. These referrals help deaf-blind consumers access resources within their home community that improve their ability to function independently.

Measure: The percentage of consumers who participated in services or programs (other than HKNC) as a result of receiving a referral from HKNC’s regional offices.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	68%	66%
2016	66	75
2017	66	94
2018	75	94
2019	75	
2020	75	

Additional information: This measure provides information on the activities of the field services programs, including the 11 regional representatives and 1 regional representative associate. Regional representatives serve individuals who are deaf-blind in their home communities, which often lack other service providers that are trained and equipped to meet the unique and multi-faceted needs of these consumers. The referrals provided by regional representatives often are the gateway to finding appropriate and individualized supports from various agencies and organizations. The intensity of consumers’ interactions with HKNC field staff varies significantly. Some consumers interact with staff only once via telecommunications, while others benefit from repeated in-person visits for a variety of services, such as skills assessments, counseling, and advocacy.

The year-to-year variation in performance on this measure makes it difficult to set an appropriate annual target. Based on the data trend, a target of 75 percent has been set for fiscal year 2020. However, this target may be adjusted based on 2019 performance.

Objective: HKNC will assist State vocational rehabilitation (VR) and employment programs in increasing employment outcomes for individuals who are deaf-blind.

Measure: The number of referrals by HKNC’s regional offices to VR or related employment programs.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	92	65

Year	Target	Actual
2016	65	41
2017	65	33
2018	65	71
2019	65	
2020	65	

Additional information: HKNC plays an important role in connecting individuals who are deaf-blind to VR agencies. Many VR agencies lack sufficient numbers of personnel trained in providing services to consumers who are deaf-blind. HKNC field staff frequently facilitate interactions between consumers and VR agencies, train VR agency staff about the specialized needs of these clients, and assist consumers who are returning to their State's VR system after attending intensive training at HKNC headquarters. HKNC hired three new regional representatives in fiscal year 2018, resulting in a significant increase in the number of referrals. In addition, the number of referrals to VR agencies can also fluctuate depending on whether the consumers served by HKNC field staff have vocational goals.

Measure: The percentage of individuals who achieved successful employment outcomes in which HKNC's regional offices played a collaborative role contributing training, advocacy and/or support to the consumer or job training agency.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	32%	46%
2016	40	45
2017	40	39
2018	45	41
2019	45	
2020	45	

Additional information: For the measure on the percentage of individuals who achieved employment outcomes, the numerator is the number of clients served by HKNC regional representatives who achieved employment outcomes in which HKNC's regional offices played a collaborative role providing training, advocacy and/or support to the consumer or job training agency. The denominator is the total number of clients served by HKNC regional representatives who achieved employment outcomes.