

Department of Education
REHABILITATION SERVICES
Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request

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State tables reflecting final 2019 allocations and 2020 and 2021 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, [~~\$3,747,739,000~~] \$3,782,952,000, of which [~~\$3,610,040,000~~] \$3,667,801,000 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, 2021].² (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2020.*)

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 [\$3,610,040,000] <u>\$3,667,801,000</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, 2021].</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, 2018, or 2019 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 2021.</p>

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Appropriation, Adjustments, and Transfers
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2019	2020	2021
Discretionary:			
Appropriation.....	<u>\$135,199</u>	<u>\$137,699</u>	<u>\$115,151</u>
Total, discretionary appropriation	135,199	137,699	115,151
Mandatory:			
Appropriation.....	3,521,990	3,610,040	3,667,801
Sequester (P.L. 112-25).....	<u>-218,363</u>	<u>-212,992</u>	<u>0</u>
Total, adjusted mandatory appropriation .	3,303,627	3,397,048	3,667,801
Total, discretionary and adjusted mandatory appropriation.....	3,438,826	3,534,747	3,782,952

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Summary of Changes (dollars in thousands)

2020.....	\$3,747,739 ¹
2021.....	<u>3,782,952</u>
Net change.....	+62,338

¹ Excludes the 5.9 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, 2019. The reduced level for 2020 subsequent to the 5.9 percent sequester is \$3,534,747, a reduction of \$212,992 million.

Increases:	<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>from 2020</u>
<u>Built in</u>		
Increase in funding for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State grants, consistent with the inflation increase specified in the authorizing statute.	\$3,610,040	+\$57,761
Decreases:	<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>from 2020</u>
<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
Net change		+35,213

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Authorizing Legislation (dollars in thousands)

Activity	2020 Authorized	2020 Estimate	2021 Authorized	2021 Request
Vocational rehabilitation (VR) State grants:				
Grants to States (RA-I A, B-110 and 111)	\$3,610,040 ¹	\$3,351,798 ²	\$3,667,801 ³	\$3,622,551
Grants for Indians (RA-I-C)	(1,4)	45,250 ²	(3,4)	45,250
Client assistance State grants (RA-I-112)	14,098	13,000	14,098 ⁵	13,000
Supported employment State grants (RA-VI)	32,363	22,548	32,363 ⁵	0
Training (RA-III-302)	39,540	29,388	39,540 ⁵	29,388
Demonstration and training programs (RA-III-303)	6,809	5,796	6,809 ⁵	5,796
Services for older blind individuals (RA-VII-2)	39,141	33,317	39,141 ⁵	33,317
Protection and advocacy of individual rights (RA-V-509)	20,735	17,650	20,735 ⁵	17,650
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNCA)	<u>0</u> ⁶	<u>16,000</u>	<u>0</u> ⁶	<u>16,000</u>
Total definite authorization	3,762,726		3,820,487	
Total discretionary appropriation		137,699		115,151
Total mandatory appropriation		3,610,040		3,667,801
Total appropriation		3,747,739		3,782,952
Portion of request not authorized				16,000
Total appropriation including required mandatory reduction		3,534,747 ²		

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 2020, this amount was \$3,610,040 thousand.

² The amount reflects the 5.9 percent reduction of mandatory programs that went into effect on October 1, 2019, pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).

³ Section 100(d) of the Rehabilitation Act automatically extends the authorization of appropriations for the program authorized by the State grant program under Part B of Title I through fiscal year 2021. 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 2021, this amount is \$3,667,801 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 applies through September 30, 2021.

⁶ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; continued funding is proposed for this program in fiscal year 2021 under appropriations language.

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Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2012	\$3,541,111	\$3,522,686 ¹	\$3,511,735 ¹	\$3,511,281
2013	3,517,710	3,511,281 ²	3,626,380 ²	3,622,925
2014	3,655,577	N/A ³	3,698,174 ⁴	3,680,497
2015	3,683,335	N/A ³	3,722,853 ⁴	3,709,853
2016	3,532,109	3,529,605 ⁵	3,487,864 ⁵	3,529,605
2017	3,541,389	3,534,027 ⁶	3,536,389 ⁶	3,535,589 ⁶
2018	3,563,008	3,562,582 ⁷	3,562,418 ⁷	3,361,143 ⁷
2019	3,634,977	3,657,689 ⁸	3,656,189 ⁸	3,657,189 ⁸
2020	3,719,527	3,752,076	3,745,239 ⁹	3,747,739 ⁹
2021	3,782,952			

¹ The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill and the level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Committee action only.

² 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.

³ The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.

⁴ The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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).

⁹ The Senate allowance reflects the Chairman's mark; the Appropriation reflects the Further Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94).

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2021 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(in thousands of dollars)

	Cat Code	2019 Appropriation	2020 Appropriation	2021 President's Budget	2021 President's Budget Compared to 2020 Appropriation	
					Amount	Percent
Rehabilitation Services						
1. Vocational rehabilitation State grants:						
(a) Grants to States (RA Title I-A, sections 110 and 111) ¹	M	3,260,627	3,351,798	3,622,551	270,753	8.08%
(b) Grants to Indians (RA Title I-C)	M	43,000	45,250	45,250	0	0.00%
Subtotal ¹		3,303,627	3,397,048	3,667,801	270,753	7.97%
Mandatory baseline	M	3,521,990	3,610,040	3,667,801	57,761	1.60%
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	13,500	16,000	16,000	0	0.00%
Subtotal		135,199	137,699	115,151	(22,548)	-16.37%
Total		3,438,826	3,534,747	3,782,952	248,205	7.02%
Discretionary	D	135,199	137,699	115,151	(22,548)	-16.37%
Mandatory	M	3,303,627	3,397,048	3,667,801	270,753	7.97%

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

¹ Pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program level shown in the 2019 Appropriation column reflects the 6.2 percent reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2018; and the 2020 Appropriation column reflects the 5.9 percent reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2019.

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 2021 request for the Rehabilitation Services account provides \$3.8 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 \$3.7 billion request for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program includes an increase of \$57.8 million over the fiscal year 2020 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 request would maintain support for all other programs in the Rehabilitation Services account at the 2020 appropriation level.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$3,667,801¹

Budget Authority:

	2020 <u>Appropriation</u>	2021 <u>Request</u>	Change from <u>2020 to 2021</u>
State grants	\$3,564,790	\$3,622,551	+\$57,761
Indian set-aside	<u>45,250</u>	<u>45,250</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	3,610,040 ²	3,667,801	+57,761

¹ Section 100(d) of the Rehabilitation Act automatically extends the authorization of appropriations for the program authorized by the State grant program under Part B of Title I through fiscal year 2021. 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). 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 2020 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 2020 subsequent to the 5.9 percent sequester that went into effect on October 1, 2019 is \$3,397,047,640, a reduction of \$213.0 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 is 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 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

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and 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 and who require and can benefit from VR services to achieve and maximize employment and career goals. 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.

VR State Grants help 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 second preceding fiscal year. 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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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

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), which pays part of the costs of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near a reservation. 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)
2016.....	\$3,161,130 ¹
2017.....	3,164,054 ¹
2018.....	3,225,038 ¹
2019.....	3,303,627 ¹
2020.....	3,397,048 ¹

¹ The amounts shown for 2016 through 2020 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 6.8 percent in 2016, 6.9 percent in 2017, 6.6 percent in 2018, 6.2 percent in 2019, and 5.9 percent in 2020.

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$3.7 billion for the VR State Grants programs, \$57.8 million more than the fiscal year 2020 appropriation, to help States and Tribal governments increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The fiscal year 2021 request reflects the current estimate of the mandatory amount required by the authorizing statute. Of the amount requested, \$45.3 million, or 1.2% of the funds requested for the VR State Grants program, 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, 2018 employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that of those aged 16-64 (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 (30.4 percent versus 74.0 percent, respectively). Of those people with disabilities who were employed, 31 percent usually worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) compared to 17 percent of people without such disabilities. In addition, employed persons with a disability were more likely to be self-employed (10.2 percent) than those with no disability (6.1 percent).²

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.htm>

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

The VR State Grants program is a critical component of the WIOA 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 2019. 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.

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 through 2019 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 2020 and 2021; consequently, the request does not include continued authority for the Disability Innovation Fund in fiscal year 2021.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The request would provide \$45.3 million for grants under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program, allowing the Department to support 87 tribal VR projects, including 13 new awards and 74 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 2.0 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 was the final year of funding for the AIVRS Training and Technical Assistance Center. The Department will hold a competition for a new center in fiscal year 2020.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Individuals receiving VR services under an IPE	939,000	940,000	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	448,000	448,000
Individuals whose cases were closed and received VR services	326,000	328,000	328,000
Individuals achieving an employment outcome	170,000	172,000	172,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of individuals achieving employment outcomes	94%	94%	94%

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

American Indian vocational rehabilitation services (dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Project funding:			
New awards	\$22,540	\$13,208	\$7,989
Continuation awards	19,675	31,121	36,349
Technical assistance	774	905	905
Peer review of new awards applications	<u>11</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	43,000	45,250	45,250
Number of AIVRS projects:			
New projects	44	30	13
Continuation projects	<u>43</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>74</u>
Total projects	87	85	87

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 Federal resources provided for the program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

VR State Grants

WIOA requires States that operate core programs of the publicly funded workforce development 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 participants' barriers to employment. Data definitions were changed by WIOA, limiting the validity of comparisons to performance data reported under the prior law.

State VR agencies began to collect and report quarterly data on the joint WIOA performance measures and other data beginning in program year (PY) 2017 (the PY runs from July 1 to June 30) and reported complete PY 2018 data at the start of fiscal year 2020. VR program data for one performance measure, Measurable Skill Gains, from PYs 2017 and 2018 will be used to establish levels of performance in the first two years of the PY 2020 through 2023 Unified/Combined State Plans. Baseline VR program data from PYs 2017 through 2021 will also

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

be used to inform performance levels for four additional measures in the second two years of these Plans. In broad terms, the WIOA measures assess the VR program's performance in assisting participants with making progress towards earning recognized credentials, whether participants earn credentials during and after program participation, and rates of employment, including wages, at specific intervals after participants exit the VR program.

For GPRA reporting for fiscal years 2015 through 2019, the Department developed and will continue to report interim GPRA measures that are aligned with the WIOA joint performance measures until State performance data on the WIOA 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)).

In fiscal year 2020, the Department will consider adopting final GPRA measures aligned with the WIOA measures.

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.

Year	Target	Actual
2016		55%
2017	50%	48
2018	50	47
2019	50	46
2020	50	
2021	50	

Additional Information: State performance varies considerably on this measure, ranging from a low of 12 percent to a high of 63 percent in fiscal year 2019. Among those individuals who

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exited the VR program in FY 2019 with an employment outcome, 99.9 percent obtained competitive integrated employment.

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016		\$315
2017	\$325	320
2018	330	325
2019	335	338
2020	340	
2021	345	

Additional Information: Median weekly earnings at exit ranged from \$218 to \$680 in fiscal year 2019, as compared with \$225 to \$455 in fiscal year 2018.

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.

Year	Target	Actual
2016		36%
2017	35%	32
2018	35	16
2019	35	15
2020	35	
2021	35	

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

State performance varies considerably on this measure; excluding the four territories, performance ranged from a high of about 57 percent to a low of about 2 percent in fiscal year 2019. Of the seven training services, the most frequently received was miscellaneous training followed by occupational training.

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American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

WIOA does not require the use of common performance measures and data for the AIVRS program, and the Department is continuing to use previously established performance and efficiency measures for this program.

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 an employment outcome, after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2016	66%	67%
2017	67	68
2018	67	68
2019	67	
2020	68	
2021	68	

Additional information: Data for fiscal year 2018 show that 2,128, or 67.6 percent, of the 3,148 individuals with disabilities who exited the program after receiving services in that year achieved an employment outcome. Fiscal year 2019 data will be available in May 2020.

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
2016	76%	72%
2017	76	77
2018	76	84
2019	76	
2020	76	
2021	76	

Additional information: The cost per employment outcome varied significantly across projects, ranging from \$4,300 to \$192,300.

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	86%	76%
2017	80	74
2018	80	73
2019	75	
2020	75	
2021	75	

Additional information: The median annual cost per participant for the 88 projects reporting data was \$5,789 in fiscal year 2018, \$845 less than the median cost in fiscal year 2017 of \$6,634, while the mean annual cost per participant in fiscal year 2019 was \$7,385 due to a small number of project outliers. 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, 2020 and 2021 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

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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 dependence on SSI payments.

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

SSA, in collaboration with the Department, has contracted for a rigorously designed national evaluation of PROMISE. As of September 2019, the evaluation contractor has prepared an interim services and impact report. The report presents the estimated impacts of the six PROMISE programs on outcomes related to service receipt, education, employment, expectations, health insurance coverage, income, and youth self-determination, and on participation in SSA and other public assistance programs for youth and their families. The impacts on the primary outcomes were measured at 18 months after youth enrolled in the PROMISE evaluation. This report and others are available on SSA's website.² Key findings, in addition to the report, are provided on Mathematica Policy Research's website.³ Specifically, the interim services and impact report found:

- Each of the six programs increased youth's receipt of transition services, youth's paid employment, and family member receipt of support services.
- None of the programs had an impact on the number of hours of key services that youth and families received, but four programs increased the likelihood that youth applied for VR services.
- Each program had a positive impact on youth's receipt of job-related training or training credentials.
- Four of the programs had positive impacts on youth's total income from earnings and SSA payments.
- Only one of the programs reduced youth's receipt of any SSA payments and increased parents' education and job-related training.
- None of the programs had a desirable impact on youth's self-determination and expectations or youth's reliance on Medicaid, nor on parents' total income.

In FY 2019, the evaluator began to collect data to inform the final impact report. This impact report is due to be released in fiscal year 2022. The evaluation contractor has published two

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>.

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PROMISE special topics briefs, *The Role of PROMISE in the Landscape of Federal Programs Targeting Youth with Disabilities*¹ and the *PROMISE Programs' Use of Effective Transition Practices in Serving Youth with Disabilities*.²

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 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, the APCP pilot tested 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 continue to test its software and create support materials for use by organizations and individuals implementing the software. In addition, the project will be disseminated to increase public awareness of the results of the APCP.

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.³ 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

¹ <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/the-role-of-promise-in-the-landscape-of-federal-programs-targeting-youth-with-disabilities>

² <https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/promoting-readiness-of-minors-in-supplemental-security-income-promise-promise-programs-use>

³ 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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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.

- *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

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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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(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Section 112)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$14,098¹

Budget Authority:

<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Request</u>	<u>Change from</u> <u>2020 to 2021</u>
\$13,000	\$13,000	0

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

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 must operate a CAP in order to receive VR State grant funds, and are required to inform VR consumers about the services available from the CAP and how to contact the CAP.

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.

Allocations are based on 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

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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.

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 rises to at least \$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. The Department currently provides such technical assistance to CAPs through the Rehabilitation Training program.

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

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2016	\$13,000
2017	13,000
2018	13,000
2019	13,000
2020	13,000

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$13 million for CAP, level with the fiscal year 2020 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 2018 from the most recent available RSA Annual Client Assistance Program Report (RSA-227) show that, nationwide, CAPs responded to 40,917 requests for information and referral (I&R). While the average number of I&R requests that States responded to was 718, the median number was 75 because of the significant range in the number of I&R requests reported by CAPs. Approximately 25 percent of all I&R requests were for information regarding the VR program. The remaining requests were in reference to independent living programs, the Americans with Disabilities Act, CAP, and other related programs.

In addition, CAPs provided extensive services, such as assisting and advocating on behalf of a client, to 4,308 individuals in fiscal year 2018. Approximately 94 percent of the cases in which extensive services were provided by the CAP involved applicants for, or recipients of, services from the VR program who needed assistance related to the VR process or delivery of VR services. Of the 3,267 cases closed in fiscal year 2018, 1,296 cases (or 40 percent) were resolved by explaining the controlling policies to the individual; 711 cases (22 percent) resulted

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in the development or implementation of an individualized plan for employment (IPE); and 458 cases (14 percent) resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties. Of the cases closed, 73 percent were resolved in the individual's favor.

Specific examples of CAP activities are described below. Funds requested in fiscal year 2021 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 schoolwork. 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.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	34,700	34,700	34,700
Individuals provided case services	4,700	4,700	4,700

NOTE: Data for fiscal years 2019 through 2021 are projected from actual final data reported for fiscal years 2016 through 2018 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 2019 will be available in May of 2020.

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 Federal resources provided for the program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the 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
2016	74%	68%
2017	74	63
2018	72	72
2019	68	
2020	68	
2021	68	

Additional information: Performance on this measure had been gradually declining since fiscal year 2014, however, performance increased and grantees met the target in 2018. While performance on this measure had been declining since 2014, the Department now believes some of this decline may have been due to inconsistent reporting standards and is addressing this issue through additional technical assistance to grantees.

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Objective: *Resolve cases at lowest possible level.*

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	98%	99%
2017	98	98
2018	98	98
2019	98	
2020	98	
2021	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.

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$39,540¹Error! Reference source not found.

Budget Authority:

	2020	2021	Change from
	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>2020 to 2021</u>
	\$29,388	\$29,388	0

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

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.

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

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2016	\$30,188
2017	29,388
2018	29,388
2019	29,388
2020	29,388

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$29.4 million for the Training program, level with the fiscal year 2020 appropriation. In fiscal year 2021, approximately \$3.4 million would be used to support new awards, \$25.7 million would be used to support continuation awards, and \$311 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, in concert with the Innovative Training program, which is designed to develop new types of training programs and new and improved methods of training rehabilitation personnel, are the best mechanisms for recruiting new graduates into the rehabilitation field and ensuring they have access to the most effective training. The Department plans to award approximately \$15.0 million in continuation LTT grants, \$4.3 in continuation Innovative Training grants, and \$350 thousand in contracts in this area in fiscal year 2021.

The request also includes:

- \$6.0 million for technical assistance centers that provide support to State VR agency personnel nationwide to improve use of promising practices that have the potential to improve the performance of the VR program;
- \$2.7 million for new awards for Training for Interpreters to increase the number of interpreters and improve their skills;
- \$750 thousand to support a new award for the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials to gather and disseminate rehabilitation information and training materials; and
- \$294 thousand for minority outreach under section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act to support continuations for a Capacity Building Center.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Program Funding:			
Long-Term Training:			
New awards	\$8,674	\$6,184	0
Continuation awards	<u>7,629</u>	<u>9,531</u>	<u>\$15,348</u>
Subtotal	16,303	15,715	15,348
Technical Assistance:			
New awards	0	6,000	0
Continuation awards	<u>7,443¹</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,000</u>
Subtotal	4,443	6,000	6,000
Short-Term Training:			
Continuation awards	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	200	200	0
Training for Interpreters for Individuals who are Deaf and Deaf-Blind:			
New awards	0	0	2,660
Continuation awards	<u>2,400</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	2,400	2,400	2,660
Experimental and Innovative Training:			
New awards	2,542	1,350	0
Continuation awards	<u>0</u>	<u>2,968</u>	<u>4,318</u>
Subtotal	2,542	4,318	4,318
National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials:			
New awards	0	0	750
Continuation awards	<u>467</u>	<u>429</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	467	0	750

¹ Amount shown does not include minority outreach contributions of \$352 thousand from Demonstration and Training and \$206 thousand from Supported Employment in fiscal year 2019.

In fiscal year 2019, \$150 thousand was reprogrammed from the Demonstration and Training program, for a total of \$2,692 thousand in new Experimental and Innovative Training awards.

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<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Other Activities:			
Peer review of new award applications	\$33	\$32	\$18
Minority Outreach	0	294	294
Subtotal	33	326	312
Program Totals:			
New awards	11,366	13,534	3,410
Continuation awards	17,989	15,528	25,666
Other Activities	33	326	312
Total	29,388	29,388	29,388

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 Federal resources provided for the program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the 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

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	47%	30%
2017	45	29
2018	45	36
2019	40	35
2020	40	
2021	40	

Additional Information: Data reported for fiscal year 2016 were based on all Master's level counseling graduates and the percentage meeting requirements through employment in State

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Training

vocational rehabilitation agencies in a given year. Beginning in 2017, reported data take into account the 2-year grace period that scholars have to obtain employment and excludes those scholars that were not required to obtain employment because they had obtained waivers.

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	83%	73%
2017	85	71
2018	85	88
2019	85	94
2020	85	
2021	85	

Additional Information: Data reported for fiscal year 2016 were based on all Master’s level counseling graduates and the percentage meeting requirements for qualifying employment in a given year. Beginning in 2017, reported data take 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. Qualifying employment includes employment in a State vocational rehabilitation agency or related agency in the field of study for which the training was received as specified in 34 CFR 386.40(a)(7).

Efficiency Measures

Measure: The Federal cost per Master’s level RSA-supported rehabilitation counseling graduate.

Year	Target	Actual
2016	\$24,000	\$29,605
2017	24,000	48,823
2018	24,000	---
2019	24,000	
2020	24,000	
2021	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 Master’s level scholars who successfully completed funded training programs ending in that year. 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. No grants closed in fiscal year 2018 so no data are available for fiscal year 2018.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III, Section 303)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$6,809¹

Budget Authority:

<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Request</u>	<u>Change From</u> <u>2020 to 2021</u>
\$5,796	\$5,796	0

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

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 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)
2016.....	\$5,796
2017.....	5,796
2018.....	5,796
2019.....	5,796
2020.....	5,796

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$5.8 million for the Demonstration and Training programs, level with the fiscal year 2020 appropriation. All funds would be used for continuation awards for the regional Parent Information and Training Centers, which are focused on significantly expanding access to transition-related services nationwide; a combined OSEP and RSA transition technical assistance center; additional technical assistance centers focused on improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including increasing the number of individuals achieving competitive integrated employment; and braille training.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Program funding:			
Model demonstrations			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards	\$3,406	0	0
Technical assistance			
New awards	0	\$2,689	0
Continuation awards	378 ¹	0	\$2,696
Braille training			
New awards	342	0	0
Continuation awards	0	342	342
Parent information and training			
New awards	0	2,700	0
Continuation awards	1,165	0	2,700
Reprogramming to Rehab Long-Term Training	150	0	0

¹ 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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Peer review of new award applications	3	7	0
Minority Outreach	<u>352</u> ¹	<u>58</u>	<u>58</u>
Total, Program funding	5,796	5,796	5,796
Number of awards:			
New awards	3	12	0
Continuation awards	<u>13</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>
Total, Number of awards	16	15	15

¹ The amount shown includes contributions to the 1 percent set-aside for Minority Outreach under Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act including \$57,960 for the Demonstration and Training program and \$293,880 for the Training Program.

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 Federal resources provided for the program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

In prior years, approximately 60 percent of the funds provided for the Demonstration and Training program were used to support model demonstration projects; therefore, the Department's GPRA measures for this program are focused on these projects. With the proposed shift to support parents and technical assistance, the Department will begin to pilot new measures and report them in future budgets. Since the Department does not plan to fund new demonstration projects in FY 2021, we are not setting new targets.

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 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 employment through those career pathways, and

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

the weekly earnings and benefits of those who obtain competitive employment through CPID-funded activities.

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	107
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.

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	277
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.

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	680
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.

Other VR-CPID Measures

VR-CPID grantees began reporting on two additional measures in: (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. The Department anticipates collecting initial data in 2020.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 509)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$20,735¹

Budget Authority:

	<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Request</u>	<u>Change from</u> <u>2020 to 2021</u>
	\$17,650	\$17,650	0

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

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 Rehabilitation 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)
2016	\$17,650
2017	17,650
2018	17,650
2019	17,650
2020	17,650

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$17.7 million for the PAIR program, level with the fiscal year 2020 appropriation, to help provide information and P&A services to over 46,000 individuals with disabilities in fiscal year 2021. 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 2018, PAIR programs nationwide reported handling 9,483 cases and responded to 32,674 requests for information or referral. Of the individual cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, most were related to education (20 percent), health care (16 percent), employment (13 percent), and government benefits/services (12 percent). The most frequent primary disability categories (i.e., the ones directly related to the issues/complaints raised) reported for such individuals were orthopedic impairments (25 percent), neurological impairments (15 percent), and other disabilities (10 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 2018, 44 out of the 57 PAIR programs (77 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 2018 illustrate how PAIR programs assist individuals and, in some cases, bring about systemic change. Funds requested in fiscal year 2021 would support similar activities.

- The Iowa PAIR agency, Disability Rights Iowa (DRI), completed an investigation into the provision of appropriate accommodations for incarcerated individuals with hearing disabilities in Iowa's prisons by conducting several monitoring visits, and interviewing prisoners through interpreters as needed. DRI found that these individuals were not being provided with qualified interpreters, appropriate communication devices such as TTY/video phones, or appropriate screening to identify or confirm hearing disabilities. DRI completed a detailed findings letter and met with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to discuss needed changes in policy and practice. The DOC created a new policy and will now provide qualified interpreters for all necessary meetings such as medical appointments, disciplinary hearings, parole hearings, programming meetings, and orientation. The DOC is also installing video phones in facilities housing individuals who communicate using American Sign Language and will have operational TTYs accessible

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

to individuals with the same ease as regular telephones. Additionally, hearing evaluations will be provided, and assistive devices and their operational components will be provided to individuals without regard to their ability to pay for them.

- Following approximately two years of monitoring the Colorado Choice Transitions (CCT) program, advocating for improvements to the program with the state, and advocating on behalf of specific nursing home residents, Disability Law Colorado (DLC) found that the CCT program had major systemic flaws and that insufficient progress had been made to correct the problems with the CCT program. Specifically, DLC found that: (1) there were large swaths of Colorado where the services and supports necessary to access programs and services to transition from nursing homes and into the community were simply non-existent; (2) in areas where the program's components existed and the program was purportedly working, some former residents were not receiving appropriate services; and (3) the state had consistently failed to meet its annual transition benchmarks. In November 2016, DLC took a major step in its advocacy work and filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding the failure of the CCT program to transition individuals out of nursing homes and into the community. In fall 2018, the DOJ visited the state to review the Olmstead issues facing Colorado and the overall effectiveness of the CCT program. In late 2018, the DOJ formally opened a case into this matter.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output Measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Information inquiries/referrals	37,300	37,300	36,000
Individuals provided case services	11,000	11,000	10,000

NOTE: Output data for 2021 are projected from actual data reported by PAIRs for fiscal years 2016, 2017, and 2018 on the number of requests for information and provision of case services to individuals with disabilities.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, 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 Federal resources provided for this program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those 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
2016	91%	84%
2017	91	89
2018	89	77
2019	89	
2020	89	
2021	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 past data and other program information, RSA has reduced the targets in fiscal year 2018 and beyond to 89 percent (51 of 57 PAIR programs). Final fiscal year 2019 data will be available in June 2020.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$32,363¹

Budget Authority:

	<u>2020</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Request</u>	<u>Change from</u> <u>2020 to 2021</u>
	\$22,548	0	-\$22,548

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

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.

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. A State VR agency may support an individual’s supported employment services solely with VR State Grant funds, or it may support these services in whole or in part with funds under the SE State Grants program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

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 amount 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)
2016	\$27,548
2017	27,548
2018	22,548
2019	22,548
2020	22,548

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests no funding for the SE State Grants program, \$22.5 million less than the fiscal year 2020 appropriation. The Department 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 much larger \$3.6 billion 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. In addition, the proposed elimination would reduce administrative burden and streamline program administration at the Federal and State levels.

When the SE State Grants program was first authorized in 1986, supported employment was a new promising practice in employing individuals who traditionally would not have achieved employment in the integrated labor market, and the program provided a critical incentive for State VR agencies to adopt this practice. Three decades later, 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 a separate incentive to provide supported employment services, as demonstrated by the fact that in fiscal year 2019, State agencies spent nearly \$199 million in VR State grant funds on such services.

In addition, amendments to Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act by WIOA significantly increased the Federal and State cost and burden of administering the program. In particular, States have struggled to meet the requirement to use one-half of their SE allocations—along with a 10 percent match—to provide supported employment and extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities. This requirement essentially forces State VR agencies to administer

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

a second formula grant involving 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.

The challenges of meeting these requirements are demonstrated by recent SE expenditure patterns. In fiscal year 2019, for example, 14 grantees did not provide any matching funds for their SE grant awards, and 16 grantees had failed to spend any of their fiscal year 2019 SE funds as of January 2020. Additionally, States relinquished more than \$1.2 million in SE funds during the fiscal year 2019 reallocation period. In addition, 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.

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>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Individuals with a supported employment IPE goal when they exited the program	45,553	45,553	0
Employment outcomes:	23,849 ¹	23,849 ¹	0
Supported employment outcomes	15,589 ²	15,589 ²	0
Employment without supports in an integrated setting	8,209 ³	8,209 ³	0
Other employment outcomes	51 ⁴	51 ⁴	0
Minority outreach	\$225	\$225	0

¹ Includes employment outcomes for all VR consumers funded with both VR and SE State Grants 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 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 Federal resources provided for the program and the VR State Grants program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

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.

Performance data for 2018 are based on data collected under the RSA-911-16 for program year 2018 (i.e., July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019).

Targets for 2021 are not included because funding for this program is proposed for elimination.

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.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

Measure: Of those individuals with most significant disabilities who had a supported employment goal and achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exited with 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
2016	95.0%	94.7%
2017	95.0	97.3
2018	96.0	99.8
2019	96.0	
2020	99.0	

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	\$208	\$219
2017	210	226
2018	215	230
2019	215	
2020	222	

Additional information: Unlike previous years, the data reported for this measure beginning 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 and subsequent years also does not include data for Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living services for older blind individuals

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII, Chapter 2)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: \$39,141¹

Budget Authority:

	2020	2021	Change from
	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>2020 to 2021</u>
	\$33,317	\$33,317	0

¹ The GEPA extension applies through September 30, 2021.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (ILOIB) program assists 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, improve or expand services for these individuals, and improve public understanding of the challenges they face. 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 ILOIB 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 territories receiving a minimum allotment of \$40,000.

Independent living services are typically provided through contracts with local providers administered by State VR agencies. Services most frequently provided to program participants 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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

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.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2016	\$33,317
2017	33,317
2018	33,317
2019	33,317
2020	33,317

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$33.3 million for the ILOIB program, level with the fiscal year 2020 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 2018, 55,831 individuals received services under the ILOIB program, 51 percent of whom were over 80 years of age and about 82 percent of whom were still living in a private residence. Approximately 54 percent of these individuals 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 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 as nearly 75 million Americans who make up the baby-boomer generation continue to age. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates), 6.3 percent of individuals 65 and older (about 3.1 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 23.9 percent report having a disability that affects their independent living status.

The request also includes \$333 thousand for minority outreach under section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act. These funds will be used to support continuations for a Capacity Building Center initially funded in fiscal year 2020.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

<u>Output Measures:</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Minimum State award	\$225	\$225	\$225
Number of States at minimum	17	17	17
Average State award	\$620	\$620	\$620
Minority outreach	\$333	\$333	\$333
Training and technical assistance	\$600	\$600	\$600

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 Federal resources provided for the program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those 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.*

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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
2016	56%	61%
2017	57	58
2018	57	58
2019	58	
2020	58	
2021		

Additional information: Data for 2019 are expected by summer of 2020. The Department has not established targets for fiscal year 2021 because fiscal year 2020 is the last year that the Department will collect data on this measure.

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	61%	61%
2017	61	60
2018	61	65
2019	61	
2020	61	
2021		

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. Data for 2019 are expected by summer 2020. The Department has not established targets for fiscal year 2021 because fiscal year 2020 is the last year that the Department will collect data on this measure.

New Performance Measures

Due to concerns about the precision of the current performance measures, the Department has established five new performance measures designed to more accurately measure the performance of the ILOIB program. Grantees will report baseline data under the new measures beginning in fiscal year 2021 (using the revised RSA-7-OB data collection).

Objective: *To restore, improve, or maintain the independence of older individuals whose functional capabilities have been lost or diminished as a result of vision loss or blindness.*

Measure: The percentage of individuals receiving assistive technology devices and services who demonstrated improvement in one or more functional capabilities during the reported FFY consistent with the objectives for receiving such devices and services.

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Independent living for older blind individuals

Measure: The percentage of individuals receiving one or more independent living and adjustment training services who demonstrated improvement in functional capabilities during the reported FFY.

Measure: The percentage of individuals completing a plan of services who reported feeling that they are more confident in their ability to maintain their current living situation.

Measure: The percentage of individuals completing a plan of services who reported an increased ability to engage in their customary daily life activities in the home and community.

Objective: *To provide cost effective supports and services to increase the independence of older individuals who are blind so that they may remain in the community and to prevent or delay the need for an increasing level of care, particularly for those individuals who are at risk of entering institutions.*

Measure: The average annual cost per individual served through the program during the reported FFY.

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(Helen Keller National Center Act)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2021 Authorization: 0¹

Budget Authority:

	2020	2021	Change from
	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>2020 to 2021</u>
	\$16,000	\$16,000	0

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2021 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 their 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.

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

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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. For example, its Information, Research and Professional Development (IRPD) department provided technical knowledge, expertise, training, information and referral and services to its 1,470 partners across the United States in fiscal year 2019. HKNC also provides internships throughout the year to undergraduate and graduate students through its Professional Learning and Leadership Institute, which offers deaf-blind individuals a paid internship, mentoring, and advocacy training to work in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

In addition, HKNC has developed a Deaf-Blind National Community of Practice (NCOP), a 65-member collaborative of professional organizations working together to improve the quality of services to individuals who are deaf-blind through shared learning, research and practice. HKNC NCOP has three sub-committees: National Support Service Provider Services, Services to transition age youth, and Braille instruction for learners who are deaf-blind.

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

Revenue and Expenses

For fiscal year 2019, HKNC reported total public support and revenues of \$20.6 million. Funds appropriated directly to HKNC through the Department's Rehabilitation Services account (\$13.5 million) made up 66 percent of its total revenue, and direct and indirect funds from other Federal sources (\$3.2 million) made up 16 percent of its total revenue. Training fees generated \$2.3 million (11 percent) and funding from State grants and contracts amounted to \$1.5 million (7 percent). HKNC received approximately \$700,000 in donations and public support (3 percent) and reported an approximately \$600,000 reduction in HKNC operations and investment income (-3 percent). While the Center has sought to increase other sources of funding, the Federal appropriation remains its primary source of support.

For fiscal year 2019, HKNC incurred total operating expenses of \$18.5 million. Because most of the specialized services required by this population are provided by HKNC staff, salaries and fringe benefits (approximately \$14.6 million) account for most expenses (79 percent). Building, utilities and rent (approximately \$1 million) account for 5 percent of expenses; professional services (approximately \$1.4 million), 7 percent; client related services (approximately \$800,000), 4 percent; and other operating expenses (approximately \$800,000), 5 percent.

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Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2016.....	\$10,336
2017.....	10,336
2018.....	12,500
2019.....	13,500
2020.....	16,000

FY 2021 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2021, the Administration requests \$16 million for HKNC, level with the fiscal year 2020 appropriation, to maintain regional office support for an estimated 2,200 individual consumers, 650 families, and 1,500 agencies and organizations, while also helping to fund direct intensive services to approximately 65 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.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Output measures</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Number of individuals served at headquarters:			
Adult training program clients	97	65	65
Specialized training services:			
Transition for high school students	12	20	20
Senior citizens	5	10	10
Individuals with intellectual disabilities	13	36	36
Targeted skills training	5	10	10
Community Services Program	90	175	175
Number of individuals served through regional representatives and deaf-blind specialists:			
Consumers	2,100	2,200	2,200
Families	625	650	650
Agencies/organizations	1,470	1,500	1,500
HKNC FTE staff	165	184	184

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, 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 Federal resources provided for this program as well as the resources and efforts invested by those 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
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	80	59/38	95	89	48	63/67	86	87
2020	80		95		60		86	
2021	80		95		60		86	

Additional information: In fiscal year 2019, HKNC served 59 consumers in the on-campus rehabilitation training programs and 38 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 multiple 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 varying levels of training intensity and differing individual needs.

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 “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.

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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
2016	300	626
2017	500	472
2018	600	573
2019	600	505
2020	600	
2021	600	

Additional information: 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
2016	66%	75%
2017	66	94
2018	75	74
2019	75	68
2020	75	
2021	75	

Additional information: This measure provides information on the activities of the field services programs, including the 11 regional representatives and 7 recently deployed deaf-blind specialists. The referrals provided by regional representatives often are the gateway to finding appropriate and individualized supports from various agencies and organizations.

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

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

Year	Target	Actual
2016	65	41
2017	65	33
2018	65	71
2019	65	55
2020	65	
2021	65	

Additional information: HKNC field staff frequently facilitate interactions between consumers and VR agencies, including assistance for consumers who are returning to their State’s VR system after attending intensive training at HKNC headquarters. The number of referrals to VR agencies fluctuates 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
2016	40%	45%
2017	40	39
2018	45	41
2019	45	47
2020	45	
2021	45	

Additional information: 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 consumers served by HKNC regional representatives who achieved employment outcomes. In 2019, the target was met.