

Department of Education
REHABILITATION SERVICES
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request

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*State tables reflecting final 2021 allocations and 2022 and 2023 estimates are posted on the Department's webpage at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/index.html>

Appropriations Language
REHABILITATION SERVICES

For carrying out, to the extent not otherwise provided, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Helen Keller National Center Act, and the Randolph-Sheppard Act, \$4,125,906,000, of which \$3,949,707,000 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 increasing competitive integrated employment as defined in section 7 of such Act for youth and other individuals with disabilities²: Provided further, That up to 15 percent of the amounts made available by this or prior Acts for innovative activities as described in the preceding proviso may be used for evaluation and technical assistance related to such activities³: Provided further, That States may award subgrants for a portion of the funds to other public and private, nonprofit entities⁴: 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, 2024⁵: Provided further, That, notwithstanding the provision in section 111(a)(2)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act regarding a fiscal year in which a States' allotment under section 110(a) is reduced for failure to comply with the requirement of section 111(a)(2)(B), the Secretary may apply the reduction specified in section 111(a)(2)(B) over a period of consecutive fiscal years, not to exceed 5, until the entire reduction is applied⁶: Provided further, That, from amounts provided under this heading, the Secretary shall use \$500,000 for a grant to provide training and technical assistance to support implementation of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.⁷

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.

A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p>¹ <u>... of which \$3,949,707,000 shall be for grants for vocational rehabilitation services under title I of the Rehabilitation Act:</u></p>	<p>This language earmarks funds provided for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program.</p>
<p>² <u>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 increasing competitive integrated employment as defined in section 7 of such Act for youth and other individuals with disabilities:</u></p>	<p>This language 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 aimed to increase competitive integrative employment for youth and other individuals with disabilities. The inclusion of this language ensures that unused funds remain available to improve the outcomes of individuals with disabilities, instead of being returned to the Treasury.</p>
<p>³ <u>Provided further, That up to 15 percent of the amounts made available by this or prior Acts for innovative activities as described in the preceding proviso may be used for evaluation and technical assistance related to such activities:</u></p>	<p>This language allows the Secretary to use up to 15 percent of the amounts that remain available subsequent to the reallocation of funds to States under the VR State Grants program to be used to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the project activities aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for youth and other individuals with disabilities, and provide technical assistance to support grantees in this work.</p>
<p>⁴ <u>Provided further, That States may award subgrants for a portion of the funds to other public and private, nonprofit entities:</u></p>	<p>This language permits States to use a portion of their project funds to make subgrants to other public and private, nonprofit entities for carrying out innovative activities aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for youth and other individuals with disabilities.</p>
<p>⁵ <u>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, 2024:</u></p>	<p>This language permits the funds made available subsequent to reallocation of VR State Grant funds for activities aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for youth and other individuals with disabilities to remain available for two years.</p>

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Language Provision	Explanation
<p>⁶ <u>Provided further, That, notwithstanding the provision in section 111(a)(2)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act regarding a fiscal year in which a States' allotment under section 110(a) is reduced for failure to comply with the requirement of section 111(a)(2)(B), the Secretary may apply the reduction specified in section 111(a)(2)(B) over a period of consecutive fiscal years, not to exceed 5, until the entire reduction is applied:</u></p>	<p>This language allows the Secretary to spread the required reduction for a State's failure to maintain effort across up to five consecutive fiscal years.</p>
<p>⁷ <u>Provided further, That, from amounts provided under this heading, the Secretary shall use \$500,000 for a grant to provide training and technical assistance to support implementation of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.</u></p>	<p>This language earmarks funds for training and technical assistance to support implementation of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.</p>

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Appropriation, Adjustments, and Transfers
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2021	2022	2023
Discretionary:			
Appropriation	\$139,199	\$139,199	\$176,199
Total, discretionary appropriation	139,199	139,199	176,199
Mandatory:			
Appropriation	3,675,021	3,719,121	3,949,707
Sequester (P.L. 112-25)	-209,476	-211,990	-225,133
Total, adjusted mandatory appropriation	3,465,545	3,507,131	3,724,574
Total, discretionary and adjusted mandatory appropriation	3,604,744	3,646,330	3,900,773

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Summary of Changes (dollars in thousands)

	2022	\$3,858,320 ¹
	2023	4,125,906 ²
	Net change	+267,586

Increases:	2022 base	Change from base
<u>Built in</u>		
Increase in funding for Vocational rehabilitation (VR) State grants, consistent with the inflation increase specified in the authorizing statute.	\$3,719,121	+\$230,586
<u>Program:</u>		
Increase in funding for Demonstration and training programs to support a new pilot program aimed at improving employment outcomes for VR participants and related technical assistance and evaluation, and provide additional support for the Parent Information and Training program.	5,796	+35,000
Increase in funding for Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to cover increased operational costs.	17,000	+1,500
New funding for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility program to support a training and technical assistance center.	0	+500
		+267,586
Net change		

¹ Excludes the 5.7 percent reduction of mandatory VR State Grant funds pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) that went into effect on October 1, 2020. The reduced level for 2022 subsequent to the 5.7 percent sequester is \$3,646,330 thousand, a reduction of \$211,990 thousand.

² Excludes the 5.7 percent reduction of mandatory VR State Grant funds pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) that went into effect on October 1, 2020. The reduced level for 2022 subsequent to the 5.7 percent sequester is \$3,724,574 thousand, a reduction of \$225,133 thousand.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Authorizing Legislation

(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2022 Authorized	2022 ¹ Estimate	2023 Authorized	2023 Request
Vocational rehabilitation (VR) State grants:				
Grants to States (<i>RA-I A, B (110, 111 and 113), and C</i>)	\$0 ¹	\$3,455,539 ²	0 ¹	\$3,896,616
Grants for Indians (<i>RA-I-C</i>)	(1,3)	51,592 ²	(1,3)	53,091
Client assistance State grants (<i>RA-I-112</i>)	0 ⁴	13,000	0 ⁴	13,000
Supported employment State grants (<i>RA-VI</i>)	0 ⁴	22,548	0 ⁴	22,548
Training (<i>RA-III-302</i>)	0 ⁴	29,388	0 ⁴	29,388
Demonstration and training programs (<i>RA-III-303</i>)	0 ⁴	5,796	0 ⁴	40,796
Services for older blind individuals (<i>RA-VII-2</i>)	0 ⁴	33,317	0 ⁴	33,317
Protection and advocacy of individual rights (<i>RA-V-509</i>)	0 ⁴	18,150	0 ⁴	18,150
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (<i>HKNCA</i>)	0 ⁵	17,000	0 ⁵	18,500
Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facilities Program (<i>R-S</i>)	0	0	0	500
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total discretionary appropriation		139,199		176,199
Total mandatory appropriation		3,719,121		3,949,707
Total appropriation		3,858,120		4,125,906
Portion of request not authorized		3,858,120		4,125,906
Total appropriation including required mandatory reduction		3,646,330²		

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action. 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 Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPIU).

² The amount reflects the 5.7 percent reduction of mandatory programs that went into effect on October 1, 2020, pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).

³ 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.

⁴ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

⁵ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2014 ¹	\$3,655,577	N/A	\$3,698,174	\$3,680,497
2015 ²	3,683,335	N/A	3,722,853	3,709,853
2016 ³	3,532,109	\$3,529,605	3,487,864	3,529,605
2017 ⁴	3,541,389	3,534,027	3,536,389	3,535,589
2018 ⁵	3,563,008	3,562,582	3,562,418	3,361,143
2019 ⁶	3,634,977	3,657,689	3,656,189	3,657,189
2020 ⁷	3,719,527	3,752,076	3,745,239	3,747,739
2021 ⁸	3,782,952	3,827,500	3,805,500	3,814,220
2022 ⁹	3,894,820	3,896,820	3,874,145	3,858,320
2023	4,125,906			

1 The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action. The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

2 The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action. The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

3 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.

4 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.

5 The level for the House allowance reflects floor action on the Omnibus appropriations bill; the Senate allowance reflects Committee action on the regular annual 2018 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

6 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).

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

8 The level for the House allowance reflects subcommittee action. The level for the Senate Allowance reflects the Chairman's mark; the Appropriation reflects Division H of the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-260).

9 The House allowance reflects floor action on the FY 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act; the Senate allowance reflects the Chairman's mark; and the Appropriation reflects the annualized continuing resolution level.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Significant Items in FY 2022 Appropriations Reports

Item description

Senate: Disability Innovation Fund [DIF].—The Committee recommendation continues authority within the DIF that allows the Department to use unallocated funding, in consultation with the Department of Labor, for competitive grants to improve opportunities for competitive integrated employment, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act, for individuals with disabilities. The Committee directs the Department to continue to brief the Committees on Appropriations; the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives; the Committee on Finance of the Senate; and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives at least every 6 months with updates on implementation of this initiative.

Response: The Department will comply with this directive.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Summary of Request

People with disabilities represent a vital and integral part of our society. Providing 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 in 2014 under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which supports the Nation's workforce development system through programs and investments in employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation. WIOA expired in fiscal year 2020 and the one-year GEPA extension ended in fiscal year 2021; authorization for all programs within the Rehabilitation Services account for FY 2023 is requested through appropriations language.

The Administration's 2023 request for the Rehabilitation Services account provides \$4.1 billion in mandatory and discretionary funding 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 \$3.9 billion mandatory request for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program includes an increase of \$230.6 million over the fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation, consistent with the inflation 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.

The request includes an increase of \$35 million for the Demonstration and training program to support a new pilot program aimed at improving employment outcomes for VR participants and related technical assistance and evaluation, and provide additional support for the Parent Information and Training program.

The request includes an increase of \$1.5 million for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to provide services to deaf-blind individuals and their families, as well as technical assistance to local service providers.

The request also includes \$500,000 in new funding for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility program to support a competitively awarded center that would provide training and technical assistance to State licensing agencies and blind vendors.

The request would maintain support for all other programs in the Rehabilitation Services account at the 2022 annualized CR level based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Parts A, B (Sections 110, 111 and 113), and C)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined ¹

Budget Authority:

	2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
State grants	\$3,667,318	\$3,896,616	+\$229,298
Set-aside for American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services	51,803	53,091	1,288
Total ²	3,719,121	3,949,707	+230,586

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 and Territories 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 All 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. The workforce

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action. 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 Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

² The levels shown are the mandatory amounts for the VR State Grants program and do not include the 5.7 percent sequester reduction for mandatory programs that took effect on October 1, 2020, pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011. The reduced levels reflecting the 5.7 percent sequester are \$3,507,131,103 for fiscal year 2022, a reduction of \$212.0 million from the mandatory level; and \$3,724,573,701 for fiscal year 2023, a reduction of \$225.1 million from the mandatory level.

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development system is aligned 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; the goal of the one-stop system is to provide a variety of services to assist both individuals in meeting their employment and training needs, as well as employers in recruiting a qualified workforce.

The VR State Grants program is a core program and a required partner in the one-stop service delivery system. It 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); the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II of WIOA); the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program (Title III of WIOA); and the 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 individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment. In supporting individuals in achieving their career goals, VR agencies are encouraged to support the pursuit of postsecondary education and vocational training leading to recognized credentials to enable individuals with disabilities to advance in high-demand, high quality careers and maximize their self-sufficiency and independence. 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 for physical disabilities or mental health support, 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

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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).

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 develop work-based learning transition demonstrations for students with disabilities.

In fiscal year 2020, \$130.1 million remained available following the reallocation of funds to States. Section 318 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, directed the Department to use \$20 million of the remaining fiscal year 2020 funds for one-time financial relief and restoration grants consistent with the purposes of the Randolph Sheppard Act. The Randolph Sheppard Act authorizes the Vending Facility program, which provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on federal and other property. These funds will be used primarily to offset losses of blind vendors in fiscal year 2020.

The Department used the remaining fiscal year 2020 funds to provide \$59,000 in supplemental awards to Transition Work-Based Learning DIF projects and approximately \$110 million in new awards through the Career Advancement Initiative Model Demonstration DIF competition. This competition funded a multi-site model demonstration project designed to assist State VR agencies, in partnership with other entities, to develop career pathways that are aimed at helping individuals with disabilities advance in their careers or change to high-demand, high-quality careers (see additional information in the Program Performance Information section below).

In fiscal year 2021, \$298.8 million was relinquished by States and \$121.4 million was redistributed through the reallocation process, leaving \$177.4 million available for DIF projects in fiscal year 2022. The Department intends to fund multiple innovative model demonstration projects to assist individuals with disabilities currently employed in, or contemplating, subminimum wage employment to engage with VR agencies so they may obtain competitive integrated employment.

Additional information about these projects is provided in the Program Performance Information section of this request.

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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 VR 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) ¹
2018	\$3,225,038
2019	3,303,627
2020	3,397,048
2021	3,465,545
2022 Estimate	3,507,131

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$3.9 billion for the VR State Grants programs, \$230.6 million more than a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation, to help States and Tribal governments increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The fiscal year 2023 request reflects the current estimate of the mandatory amount required by the authorizing statute. Of the amount requested, \$53.1 million, or 1.4%, of the funds 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, 2021 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 disabilities were significantly less likely to be employed (either full-time or part-time) than people without such disabilities (31.4 percent versus 72.5 percent, respectively). Of those people with disabilities who were employed, 29 percent usually worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) compared to 16 percent of people without such disabilities.²

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

¹ The amounts shown for 2018 through 2022 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 6.6 percent in 2018, 6.2 percent in 2019, 5.9 percent in 2020, 5.7 percent in 2021, and 5.7 percent in 2022.

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

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competitive integrated employment. Nationally, there are approximately 1.5 million individuals with disabilities, including students with disabilities, in various phases of the vocational rehabilitation process, about two-thirds of whom received VR services under an individualized plan for employment (IPE) during fiscal year 2021. Approximately 94 percent of these individuals were individuals with significant disabilities.

Examples of VR services include support for work-based learning experiences and postsecondary training that offer youth and adults with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, a pathway to the achievement of competitive integrated employment. These VR services ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in the workforce in both traditional and high-growth industries.

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

The Administration is requesting appropriations language that would allow RSA to spread the maintenance of effort (MOE) reduction required under Sec. 111(a)(2)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act across multiple fiscal years. This flexibility would enable RSA to enforce the MOE requirement while also ensuring that significant reductions due to MOE violations do not significantly limit a State VR agency's ability to provide critical VR services in any single fiscal year.

Disability Innovation Fund

The Administration continues to request authority to use funds that remain available following reallocation for innovative activities aimed at improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the request includes bill language that would allow the Department to reserve up to 15 percent of these funds for evaluation of, and technical assistance for, DIF projects.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The request would provide \$53.1 million for continuation awards under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) program, allowing the Department to support 96 tribal VR projects and one training and technical assistance center. 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. The Department plans to reserve 1.9 percent of these funds to support training and technical assistance to governing bodies of Indian tribes located on Federal and State reservations.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Output Measures ¹	2021	2022	2023
Individuals receiving VR services under an IPE	815,718	850,000	850,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of all individuals receiving services	95%	94%	94%
Eligible individuals whose case files were closed	324,092	425,000	425,000
Individuals whose cases were closed and received VR services	258,974	325,000	325,000
Individuals achieving an employment outcome	112,445	120,000	120,000
Individuals with significant disabilities as a percent of individuals achieving employment outcomes	92%	94%	94%

American Indian vocational rehabilitation services

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Project funding:			
New awards	\$27,102	\$5,369	0
Continuation awards	22,515	\$45,200	\$52,078
Technical assistance	1,013	1,013	1,013
Peer review of new awards' applications	20	10	0
Total	50,650	51,592	53,091
Number of AIVRS projects:			
New projects	45	8	0
Continuation projects	44	89	97
Total projects	89	97	97

¹ The output measures data for Vocational rehabilitation State grants for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 are estimates based on prior year data.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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 the core programs of the workforce development system, including the State VR Services 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. For fiscal years 2015 through 2020, the Department reported interim measures that were aligned with the WIOA performance indicators as State VR agencies continued to collect and report WIOA data.

The Department has developed new performance measures that mirror three of the WIOA performance indicators and will report baseline data for 2021, 2022 and 2023 before establishing targets. Performance data reported in 2021 are based on data collected under the RSA-911 from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

These performance measures do not include data for Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands because the territories are not a part of the performance accountability system set forth in section 116 of WIOA.

Goal: Individuals with disabilities served by the VR program will achieve high quality employment outcomes and continue to work following their exit from the program.

Objective: *Ensure that individuals with disabilities, who are participating in an education or training program, are making progress towards earning a recognized postsecondary credential or achieving employment.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Measure: The percentage of VR program participants who achieved measurable skill gains, in accordance with WIOA, during the program year.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	43.3%
2022		
2023		

Objective: *Ensure that individuals with disabilities who exit the VR program with competitive integrated employment will be capable of maintaining employment as a result of the VR services they received.*

Measure: The percentage of VR program participants who were employed during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	48.6%
2022		
2023		

Measure: The percentage of VR program participants who were employed during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	44.0%
2022		
2023		

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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

During fiscal year 2019, the economy and labor markets on American Indian reservations began a significant decline that reduced viable employment opportunities for American Indians with disabilities. As a result of this decline, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic that began during fiscal year 2020, the Department anticipates that AIVRS program performance data will continue to show a downward trend in fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

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

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

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
2018	67%	68%
2019	67	58
2020	68	57
2021	68	
2022	68	
2023	68	

Additional information: Data for fiscal year 2020 show that 1,557, or 57.0 percent, of the 2,733 individuals with disabilities who exited the program after receiving services in that year achieved an employment outcome. Fiscal year 2021 data will be available in summer 2022.

Efficiency Measures

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
2018	76%	84%
2019	76	59
2020	76	60
2021	76	
2022	76	
2023	76	

Additional information: The cost per employment outcome varied significantly across projects, ranging from \$6,379 to \$260,912. The median annual cost per employment outcome for the 88 projects was \$30,609 in fiscal year 2020, while the mean annual cost per employment outcome was \$41,790 due to a small number of project outliers.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

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
2018	80%	73%
2019	75	66
2020	75	64
2021	75	
2022	75	
2023	75	

Additional information: The cost per participant varied significantly across projects, ranging from \$2,126 to \$270,694. The median annual cost per participant for the 88 projects was \$7,554 in fiscal year 2020, while the mean annual cost per participant was \$13,930 due to a small number of project outliers.

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 was 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 developed partnerships and implemented interventions designed to improve the provision and coordination of services and supports for children who received SSI and their families, and achieve outcomes leading 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 to cover continuation costs of the PROMISE MDPs, as well as the costs of the PROMISE technical assistance center grant. The Department provided an additional \$17.2 million in supplemental awards in fiscal year 2015 using unobligated fiscal year 2014 VR funds.

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 received project services. Program participants in the intervention group received services including paid competitive employment opportunities. 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. A 2019 interim services and impact report presents the estimated

¹ <http://www.promisetacenter.org/>.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

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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.¹ Key findings, in addition to the report, are provided on Mathematica Policy Research's website.² 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.

A final impact report is due to be released in fiscal year 2022. The evaluation contractor has published multiple PROMISE special topics reports and articles, including most recently, *Insights About the Transition System for SSI Youth from the National Evaluation of Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI*³ and the *Family Service Use and Its Relationship with Youth Outcomes*.⁴

Automated Personalization Computing Project

In fiscal year 2015, the Department used approximately \$20 million of unobligated fiscal year 2014 VR funds to fund an innovative Automated Personalization Computing Project (APCP). The goal of the APCP was to ensure that individuals with disabilities could 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), and volume levels of audio features. The project developed 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 partnered with the National Institute on Disability, Independent

¹ Reports documenting PROMISE program implementation and service delivery experiences are available at <https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/promise.htm>.

² 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>.

³ <https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/insights-about-the-transition-system-for-ssi-youth-from-the-national-evaluation-of-promoting>

⁴ <https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/promoting-readiness-of-minors-in-supplemental-security-income-family-service-use>

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Living, and Rehabilitation Research which is 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. While the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the grantee's plans to implement many final year activities in fiscal year 2020, such as testing and disseminating its software, section 153 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act extended the availability of funds for APCP through September 30, 2021, which enabled the grantee to complete accessibility testing on multiple computer platforms, conduct disability sector outreach and dissemination, and implement its sustainability plan to ensure that the project would continue to be available after the Federal award ended. Additional information about the final product, Morphic Basic, which is free to use, is available at <https://morphic.org/>.

Transition Work-Based Learning Demonstrations

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

In fiscal year 2016, the Department awarded 5-year demonstration projects to five State VR agencies using unobligated fiscal year 2015 VR funds. 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 worked to improve career outcomes for youth with disabilities by incorporating early referral to the VR agency, work-based learning experiences, integrated employment, and collaboration among

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

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the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, local educational agencies, community rehabilitation programs, America's job centers, and employers. The model included a randomized control design implemented across eight diverse school districts.

(<https://www.way2workmd.net>)

- *Vermont's Linking Learning to Careers* project assisted students with disabilities to transition to early career success by connecting community college career consultants with VR services and school programming. These connections were 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 included a quasi-experimental design. (<https://vocrehab.vermont.gov/linking-learning-careers-llc>)
- The *Massachusetts Transition Pathway Services* project provided a coordinated set of services to improve career and academic planning skills so that high school students with disabilities would 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, provided work-based learning experiences and a menu of services to students. Through a person-centered collaborative team-based approach, students' career goals were planned and supported. The model included a quasi-experimental design. (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/transition-pathway-services>)
- *Maine's Transition Work-Based Learning Model* project partnered 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 worked to expand employer relationships and align its dual customer community-based strategy with enhanced JMG programs for students with disabilities. The model included a quasi-experimental design. (<https://www.explorevr.org/progressive-employment-maine-transition-work-based-learning-model>)
- The *California Career Innovations* project incorporated 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 provided 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 included basic life skills training to assist with job readiness, such as computer literacy, and organization and communication skills. The model included a randomized control design. (<https://www.ci-california.org>)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these projects had to pivot from face-to-face work-based learning experiences to virtual work-based learning experiences, which required additional staff time and resources. To help offset these costs, the Department provided three of the projects with a total of \$59,000 in supplemental funding in fiscal year 2021 from the unobligated fiscal year 2020 VR funds, which were used to complete the final performance and financial reports, thereby allowing the three grantees additional time and resources to carry out the work of the grants.

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Vocational rehabilitation State grants

Career Advancement Initiative Model Demonstration Project

In fiscal year 2021, VR funds remaining from the 2020 appropriation were used to award 5-year grants to fund eight multi-site model demonstration projects designed to assist State VR agencies, in partnership with other entities—such as employers, community colleges and postsecondary institutions, entities that make up the workforce development systems, entities that provide apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, comprehensive rehabilitation centers, local or State educational agencies, and providers or other Federal or State agencies—to develop career pathways that are aimed at helping individuals with disabilities advance in their careers or change to high-demand, high-quality careers. Projects funded under this competition will help VR-eligible individuals with disabilities, including previously served VR participants in employment who re-enter the VR program, to:

- Advance in high-demand, high-quality careers such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, including computer science;
- Enter career pathways in industry-driven sectors through pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship programs;
- Improve and maximize competitive integrated employment outcomes, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion in society; and
- Reduce reliance on public benefits (e.g., Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and State or local benefits).

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Client assistance State grants

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined ¹

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
\$13,000	\$13,000	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides grants to States for services to assist eligible individuals and applicants for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program and other programs, projects, and services funded under the Rehabilitation Act (the Act). CAP focuses on promoting understanding of the rehabilitation services and benefits available under the Act, and advising eligible individuals of their rights and responsibilities in connection with those benefits. The program also offers eligible individuals and applicants a variety of other kinds of assistance, including individual or systemic advocacy, pursuit of legal and administrative remedies, and 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. Currently 43 CAPs are operated by independent private or non-profit organizations, 8 are operated by external State agencies, and 6 are operated by the State VR agency.

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 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

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

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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)
2018	\$13,000
2019	13,000
2020	13,000
2021	13,000
2022 Estimate	13,000

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$13 million for CAP, level with a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 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 2021 from the most recently available RSA Annual Client Assistance Program Report (RSA-227) show that, nationwide, CAPs responded to 15,306 requests for information and referral (I&R). While the average number of I&R requests that States responded to was 268, the median number was 60 because of the significant range in the number of I&R requests reported by CAPs. Approximately 39 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 3,009 individuals in fiscal year 2021. Approximately 89 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 2,458 cases closed in fiscal year 2021, 973 cases (or 39 percent) were resolved by explaining the controlling policies to the individual; 497 cases (20 percent) resulted in the development or implementation of an individualized plan for employment (IPE); and 375 cases (15 percent) resulted in the reestablishment of communication between the individuals and other parties. The remaining closed cases focused on outcomes such as completing an application for services, expediting an eligibility determination, helping the individual participate in evaluation, assigning a new counselor or office to the individual, identifying alternative

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resources for the individual, or filing a complaint. Of the cases closed, 78 percent were resolved in the individual's favor.

Specific examples of CAP activities are described below. Funds requested in fiscal year 2022 would support similar activities.

- In Illinois, a client had participated in a Division of Rehabilitative Services-supported high school transition program and was ready to transition to adult VR services. However, the VR counselor discouraged the legal guardian and client from pursuing VR services due to the client's significant disabilities. The legal guardian and client contacted CAP. CAP investigated the complaint and contacted the VR counselor to discuss the parent's concerns and explore types of VR services from which the client could benefit. As a result of the discussion, the VR counselor scheduled a meeting with the legal guardian and client and determined the client would be a good fit for customized employment. The customer was found eligible for VR services and an IPE was developed. The client was referred to a community rehabilitation provider for services and is currently working towards employment.
- In New Jersey, CAP intervened on behalf of a 28-year-old female diagnosed with a hearing impairment. The client contacted CAP and reported experiencing significant difficulties accessing a range of VR services, including communication technology, vocational training, and supported employment services. CAP investigated the concerns reported by reviewing documentation and attending meetings with the client at the VR agency. Despite CAP's advocacy, the VR agency continued to delay the provision of appropriate services. Based on these delays, CAP represented the client at an administrative review. As a result of the administrative review, the VR agency agreed to provide the client with a specialized assessment to determine technological communication needs and sponsor the client to attend a computer training course. The VR agency also agreed to provide the client with job search services after she completed computer training.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Output Measures ¹	2021	2022	2023
Information inquiries/referrals	15,306	27,000	27,000
Individuals provided case services	3,009	3,800	3,800

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of

¹ Fiscal year 2021 data remain low due to the coronavirus pandemic; however RSA anticipates that the number of information inquiries and referrals, and individuals provided case services, will quickly increase as the pandemic recedes. Data for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 are projected from actual final data reported for fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

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Client assistance State grants

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
2018	72%	74%
2019	68	67
2020	68	67
2021	68	65
2022	73	
2023	73	

Additional information: The Department continues to support technical assistance and training to increase the capacity of CAP professionals to provide systemic advocacy. As a result of this technical assistance and training, and an increased focus on relationship-building and outreach among CAPs and VR agencies, we expect that performance on this measure will improve over time.

Objective: *Resolve cases at lowest possible level.*

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	98%	98%
2019	98	98
2020	98	97
2021	98	98
2022	98	
2023	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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined ¹

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
\$29,388	\$29,388	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

Awards may be made in any of 30 rehabilitation long-term training fields, in addition to awards for rehabilitation short-term training, innovative rehabilitation training, and training interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons who are deaf-blind. These training programs vary in terms of content, methodology, and type of trainee.

The rehabilitation long-term training (LTT) program supports academic training grants that must direct at least 65 percent of the funds to trainee scholarships, which may include student stipends, tuition and fees, books and supplies, and student travel in conjunction with training assignments. 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.

The rehabilitation short-term training program supports special seminars, institutes, workshops, and other short-term courses in technical matters relating to the vocational, medical, social, and psychological rehabilitation programs, supported employment programs, independent living services programs, and client assistance programs. These training projects may be of regional or national scope.

The innovative rehabilitation training program supports grants that develop new types of training programs or new and improved methods of training for rehabilitation personnel, including stand-alone modules and instructional materials to be incorporated into an existing degree program or short-term training, and demonstrate the effectiveness of such training programs.

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

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Training

The training of interpreters program supports programming throughout the country in order to meet the communication needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and individuals who are deaf-blind. This includes providing financial assistance to establish interpreter training programs where they are needed and supporting established interpreter programs to train a sufficient number of qualified interpreters. The program focuses on training interpreters to effectively interpret and transliterate between spoken language and sign language, and oral or tactile modes of communication, as well as maintaining and improving the skills of qualified interpreters.

Awards may also be made for technical assistance centers, such as the VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Employment. These awards are made to pay part of the costs of projects that provide State VR agency personnel with training and technical assistance designed to assist in increasing the numbers of, and upgrading the skills of qualified personnel, including rehabilitation counselors. In addition, the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials is contracted to establish a central clearinghouse for information and resource availability for individuals with disabilities.

Traditionally Underserved Populations

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to fund the Traditionally Underserved Populations program (section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act) through a reservation of 1 percent of the funds appropriated under the Training, Demonstration and Training, Supported Employment, and Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals programs. In fiscal year 2021, this provision made \$910,000 available for the Traditionally Underserved Populations program, which is designed to improve the quality, access, delivery of services, and outcomes of those services under the Rehabilitation Act, especially services provided to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. It also increased the capacity for minority entities and Indian Tribes to participate in activities funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

In fiscal year 2021, the Department ran a competition for a capacity-building center that was intended to improve the delivery of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to, and the employment outcomes of, individuals of color with disabilities. The Department aimed to provide awards to entities to provide cultural competency training to VR leadership and staff, collect and analyze relevant data, and disseminate evidence-based practices. The Department did not receive any applications for this competition, so the Department used the funds to support LTT continuation awards that also meet the requirements of the Traditionally Underserved Populations program. The Department will use the fiscal year 2022 funds to support LTT continuation awards and will run a new Traditionally Underserved Populations competition in fiscal year 2023.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

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

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2018	\$29,388
2019	29,388
2020	29,388
2021	29,388
2022 Estimate	29,388

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$29.4 million for the Training program, level with a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation. In fiscal year 2023, approximately \$27.9 million would be used to support continuation awards, \$1.2 million would be used to support contracts, and \$294,000 would be used to support a new award for the Traditionally Underserved Populations program under section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The Training program supports projects that provide training to new VR staff or upgrade the qualifications of existing staff. 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 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 supports the development of 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 request includes approximately \$19.5 million to support these activities through non-competing continuation awards under grants and contracts made in prior years.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Program Funding:			
Long-Term Training:			
New awards	0	\$500	0
Continuation awards	\$14,547 ¹	15,376 ²	\$16,108
Subtotal	<u>14,547</u>	<u>15,876</u>	<u>16,108</u>
Technical Assistance:			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards	7,645	5,938	5,736
Subtotal	<u>7,645</u>	<u>5,938</u>	<u>5,736</u>
Short-Term Training:			
New awards	308	0	0
Continuation awards	0	308	308
Subtotal	<u>308</u>	<u>308</u>	<u>308</u>
Training for Interpreters for Individuals who are Deaf and Deaf-Blind:			
New awards	2,855	0	0
Continuation awards	0	2,938	2,935
Subtotal	<u>2,855</u>	<u>2,938</u>	<u>2,935</u>
Innovative Rehabilitation Training:			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards	3,049	3,392	3,363
Subtotal	<u>3,049</u>	<u>3,392</u>	<u>3,363</u>

¹ An additional \$910 thousand of Traditionally Underserved Populations funding was also used toward continuation LTT awards, for a total of \$15,457 thousand used for continuation LTT awards in FY 2021.

² An additional \$910 thousand of Traditionally Underserved Populations funding will be used toward continuation LTT awards, for a total of \$16,286 thousand used for continuation LTT awards in FY 2022.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials:			
New awards	680	0	0
Continuation awards	0	642	644
Subtotal	680	642	644
Other Activities:			
Peer review of new award applications	10	0	0
Traditionally Underserved Populations	294	294	294
Subtotal	304	294	294
Program Totals:			
New awards	3,843	500	0
Continuation awards	25,241	28,594	29,094
Other Activities	304	294	294
Total	29,388	29,388	29,388

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

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
2018	45%	36%
2019	40	35
2020	40	39
2021	40	39
2022	40	
2023	40	

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	85%	88%
2019	85	94
2020	85	88
2021	85	84
2022	85	
2023	85	

Additional Information: Qualifying employment includes employment in a State vocational rehabilitation agency or related agency in the field of study for which the training was received.

Efficiency Measures

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	\$24,000	---
2019	24,000	\$36,771
2020	24,000	41,780
2021	24,000	45,831
2022	24,000	
2023	24,000	

Additional Information: This 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. No grants closed in fiscal year 2018 so no data are available for fiscal year 2018. The fiscal year 2019 data includes 47 closed grants with 1,101 completers. The fiscal year 2020 data includes 45 closed grants with 993 completers. The fiscal year 2021 data includes 3 closed grants with 65 completers.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Training

The Department is currently reviewing options to revise the targets for this measure. The Department intends to increase the targets based on this analysis beginning with fiscal year 2024.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined¹

Budget Authority:

	2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
	\$5,796	\$40,796	+\$35,000

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Demonstration and Training programs are designed to provide competitive grants to, or enter into contracts with, eligible entities to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act (the Act), or to further the purposes of the Act by supporting activities that increase the provision, extent, availability, scope, and quality of rehabilitation services under the Act, including related research and evaluation activities.

Specific activities include:

- Section 303(b) of the 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 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 their parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.
- 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.

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2018	\$5,796
2019	5,796
2020	5,796
2021	5,796
2022 Estimate	5,796

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$40.8 million for the Demonstration and Training programs, \$35 million more than a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation. The request will support a new pilot program to catalyze innovative approaches for improving employment outcomes for VR participants and related technical assistance and evaluation, as well as supplemental funding for the Parent Information and Training program.

While individuals with disabilities participating in the VR system are, on average, more likely to obtain employment than individuals with disabilities, the percentage of VR participants exiting into competitive integrated employment (CIE) has declined each year since FY 2017. In FY 2020, 44 percent of participants exited the program in CIE, compared to 48 percent in FY 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted VR services and disproportionately impacted individuals with disabilities seeking employment, has only added to the urgency to improve employment outcomes for VR participants.

New and innovative approaches are needed in the VR system to overcome both long-term and new pandemic-related barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. The request would make available \$33.3 million to VR agencies and their partners to spur innovation, promote greater alignment of the VR system with a rapidly changing economy, and improve employment outcomes for VR participants. Pilot projects would provide innovative employment services for unemployed or under-employed individuals with disabilities who are no longer eligible for pre-employment transition services, with the goal of assisting them in obtaining competitive integrated employment in fields where they are typically underrepresented. Jobs in STEM fields such as IT, infrastructure, and green energy represent new opportunities for employees with disabilities to seek a living wage in integrated employment. Proposed five-year grants would support training and building capacity within VR agencies, delivering enhanced and novel employment services to participants, and developing partnerships with employers. For example, grantees might use funds to establish partnerships with postsecondary institutions and employers to offer novel curricula and workplace learning opportunities to help VR participants enter growing employment sectors or to add additional service coordination and performance improvement capacity within the VR agency to evaluate and improve the delivery of employment supports. Grantees would conduct evaluations of these efforts to create an evidence base that can inform the practices of other VR agencies and scale best practices for increasing CIE.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Approximately \$1.4 million of the proposed increase for fiscal year 2023 would be used to supplement funding for the National Parent Training and Information Center (National PTI), as well as its eight Regional Parent Training and Information Centers (Regional PTIs). Each of these centers receives approximately \$300,000 annually, for a total of \$2.7 million that has not proven sufficient to support the increased scope of work following the transition to the regional model (prior to fiscal year 2020, PTIs received an average of \$65,000 per state served; currently, they receive an average of \$45,000 per state served). This additional \$1.2 million would bring the average amount PTIs receive per state served to approximately \$70,000. New funds would also provide the National PTI with an increase of \$150,000 to provide much needed guidance, support, and coordination to the Regional PTIs. The remaining \$1.2 million would support increased collaboration among the Regional PTIs, the development of new materials, and enhanced services to consumers in their respective regions.

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to reserve 1 percent of the funds appropriated under the Training, Demonstration and Training, Supported Employment, and Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals programs for the Traditionally Underserved Populations program (section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act). Approximately \$350,000 of the increase proposed for fiscal year 2023 would be used to cover the related increase to meet this requirement, for an estimated contribution of \$408,000 from the Demonstration and Training programs.

Approximately \$3 million of funding would be used for continuation awards for the Braille Training program and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, and to support evaluation activities for two technical assistance centers focused on improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Program funding:			
Model demonstrations			
New awards	0	0	\$33,285
Continuation awards	0	0	0
Technical assistance			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards ¹	\$2,689	\$2,689	2,689
Braille training			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards	342	342	342

¹ The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition is jointly funded with the Office of Special Education programs.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Parent information and training			
New awards	0	0	0
Continuation awards	2,700	2,700	2,700
Supplemental awards	7	7	1,350
Peer review of new award applications	0	0	22
Traditionally Underserved Populations	58	58	408
Total, Program funding	5,796	5,796	40,796
Number of awards:			
New awards	0	0	6
Continuation awards	15	15	15
Total, Number of awards	15	15	21

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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 focused on these projects. With the shift from model demonstration projects to providing more robust support for the Parent Information and Training (PTI) programs and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), the Department is proposing new performance measures that more accurately reflect the impact of the bulk of the Demonstration and Training program funds. Fiscal year 2020 is the last year the Department will report on the Vocational Rehabilitation Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) Demonstration Projects and its associated measures. The Department plans to report on new performance measures starting in fiscal year 2021, with initial data to be provided in a future budget justification. Additional performance measures will be developed for the proposed pilot program, as appropriate.

VR-CPID Measures

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

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

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 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
2018	114	103
2019	121	107
2020	131	111

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	150	201
2019	200	277
2020	250	292

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	\$600	\$650
2019	630	680
2020	680	685

Other VR-CPID Measures

VR-CPID grantees reported on two additional measures: (1) the numbers of competitive integrated employment and employer-provided benefits obtained by CPID participants 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 compared to the average weekly earnings of VR consumers in their State who obtained competitive integrated employment outside of the CPID project. All four grantees reported higher results for CPID participants compared to non-CPID participants on both measures.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Demonstration and training programs

New Performance Measures

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Goal: To increase the number of students with disabilities who receive the VR services needed to prepare them for competitive integrated employment.

Objective: To provide VR State agencies with training and technical assistance that ensures that staff are well-trained in providing services for students with disabilities that lead to competitive integrated employment.

Measure: Of VR agencies that receive targeted and/or intensive technical assistance from NTACT, the percentage that show an increase in the percentage of potentially eligible students receiving pre-employment transition services.

Measure: Of VR agencies that receive targeted and/or intensive technical assistance NTACT, the percentage that show an increase in the percentage of potentially eligible students who become VR program participants.

Measure: Of the VR agencies that receive TA from NTACT to strengthen their SEA agreements, the percentage of those VR agencies that show an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities who receive VR services.

Parent Information and Training Programs

Goal: To ensure that individuals with disabilities and their families have the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for vocational, independent living, and other rehabilitation needs.

Objective: Individuals with disabilities and their families who are served by the Rehabilitation Services Parent Information Centers will be knowledgeable about their rights and available services.

Measure: The percentage of individuals with disabilities and their families receiving PTI services who report enhanced knowledge and understanding of VR services.

Objective: Improve the quality of parent training and information products and services.

Measure: The percentage of all products and services developed to improve VR service utilization deemed to be useful by individuals with disabilities and their families receiving PTI services.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined¹

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
\$18,150	\$18,150	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

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

The 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.

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2018	\$17,650
2019	17,650
2020	17,650
2021	18,150
2022 Estimate	18,150

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$18.5 million for the PAIR program, level with a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation, to help provide information and P&A services to individuals with disabilities. The Department plans to reserve 1.8 percent of the funds requested (\$326,700) to provide training and technical assistance to eligible statewide systems established under this program, as required by the authorizing statute.

During fiscal year 2021, PAIR programs nationwide reported handling 8,771 cases and responded to 22,503 requests for information or referral. Of the individual cases handled by PAIR programs in that year, most were related to housing (17 percent), employment (17 percent), and health care (14 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 (23 percent), neurological impairments (13 percent), and other disabilities (11 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 2021, 55 out of the 57 PAIR programs (96 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 2021 illustrate how PAIR programs assist individuals and, in some cases, bring about systemic change. Funds requested in fiscal year 2023 would support similar activities.

- The PAIR staff of Disability Rights Florida advocated for accessible COVID-19 testing in several counties throughout the state. Many individuals with disabilities could not travel to test sites and wait in long lines to be tested. PAIR staff advocated for reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities by sending demand letters to the organizations who managed testing in each county. The counties who received demand letters engaged with PAIR staff around the reasonable accommodation requests and set up accessibility procedures to ensure qualified individuals would have access to COVID testing. One county in South Florida established a process by which qualified individuals could be tested for COVID in their homes.
- In 2018, a U.S. District Court judge approved a settlement agreement between the City of Portland and plaintiffs in the case of *Hines, et al. v. City of Portland*. Plaintiffs were people

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

with disabilities who reside or visit Portland and “who use...a wheelchair or scooter for mobility.” The Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center (CREEC) and Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho are now in the enforcement phase of this settlement. CREEC asked Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) to assist in enforcement activities by partnering with other parties to provide on-the-ground monitoring, including sharing information about the curb ramp complaint system, and ensuring the city responds in a timely manner. Monitoring may also include checking on the installation of new curb ramps to make sure they are being built according to the design standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The settlement remains in effect for 12 years. DRO’s involvement in this case provides DRO attorneys with the ancillary benefit of building relationships with national experts in ADA design standards and enforcement and other national partners. DRO continues to monitor the enforcement of the settlement agreement with the Portland Bureau of Transportation to build or repair noncompliant curb ramps.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Information inquiries/referrals	22,503	23,000	23,000
Individuals provided case services	8,771	9,000	9,000

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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 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.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Protection and advocacy of individual rights

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	89%	77%
2019	89	95
2020	89	74
2021	89	96
2022	89	
2023	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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined¹

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
\$22,548	\$22,548	0

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. 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 supports enable individuals with the most significant disabilities 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 if an individual is eligible 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 SE State Grants program and/or the VR State Grants 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.

In addition, States are required, under the amendments to Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act made by WIOA, 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 State dollar match of 10 percent for the SE allotment portion used to serve such youth.

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

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)
2018	\$22,548
2019	22,548
2020	22,548
2021	22,548
2022 Estimate	22,548

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$22.5 million for SE State Grants, level with the fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation, to continue to provide a dedicated source of funding for supported employment services, including significant support for services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

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. 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 if an individual is eligible for the Title I VR State Grants program.

One issue of concern is that States have struggled to meet the requirement to use one-half of their SE allocations—along with a 10 percent state dollar match—to provide supported employment and extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

The challenge of meeting these requirements is demonstrated by recent SE State grant expenditure patterns. Grantees did not use more than \$3.4 million of fiscal year 2020 SE funds, representing more than 15 percent of the entire SE appropriation that will return to the Treasury. This is an increase of over \$850,000 from the fiscal year 2019 funds remaining unused. In fiscal year 2020, 17 out of 75 grantees did not meet the matching requirement for the funds required to be reserved and expended for students with significant disabilities. The Department will be exploring, in consultation with Congress, potential options for addressing this problem and ensuring that States provide critical supported employment and extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the intent of the authorizing statute.

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to reserve 1 percent of the funds appropriated under the Training, Demonstration and Training, Supported Employment, and Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals programs for the Traditionally Underserved

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

Populations program (section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act). The request includes \$225,000 to meet this requirement.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures ¹	2021	2022	2023
Individuals with the most significant disabilities who exited with SE outcomes in competitive integrated employment	12,000	12,250	12,500
Individuals with the most significant disabilities who received SE services	43,000	43,250	43,500
Youth ² with the most significant disabilities who received SE services	20,200	20,400	20,600
Traditionally Underserved Populations	\$225	\$225	\$225

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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.

Data reported for these measures include outcomes for individuals who received supported employment services and exited the VR program with a supported employment outcome in competitive integrated employment, whether such services were paid for with VR State Grants or SE State Grants. Consequently, the measures do not permit independent assessment of the performance of the SE State Grants program.

The Department has established three new performance measures, including two measures that mirror the WIOA performance indicators, to replace the current performance measures. The new measures are designed to more effectively assess the role of supported employment services in the outcomes that participants with the most significant disabilities achieve.

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

¹ The output measures data for Supported Employment State Grants are estimates based on program year 2020 data.

² Youth is defined as individuals 14 to 24 years old.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

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

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
2018	96.0%	99.8%
2019	96.0	99.6
2020	99.0	99.9
2021	99.0	99.9
2022		
2023		

Additional information: The Department has not established targets for fiscal years 2022 or 2023 because fiscal year 2021 is the last year that the Department will report data on this measure.

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	\$215	\$230
2019	215	222
2020	222	244
2021	222	260
2022		
2023		

Additional information: The data reported for this measure include data on all individuals who obtained a supported employment outcome with earnings. The average weekly earnings calculation does not include data for Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands. The Department has not established targets for fiscal years 2022 or 2023 because fiscal year 2021 is the last year that the Department will report data on this measure.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Supported employment State grants

New Performance Measures

Performance data reported in 2021 are based on data collected under the RSA-911 from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The Department will report baseline data for 2021 and 2022 under the new measures in fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

Goal: Individuals with the most significant disabilities who receive supported employment services will achieve high-quality employment outcomes and continue to work following their exit from the program.

***Objective:** Ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities, who exit the VR program with supported employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment, will be capable of maintaining employment as a result of the supported employment services they received and that, consistent with their informed choice, they will have opportunities to maximize the number of hours they work each week.*

Measure: Of those individuals who received supported employment services, the median hours worked per week at the time they exit from the program with supported employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	20
2022		
2023		

Measure: Of those individuals who received supported employment services, the percentage who were employed during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	61.3
2022		
2023		

Measure: Of those individuals who received supported employment services, the percentage who were employed during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	53.8
2022		
2023		

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living services for older blind individuals

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined ¹

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
\$33,317	\$33,317	0

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. Services under this program are not typically covered under private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare.

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. The services most frequently provided to program participants in fiscal year 2021 were assistive technology devices and services (provided to 66 percent of participants), information and referral services (53 percent) and daily living skills training (53 percent), with some participants receiving more than one service. These services allow older individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired to be more independent at home and in the community. Service providers 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.

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2021; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

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:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>(dollars in thousands)</u>
2018	\$33,317
2019	33,317
2020	33,317
2021	33,317
2022 Estimate	33,317

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$33.3 million for the ILOIB program, level with a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 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 ILOIB grantees and service providers.

In fiscal year 2021, 45,972 individuals received services under the ILOIB program, 61 percent of whom were over 75 years of age and about 84 percent of whom were still living in a private residence. Approximately 55 percent of these individuals were either legally blind or totally blind, and 19 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 (born from 1946 to 1964) continue to age. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates), 6.0 percent of individuals 65 and older (about 3.2 million people) have a vision-related disability. In addition, the percentage of individuals who have a disability that affects their independent living status (including vision-related disabilities) increases with age, with a dramatic increase for individuals in the 75 years and over category, where 23.1 percent report having a disability that affects their independent living status.

The Rehabilitation Act requires the Department to reserve 1 percent of the funds appropriated under the Training, Demonstration and Training, Supported Employment, and Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals programs, or 333,000, for the Traditionally Underserved Populations program (section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act).

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures:	2021	2022	2023
Minimum State award	\$225	\$225	\$225
Number of States at minimum	17	17	17
Average State award	\$620	\$620	\$620
Traditionally Underserved Populations	\$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, program 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.*

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	57%	58%
2019	58	57
2020	58	55

Additional information: Fiscal year 2020 was the last year that the Department collected data on this measure. New measures are described below.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	61%	65%
2019	61	55
2020	61	56

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. Fiscal year 2020 was the last year that the Department collected data on this measure. New measures are described below.

New Performance Measures

Due to concerns about the precision of the previous performance measures shown above, the Department established five new performance measures designed to more accurately measure the performance of the ILOIB program. Targets will be established after the Department has collected two years of baseline data from fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2022.

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 federal fiscal year consistent with the objectives for receiving such devices and services.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	79%
2022		
2023		

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

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	78%
2022		
2023		

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Independent living for older blind individuals

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.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	87%
2022		
2023		

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.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	77%
2022		
2023		

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 federal fiscal year.

Year	Target	Actual
2021	Baseline	\$942
2022		
2023		

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

(Helen Keller National Center Act)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: To be determined¹

Budget Authority:

	2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
	\$17,000	\$18,500	+\$1,500

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 several 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 20 regional representatives and 10 deaf blind specialists. Through this network, HKNC assists deaf-blind individuals and their families and provides 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), operated by the Center in collaboration with the New York State Commission for the Blind and the California Department of Rehabilitation Services, provides comprehensive rehabilitation, vocational, and support services to eligible persons who are deaf-blind in their homes, worksites, and communities. CSP is staffed by

¹ The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2004; reauthorization for FY 2023 is expected through appropriations action.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

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.

In addition, HKNC has developed a Deaf-Blind National Community of Practice, a 67-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. These organizations consist of three national organizations, vocational rehabilitation agencies for both deaf and hard of hearing and blind consumers, many State deaf-blind projects, two schools for the deaf and blind, and agencies that provide support services (such as Support Service Provider and interpreting services) to deaf-blind individuals.

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

HKNC also provides professional development, training and technical assistance, and consultation to other organizations, programs, and providers serving individuals who are deaf-blind.

COVID-19 Pandemic Adjustments

Due to COVID-19, HKNC transformed the in-person vocational rehabilitation program into a virtual program approximately halfway through fiscal year 2020. Four-week virtual assessments were offered to match each consumer's schedule and goals. Remote training programs were designed on a part-time and full-time basis and focused on goals that would improve outcomes or would help to develop a foundation upon which to build, especially when in-person services resume. The HKNC field staff joined with the Center staff to support consumers with obtaining and setting up the necessary equipment and technology needed to access Zoom and Google Docs training sessions, support groups, and peer learning opportunities. Staff utilized a transdisciplinary approach and partnered with consumers and vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide services remotely. The HKNC campus remained closed in fiscal year 2021; however, HKNC continued virtual offerings developed under the online training and regional activity framework developed over the previous fiscal year.

Revenue and Expenses

For fiscal year 2021, HKNC reported total public support and revenues of \$21 million. Funds from the Federal government (\$17 million) made up 81 percent of its total revenue. Funding from State grants and contracts amounted to \$2.9 million (14 percent). HKNC received approximately \$510,000 in donations and public support (2 percent) and reported an approximately \$630,000 increase 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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

For fiscal year 2021, HKNC incurred total operating expenses of \$24 million. Because most of the specialized services required by this population are provided by HKNC staff, salaries, and fringe benefits (approximately \$18.8 million) account for most expenses (78 percent). Other expenses include: building, utilities, and rent (approximately \$1.7 million, or 7 percent); professional services (approximately \$1.3 million, or 6 percent); client related services (approximately \$200,000, or 1 percent); and other operating expenses (approximately \$2 million, or 8 percent).

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2018	\$12,500
2019	13,500
2020	16,000
2021	17,000
2022 Estimate	17,000

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$18.5 million for HKNC, \$1.5 million more than a fiscal year 2022 annualized CR based on the fiscal year 2021 appropriation, to expand regional office support for an estimated 2,300 individual consumers, 700 families, and 1,000 agencies and organizations, while also strengthening direct intensive services to approximately 90 consumers at HKNC's residential training and rehabilitation program.

While most of the request would support core activities at HKNC headquarters, 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 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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

Output Measures	2021	2022	2023
Number of individuals served at headquarters:			
Adult training program clients	82	85	90
Specialized training services:			
Transition for high school students	9	10	15
Senior citizens	22	25	30
Individuals with intellectual disabilities	9	10	15
Targeted skills training	10	10	15
Community Services Program	142	150	165
Number of individuals served through regional representatives and deaf-blind specialists:			
Consumers	1,288	1,300	2,300
Families	354	360	700
Agencies/organizations	944	945	1,000
HKNC FTE staff	160	160	175

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, program 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.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the unique health and developmental needs of the communities served by HKNC, several of the performance outcomes outlined below indicate notable shifts from past performance. These shifts are typically decreases and are found in performance measures designed to capture outcomes in spaces where service recipients are typically required to either live at HKNC headquarters or have extensive in-person contact with HKNC-affiliated staff. HKNC expects outcomes on these performance indicators to move back toward normality.

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.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

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
2018	75	76/40	95%	90%	48%	50/71%	86%	91%
2019	80	59/38	95	89	48	63/67	86	87
2020	80	86/92	95	87	60	33/50	86	93
2021	80	82/95	95	88	60	9/41	86	12
2022	80		95		60		86	
2023	80		95		60		86	

Additional information: In fiscal year 2021, HKNC served 82 consumers through its virtual training programs sponsored by HKNC headquarters and 95 additional off-campus consumers through its NY 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.

In fiscal year 2021, 9 percent of consumers served by HKNC headquarters and 41 percent of regional consumers participating in the Community Services Program with an employment goal were placed in employment.

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.

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

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

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
2018	600	573
2019	600	505
2020	600	372
2021	600	384
2022	600	
2023	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
2018	75%	74%
2019	75	68
2020	75	75
2021	75	75
2022	75	
2023	75	

Additional information: This measure provides information on the activities of the field services programs, including the regional representatives and 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.*

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Helen Keller National Center

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

Year	Target	Actual
2018	65	71
2019	65	55
2020	65	79
2021	65	47
2022	65	
2023	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
2018	45%	41%
2019	45	47
2020	45	35
2021	45	35
2022	45	
2023	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.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program

(Randolph-Sheppard Act, 20 U.S.C. §107 et. seq.)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2023 Authorization: Proposed legislation

Budget Authority:

2022 Estimate	2023 Request	Change
0	\$500	\$500

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Vending Facility program authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Act provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on Federal and other property. The program, enacted into law in 1936, was intended to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed blind persons to operate facilities. The law was subsequently amended in 1954 and again in 1974 to ultimately give individuals who are blind priority in the operation of vending facilities, which included cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, that are on Federal property. The program priority has broadened in most States to include State, county, municipal, and private locations as well. Under the program, State licensing agencies (SLAs) recruit, train, license, and place individuals who are blind as operators of vending facilities located on Federal and other properties. The act authorizes a blind individual licensed by the SLA to conduct specified activities in vending facilities through permits or contracts.

In fiscal year 2020, a total of 1,697 blind vendors operated 2,183 vending facilities located on Federal and other property. The program generated \$564.9 million and the average vendor earnings amounted to \$55,958.

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

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2018	\$0
2019	0
2020	0
2021	0
2022 Estimate	0

FY 2023 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2023, the Administration requests \$500,000 for the newly proposed Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility program, which would support a competitively awarded center that would provide training and technical assistance to SLAs and blind vendors. Of this amount,

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program

approximately \$3,000 would be used to support the peer review process, and the remaining \$497,000 would be used to provide training and technical assistance. The request includes appropriations language that would authorize the new program.

In fiscal year 2021, Congress provided \$20 million in one-time relief and restoration payments to blind vendors who incurred losses under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility program in calendar year 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While SLAs have worked hard to support blind vendors during this time, many SLAs have struggled to keep up with the number and complexity of requests from blind vendors for technical assistance and other support to ensure the effective operation of the Vending Facility Program. Additionally, many SLAs also need further support to ensure that their State rules align with current requirements.

Establishing a federally-funded training and technical assistance center would support efforts to help blind vendors fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Key activities would include technical assistance to SLAs and blind vendors on programmatic requirements, including fiscal and reporting requirements under the Randolph-Sheppard Act. The grantee also would support States by establishing communities of practice around key topics, and sharing best practices and innovative approaches among SLAs and blind vendors. Additionally, the grantee would develop and provide training for blind vendors, supplementing the trainings already being provided by SLAs.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

The Department will establish goals and performance indicators to assess the impact and effectiveness of activities supported by the training and technical assistance center through the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program. Potential indicators include the number of trainings provided and arbitrations requested, the number of blind vendors and facilities, and the average vendor earnings.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Account Summary Table

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2023 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET
(in thousands of dollars)

	Cat Code	2021 Appropriation	2022 Estimate	2023 Request	2023 Request Compared to 2022 Estimate		
					Amount	Percent	
Rehabilitation Services							
1. Vocational rehabilitation State grants:							
(a)	Grants to States (RA Title I-A, sections 110 and 111)	M	3,414,895	3,455,539	3,671,483	215,944	6.25%
(b)	Grants to Indians (RA Title I-C)	M	50,650	51,592	53,091	1,499	2.91%
	Subtotal	M	3,465,545	3,507,131	3,724,574	217,443	6.20%
	Mandatory baseline	M	3,675,021	3,719,121	3,949,707	230,586	6.20%
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	40,796	35,000	603.86%
5.	Protection and advocacy of individual rights (RA section 509)	D	18,150	18,150	18,150	0	0.00%
6.	Supported employment State grants (RA VI)	D	22,548	22,548	22,548	0	0.00%
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	17,000	17,000	18,500	1,500	8.82%
9.	Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program	D	0	0	500	500	---
	Subtotal		139,199	139,199	176,199	37,000	26.58%
	Total		3,604,744	3,646,330	3,900,773	254,443	6.98%
	Discretionary	D	139,199	139,199	176,199	37,000	26.58%
	Mandatory	M	3,465,545	3,507,131	3,724,574	217,443	6.20%

NOTES:

1) D = discretionary program; M = mandatory programs

2) Pursuant to the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), for most mandatory programs, with the exception of Pell Grants, Credit Liquidating, and Credit Reestimates the levels shown in the 2021 Appropriation column reflect the 5.7 percent reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2020; the levels shown in the 2022 Estimate column reflect the 5.7 percent reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2021.

3) Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.