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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

POLICY DIRECTIVE

RSA-PD-91-03

DATE: November 16, 1990

TO: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
RSA DISCRETIONARY GRANTEES
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: Policy Statement on Rehabilitation Engineering
(See also RSA-TAC-91-01)

BACKGROUND: The 1986 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 99-506) placed a new emphasis on the provision of rehabilitation engineering services. The term "rehabilitation engineering" as defined in the Act means: "... the systematic application of technologies, engineering method-ologies or scientific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with handicaps in areas which include education, rehabilitation, employment, trans- portation, independent living, and recreation." With the enactment of Public Law 99-506, the rehabilitation process reached a new milestone in the con- tinuum of services for individuals with disabilities by expanding their opportunities for a better quality of life.

POLICY

STATEMENT: It is the policy of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to promote, encourage and support the application of rehabilitation engineering technology in the provision of services to people with disabilities. Rehabilitation technology encompasses a range of services and devices which can supplement and enhance individual functions. It also encompasses services which impact the environment through environmental changes, such as job re-design or worksite modifications. Rehabilitation technologists may employ one or both types of services in order to enhance employment opportunities for an individual. Any evaluation of a client's need for rehabilitation technology services must be performed by personnel skilled in rehabilitation engineering technology.

Application of rehabilitation engineering services is especially important when making determinations of eligibility. This is particularly so for those individuals whose disabling conditions are of a severity that otherwise might lead to a finding of ineligibility. Application of these technologies, methodologies and principles are equally important for those individuals who are:

- In extended evaluation to determine rehabilitation potential
- Receiving services under an individualized written rehabilitation program (IWRP) if such services are appropriate
- Undergoing annual review when the case was closed as too severe
- Undergoing annual review and re-evaluation when the case is in extended employment in rehabilitation facilities
- Receiving post-employment services.

The Federal statute stipulates that the provision of rehabilitation engineering services by State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies is not conditioned on a determination that comparable services and benefits are unavailable under any other program. This does not mean, however, that if such services are readily available to the individual from other sources they should not be utilized by VR agencies.

RSA is strongly committed to the utilization of the expertise available through rehabilitation engineering. Each State VR agency must provide, as an attachment to its Three Year State Plan under Title I a description of how rehabilitation engineering services will be provided to assist an increasing number of individuals with handicaps.

CITATIONS
IN LAW:

Section 7(5)(H), and (12), Section 101(a)(5)(c), Section 101(a)(8), 101(a)(9), 101(a)(16), Section 102(a) and (b) and (c), Section 103(a)(1)(A), Section 103(a)(12), of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

CITATIONS
IN
REGULATIONS:

34 CFR 361.1
34 CFR 361.2(b)(1)(i)
34 CFR 361.32(c)
34 CFR 361.33(b)
34 CFR 361.34(b) and (e)(2)
34 CFR 361.35(d)
34 CFR 361.40(c) and (d)
34 CFR 361.41(a)(3)
34 CFR 361.42(a)(15) and (b)

34 CFR 361.47(b)(2)(v)
34 CFR 361.58

EFFECTIVE
DATE: Upon issuance

POLICY
DELETED: None

INQUIRIES
TO: Regional Commissioners

Nell C. Carney
Commissioner, Rehabilitation
Services Administration

cc: CSAVR
NAPAS