

## Discretionary Project Grants for Training Rehabilitation Personnel (CFDA Nos. 84.129, 84.160, and 84.246)

### I. Legislation

Sections 302 and 803 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 93-112, as amended by P.L. 102-569 and P.L. 103-73 (29 U.S.C. 771a and 797b) (expires September 30, 1997).

### II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1966	\$24,800,000	1987	\$29,550,000
1970	27,700,000	1988	30,000,000
1975	22,200,000	1989	30,500,000
1980	28,500,000	1990	31,110,000
1981	21,675,000	1991	33,353,000
1982	19,200,000	1992	36,688,000
1983	19,200,000	1993	39,628,608
1984	22,000,000	1994	39,629,000
1985	22,000,000	1995	39,629,000
1986	25,838,000	1996	39,629,000

### III. Analysis of Program Performance

#### A. Goals and Objectives

**Objective 1: Improve the skills of personnel trained to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.**

**Objective 2: Increase the number of people trained to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.**

**Objective 3: Concentrate efforts in areas of personnel shortages.**

The Rehabilitation Act requires that training funds be targeted to support projects in areas of personnel shortages. The Department developed priorities for the allocation of training funds based on a National Survey of Personnel Shortages and Training Needs. Specialties that were determined to most affect service to clients with severe disabilities included rehabilitation counseling; rehabilitation of the blind, deaf, and mentally ill; job development; supported employment; and vocational evaluation and work adjustment.

#### B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

## Services Supported

The program supports training, scholarships, and related activities in a broad range of rehabilitation disciplines and areas of professional practice, including long-term training, training of interpreters, experimental and innovative training, continuing education, short-term training, and in-service training. To pay part or all the cost of conducting training programs, grants and contracts are awarded to states and to public or nonprofit agencies and organizations, including institutions of higher education.

## Strategic Initiatives

Programs vary with respect to content, methodology, and type of trainee. For example, the Long-Term Training Program must spend 75 percent of the training grants on trainee scholarships, for which trainees must later either make repayment or work for a period in public or private, nonprofit rehabilitation or related agencies. At least 15 percent of the Title III training funds must be set aside to support the In-Service Training Program, one of six programs authorized under Title III.

### C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

Two key proposed indicators for the Long-Term Training Program are (1) percentage of trainees completing the program, and (2) percentage of completers accepting employment with public rehabilitation agencies. Indicators for other types of training have not been developed.

<b>Number of trainees completing the program</b>
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Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) data show that 1,320 scholars received support under 171 Long-Term Training Projects in FY 1996. All are required to pay back their scholarships by working in the vocational rehabilitation field and, as of 1992-93, must begin fulfilling their work obligation within two years. RSA plans to implement in FY 1997 a new Payback Reporting Form, which will show the percentage of trainees who actually complete the program.

<b>Percentage employed with public rehabilitation agencies</b>
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The new reporting form will allow the Department to obtain better information about the extent to which individuals who receive support subsequently go to work in vocational rehabilitation. A 1993 evaluation found that 75 percent of persons with RSA scholarships in 1990-91 immediately began to repay their obligation through work at nonprofit agencies or state VR agencies (V.1).

## IV. Planned Studies

RSA is planning to use FY 1997 funds to evaluate continuing education and in-service training activities for state agency personnel. RSA intends to compare the cost-effectiveness of the programs, identify best practices, and develop appropriate performance measurement instruments to assess these programs.

## V. Sources of Information

1. Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Field Service Delivery Personnel in Vocational Rehabilitation (Washington, DC: Pelavin Associates, 1993).

2. 1992 Survey of Personnel Shortages and Training Needs in Vocational Rehabilitation (Washington, DC: Pelavin Associates, July 1992).
3. Program files.

## **VI. Contacts for Further Information**

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