

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (CFDA No. 84.177)

I. Legislation

Chapter 2 of Title VII the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P.L. 93-112, as amended by P.L. 102-569 (29 U.S.C. 796f) (expires September 30, 1997).

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1986	\$4,785,000
1987	5,290,000
1988	5,600,000
1989	5,700,000
1990	5,829,000
1991	5,914,000
1992	6,505,000
1993	6,944,000
1994	8,131,000
1995	8,952,000
1996	9,952,000

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

To provide independent living services for individuals age 55 or older who are blind or severely visually impaired, and to help them adjust to blindness so that they may live more independently in their homes and communities. This program also supports activities to expand and improve services for older individuals who are blind, and to improve public understanding of the problems facing them.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

The program serves blind or severely visually impaired individuals, age 55 or older, whose blindness or severe visual impairment makes gainful employment extremely difficult, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. Independent living skills help to prevent institutionalization and enhance the lives of these individuals.

Independent living services for older individuals who are blind include services to correct blindness or visual impairment, or to help the recipients become more mobile and self-sufficient. Services provided under the program are visual screening, therapeutic treatment, outreach, provision of eyeglasses, other vision aids, guide services, transportation, orientation and mobility training, reader services, Braille instruction, information and referral, peer counseling, adaptive skills training, and other appropriate services designed to help older individuals who are blind to cope with daily living activities. In 1995, approximately 22,000 individuals received one or more services through this program. Approximately 34 percent of total funding came from nonfederal sources (V.2).

Eligible grantees are state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies for individuals who are blind and visually impaired or, in states with no separate agency for such persons, state combined VR agencies. Each designated state unit may either provide independent living services directly under this program or make subgrants to other public agencies or private, nonprofit organizations to provide these services.

Strategic Initiatives

Section 21(b)(3)(c) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1992, requires the Commissioner to use 1 percent of the aggregate funds appropriated for programs authorized in Titles II, III, VI, VII, and VIII for minority outreach activities as specified in Section 21(b)(3)(A) of the act. In FY 1996, one percent of the funds appropriated for this program were reserved for this purpose. Section 21 also requires grant applicants to demonstrate how they will address the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. Section 20 of the act requires all programs under the act to advise individuals receiving or seeking to receive program services, or as appropriate, such individuals' authorized representative, of the availability and purposes of the Client Assistance Program under Section 112 of the act, including information on the means of seeking assistance under such program.

Working with grantees, the Department, in FY 1997, will develop a plan to collect outcome data for individuals who have obtained assistance from the program.

IV. Planned Studies

None.

V. Sources of Information

1. Program files
2. Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Annual Report for FY 1995.

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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