



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

CCD FY 2011 JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Projects with Industry (PWI) – CCD recommends \$50 million

The Projects with Industry (PWI) program as defined by law “...is to create and expand job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the talent and leadership of private industry as partners in the rehabilitation process...”. (Title VI, Section 611 of the Rehabilitation Act). President Obama’s 2011 budgets has recommended no funding based on the assumption that these programs are duplicative of the state vocational rehabilitation program. The current funding is \$19.2 million and supports 66 projects in 29 states. Over the years PWI has placed tens of thousands of persons with disabilities into competitive community jobs and has engaged thousands of businesses who serve on the Business Advisory Councils to the PWI program. The President’s budget reasoned that PWI and the state vocational rehabilitation system served the same people but in the same federal evaluation cited by the budget document went on to say “... The services provided by PWI projects complement, rather than duplicate, those of the VR agency, mainly because individuals served by both programs tend to receive placement assistance only through the PWI program, with any training usually provided or at least funded by VR “. Employers almost unanimously identified PWI projects’ regular post-placement follow up as the single most important feature of the program, one that distinguished PWI from both the VR services program and private placement services employers had used.

Elimination of this funding will reduce the resources available to persons with disabilities to obtain good jobs and become more productive members of our society. This is coupled with elimination and consolidation of other funding for job related programs for persons with disabilities including supported employment state grants, rehabilitation program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and the AgrAbility program at the Department of Agriculture. We are concerned that these reductions and consolidations diminish the chance for persons with disabilities to participate in the Administration’s economic recovery initiatives.

Supported Employment State Grants Programs—CCD Recommends \$50 million

The purpose of the Supported Employment (SE) State Grants program is to assist states in developing collaborative programs with appropriate public and private nonprofit organizations to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. The law requires that individuals with the most significant disabilities receive the highest priority for services when a state cannot serve all eligible individuals and has to create a priority system.

The Administration proposed eliminating the supported employment state grants program with the expectation that states would continue to provide supported employment services with Title 1 funding. However, there is not a plan or provision in place to ensure that states continue to provide supported employment services to individuals who require those services.

The Department acknowledges in the budget justification that its data collection and monitoring process are not adequate to measure the impact of eliminating the supported employment state grant. In fact, in FY 2009 it began a study to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how State VR agencies provide SE services for their consumers, including how the supported employment state grant is used in conjunction with VR Title I funds. This information is needed to create a baseline understanding of what each state is spending on supported employment services and what outcomes they are achieving. This information must be known in order to hold states accountable for maintaining services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The Department estimates that in FY 2009 15,700 individuals will be employed in integrated settings and receiving ongoing support services. CCD believes that far more people should receive supported employment services and urges Congress to expand these programs.

Furthermore, the supported employment state grant does not require a state match. Many states are experiencing difficult fiscal realities and are proposing cuts to human needs spending. CCD is concerned that states will not be able to meet higher state match levels that would be needed if the proposed consolidation is approved.

Therefore, we recommend that a separate line item remain for Title VI-B Supported Employment State Grants program and that it be funded at \$50 million. As America works to enhance job creation and sustainability, we believe that maintaining SE services funding is critical in helping ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities become integral employees in America's workforce.

Supported Employment Extended Services for Youth Grant program--CCD recommends \$25 million.

As proposed by President Obama, this new competitive grant program would expand supported employment opportunities for youth with disabilities as they transition from school to the workforce. Many youth with developmental disabilities will need job

coaching, job skill training, follow up services and supports over an extended period of time to find and maintain jobs in the community. When these types of services are provided on an ongoing basis they are known as extended services. The proposed competitive grants would be made to states who identify their local needs and demonstrate how they will collaborate with other public and nonprofit agencies to increase access to extended supports.

Supported employment opportunities are limited by the availability of extended services. For the most part, funds to support extended services come from state and local developmental disability and mental health agencies, other state agencies and from Medicaid. Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program funds can only be used for providing supported employment to a very limited and clearly defined group of individuals who meet eligibility requirements imposed by Medicaid policies. Far too often the lack of extended services causes youth to be put on waiting lists for services or diverted to non-work or segregated work options. By expanding the extended services funding more youth with significant disabilities will find employment in the community.

In-Service Training--

The In-Service Training Program is housed in Title III of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and is designed to support projects for training State vocational rehabilitation unit personnel in program areas essential to the effective management of vocational rehabilitation services or in skill areas that will enable staff personnel to improve their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) was among the legislative hallmarks of the 1992 Rehabilitation Act Amendments. The CSPD provisions require State VR Agencies and their community partners to employ qualified personnel and to upgrade current staff. At that time and today, it is recognized that hiring and retaining qualified personnel is the pathway to quality rehabilitation services and outcomes.

The Consortium of Citizens With Disabilities (CCD) does not support the consolidation of this important program in to Title I of the Rehabilitation Act since proper, ongoing training of rehabilitation professionals is critical, together with the individual's self-determination, to securing, retaining, or regaining quality employment for eligible individuals with disabilities.

With millions of individuals with disabilities needing individualized services and supports, coupled with thousands of our wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with serious, significant injuries, it is critical that the training of rehabilitation personnel be the best that this country has to offer for all individuals with disabilities who are eligible for the VR Program.

We respectfully request that In-Service Training remain in Title III of the Rehabilitation Act and not be consolidated in to Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Workforce Innovation Fund—CCD recommends \$25 million

In 1998 Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) with the intention of having the broader workforce system available for people with disabilities and other individuals facing exceptional challenges to employment. Unfortunately, the promise of WIA has in many instances not yet been fulfilled.

We applaud the Administration for including in their FY 2011 budget \$30 million for the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration and \$30 million for the Department of Labor for a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) to "encourage innovation and identify and validate effective strategies for improving the delivery of services and outcomes for beneficiaries under programs authorized by the Workforce Investment Act."

Under the WIF, public and private agencies and organizations would be eligible to compete for multi-year grants or contracts to help build evidence of what works, enable the replication of the most effective approaches to service delivery, and promote more coordinated service delivery across programs. Eligible applicants under this Fund would include State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, other providers of VR services, and other workforce-related agencies, community-based organizations such as centers for independent living, institutions of higher education, research organizations, and other public and private entities.

This funding would encourage collaboration between RSA, NIDRR, the Department of Labor, and other programs in the WIA system to improve services in the following areas:

Achieving and retaining high quality employment outcomes for populations with particularly high rates of unemployment, such as individuals with psychiatric disabilities, migrants, and American Indians with disabilities.

- Effectively serving individuals with disabilities through One-Stop centers, particularly those who may not be eligible for or able to receive services provided by State VR agencies.
- Preparing youth with significant disabilities for employment and independent living by providing opportunities for career exploration and work experience.
- Preparing individuals with significant disabilities for employment in high demand occupations through partnerships among State VR agencies, community colleges, and employers.
- Engaging public, private, and nonprofit sector employers in creating full-time career opportunities with benefits for individuals with significant disabilities.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

CCD recommends --\$210 million

Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization

From 2004 – 2008, Centers for Independent Living:

- Moved 11,451 people out of nursing facilities and institutions, saving state and federal governments over \$200 million;
- Provided the core services of advocacy, information and referral, peer support, and independent living skills training to over 3 million individuals with disabilities; and
- Attracted over \$618 million through private, state, local and other sources annually.
- CILs provided other services to over 659,000 people with disabilities, including assistance with housing and transportation, personal assistants, employment, and technology.

The average Center receives only \$218,000 per year in Federal funds, and provides direct services to over 7,600 and systemic advocacy for over 138,000 people with disabilities. Centers need Title VII Part C funding increased by \$100 million.

America is home to:

- 391 Centers for Independent Living
- 330 branch offices
- 56 Statewide Independent Living Councils

Additional Recommendations:

- *Funding Formula Change*: All new Part C dollars to be shared among all states and territories. 50% of all new funds should be distributed based on population, and the remaining 50% of new funds should be distributed evenly to all states and territories. States with the largest populations would receive more funding proportionally.
- *Carryover*: CILs should be allowed to carry over unspent Part C funds into a second year, despite the fact that CILs are “forward funded”.

DOL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

CCD recommends--- \$404 million

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides veterans and transitioning service members with the resources and services to succeed in the civilian workforce by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights and meeting labor market demands with qualified veterans. In addition, VETS administers and enforces the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA).

VETS helps veterans obtain positive employment outcomes through services provided at One-Stop Career Centers and other locations. State Grants are provided by formula to State Workforce Agencies (SWA) to support approximately 2,100 Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and also for Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshops and services. To meet the anticipated increased demand for TAP Employment Workshops, and maximize efficiency and effectiveness, VETS will need to increase the number of contract staff who facilitate TAP Employment Workshops.

VETS protects the reemployment and employment rights of veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserve Forces under the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act [USERRA] so that they can serve on active duty without harm to their employment status. The National Veterans' Employment and Training Service Institute (NVTI) was established in 1986 and authorized in 1988 by P.L. 100-323. NVTI develops and delivers competency-based training to the State DVOP and LVER veteran service providers. The purpose of NVTI is to guarantee the universality of services for veterans by ensuring that all direct client service providers have been properly trained on their job, thereby, increasing their productivity and knowledge of services available to veterans.

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) provides grant funding for activities that carry out the mission of assisting homeless veterans to re-enter the labor force.

The Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) activity supports efforts to ensure veterans' lifelong learning and skills development, under Sec. 168, Workforce Investment Act in programs designed to serve current eligible and targeted veteran subgroups with severe employability barriers. VWIP is a program year, competitive grant program where funds are awarded to veterans and eligible persons with emphasis on Special Disabled veterans, and veterans with other barriers to employment.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Model Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education –CCD recommends \$11 million

Students with intellectual disabilities have made significant progress under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). On August 14, 2008, however, a void was filled when The Higher Education Opportunity Act was signed into law. Students with disabilities now have the opportunity to improve their work outcomes through specialized training and increased access to educational opportunities.

A growing number of two and four-year colleges and universities are now including students with intellectual disabilities in educational, independent living and vocational programs. Students in comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs receive a variety of supports and are often provided opportunities to participate in regular college classes with support from peer mentors or instructional staff. They also may audit or otherwise participate in regular courses, participate in internships and other vocational opportunities, or enroll in courses specially designed for students with intellectual disabilities.

The President's budget provides \$11 million for Model Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education. This program, new since the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act last year, awards competitive grants to institutions of higher education or consortia of such institutions to create or expand high quality, inclusive model comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AgrAbility- CCD recommends \$6 million

increases the likelihood that individuals with disabilities and their families engaged in production agriculture (AgrAbility customers) become more successful. The primary outcome is enhanced quality of life for people with disabilities in agriculture. The program supports cooperative projects in which State Cooperative Extension Services (CES) based at either 1862 or 1890 Land-Grant Universities subcontract to private, non-profit disability organizations. Measures of success may include improvements in customers' financial stability or access to life activities and the capacity of states and regions to deliver services this population requires in a timely and satisfying manner. To address the specialized needs of AgrAbility's customers, the program builds service capacity on national, regional, state, and local levels through education and networking. In the absence of capacity, projects provide assistance to customers. Projects use marketing to direct the public to initiatives in education, networking, and assistance.