

Rehabilitation Services

Total: \$540 million

Total Wyoming: \$2,046,083

- *Vocational Rehabilitation Services: \$1,800,000*
- *Independent Living Centers: \$242,913*
- *Services for Older Individuals who are Blind: \$3,170*

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Purpose and Principles: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriates significant new funding for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The VR State Grants program provides grants to states to help individuals with disabilities, especially those individuals with the most significant disabilities, prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.

Grant Expenditure Period: The U.S. Department of Education awarded 50 percent of the VR funds on April 1, 2009. The remaining funds will be awarded by September 30, 2009. These funds are allocated to state VR agencies under the program's allotment formula and are in addition to the funds received under the regular FY 2009 appropriations for the VR State Grant program. Together, these awards will constitute a state's total FY 2009 allocation for the VR State Grant program. In accordance with the ARRA, VR funds should be obligated expeditiously. State All VR funds must be obligated by September 30, 2011.

Use of Funds: All Recovery Act VR funds must be used consistently with the statutory and regulatory requirements for the VR State Grants program, as well as applicable requirements in the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

Recovery Act VR funds constitute a large one-time increment in VR state grant funding that offers state VR agencies a unique opportunity to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. Generally, funds should be used for short-term investments that have the potential for long-term benefits, rather than for commitments that the State may not be able to sustain once ARRA funds are expended. State VR agencies are encouraged to consider serving individuals on waiting lists in agencies currently using an order of selection; increasing services to eligible consumers; and expanding services to traditionally underserved and unserved populations in the state, including students with disabilities transitioning from school to the workplace.

States are also encouraged to use funds in innovative ways for significant system improvement. Examples of possible uses include:

- Obtaining or improving effective case management systems that provide the agency with enhanced program management and evaluation capabilities.
- Providing training to VR counselors and other persons who provide VR services that will enhance the utilization of rehabilitation technology by VR program participants and improve employment outcomes.

- Providing intensive training to VR counselors and other persons who provide VR services on effective and innovative evidence-based VR practices to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.
- Providing intensive training to agency staff to improve the capability of the agency to analyze and use data to improve VR services and employment outcomes.

Independent Living Programs

Purpose and Principles: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriates significant new funding for the Independent Living (IL) programs authorized under Title VII, Chapter 1, Part B and Part C, and Chapter 2 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act). The IL programs support services to individuals with significant disabilities and older individuals who are blind to maximize their leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity, and to promote the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

Grant Expenditure Period: The Department awarded the ARRA funds available under the State IL Grants and OIB programs on April 1, 2009. These awards are in addition to the regular FY 2009 awards for these programs, and together, these awards will constitute a state's total FY 2009 allocation for the State IL Grants and OIB programs.

In accordance with the goals of the ARRA, the funds for the State IL Grants and OIB programs must be obligated expeditiously and with appropriate accountability. The ARRA funds received by the State IL Grants and OIB programs will remain available for obligation by grantees until September 30, 2011, which includes one year of carry over in accordance with section 19 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Use of Funds: All ARRA funds for State IL Grants and OIB programs under the Rehabilitation Act must be used consistently with the current statutory and regulatory requirements for those programs, as well as applicable requirements in the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) and EDGAR.

Grantees under the State IL Grants and OIB programs should consider how they can use the additional funds to improve and expand IL services; serve additional consumers, especially populations that are unserved or underserved in the state; increase the capacity of IL service providers to provide IL services; and maximize employment opportunities and economic benefits to individuals with significant disabilities consistent with the goals and objectives established by individual consumers.

The ARRA State IL Grants and OIB funds constitute a large one-time increase that offers a unique opportunity to improve IL outcomes. Generally, funds should be used for short-term investments with the potential for long-term benefits, rather than for commitments that the State may not be able to sustain once ARRA funds are expended. Some examples of possible uses include:

- Designing or identifying and providing services that may be extended at low cost beyond 2012 to additional individuals who wish to transition from nursing homes to their communities;

- Creating more efficient and effective ways of increasing IL services to students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment and independent living;
- Building long-term capacity by improving the technological core of the program, including, but not limited to, purchasing equipment, improving connections, and obtaining software in order to better serve consumers;
- Training current staff in effective ways of providing assistive technology to consumers;
- Expanding information and referral and advocacy services to address the needs of consumers who were laid off and may need assistance replacing services or assistive technology previously provided through an employer; and
- Providing professional development opportunities that have both short-term and long-term benefits to service provider staff.