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## BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2025

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2024



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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

## Vocational Rehabilitation

### Purpose and History

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) assists individuals with disabilities to achieve employment and live independently. IVRS is responsible for providing services leading to employment for eligible Iowans with disabilities in accordance with Iowa Code chapter [259](#), the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended and codified in [29 U.S.C. §701](#) et seq.), the federal Social Security Act ([42 U.S.C. §301](#) et seq.), and corresponding federal regulations.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, [SF 514](#) (State Government Alignment Act) transferred IVRS to the Iowa Department of Workforce Development (IWD). Prior to FY 2024, IVRS was a division of the Department of Education.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services serves individuals with disabilities under Title II and Title XVI of the federal [Social Security Act](#) and Title IV of the federal [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) by doing the following:

- Providing vocationally related assistance to help persons with disabilities achieve economic independence.
- Providing disability determinations that result in appropriate financial benefits per Social Security Administration guidelines.

Other services and financial assistance are provided to enable persons with disabilities to continue to function independently as long as possible within their communities and to prevent institutionalization.

Employees of IVRS work within the following three bureaus and a Planning and Development Team:

- **Disability Determination Services Bureau.** This bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for disability benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance (Title II), Supplemental Security Income (Title XVI), or Department of Health and Human Services Medicaid Waiver programs.
- **Rehabilitation Services Bureau.** This bureau assists eligible individuals with disabilities to become employed. Persons who receive vocational rehabilitation services have a wide range of disabilities.
- **Administrative Services Bureau.** This bureau provides support to the other elements of IVRS through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting, payroll, statistical records, reporting, closed case file control, personnel management, collective bargaining administration, purchasing and property control, information systems, and the physical plant management of the Jessie Parker Building.
- **Planning and Development Team.** This team is responsible for planning, legal services program evaluation, and outreach. This includes development of business contacts to foster client employment. Services also include oversight of the Iowa Independent Living Centers and Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as some direct service provision to Iowans with independent living needs.

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### More Information

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation: [ivrs.iowa.gov](https://ivrs.iowa.gov)

LSA Staff Contact: Evan Johnson (515.281.6301) [evan.johnson@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:evan.johnson@legis.iowa.gov)

The Office of the Administrator is responsible for the overall administration of the statewide programs. The administrator determines program scope and policies; promotes public interest and acceptance; directs budget funds; develops program plans; and provides for staff development, research, and evaluation. Under the umbrella of the administrator are two community advisory groups: the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Group.

**Waiting List**

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services often does not have the capacity to serve all individuals with its current State and federal funding and, as a result, maintains waiting lists. Counselors determine an individual's eligibility according to federal guidelines, and then depending upon the significance of the individual's disability, the individual may be placed on one of three waiting lists:

- **Most Significantly Disabled (MSD)** — The individual has a significant disability and is seriously limited in three or more functional areas (mobility, communications, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, and work skills).
- **Significantly Disabled (SD)** — The individual has a physical or mental disability that seriously limits the person in one or two of the MSD-listed functional areas.
- **Others Eligible** — The individual is eligible for services; however, the person does not meet the criteria for either MSD or SD.

As funds become available, individuals on the waiting lists are served according to the severity of disability. Individuals on the MSD waiting list are served first. All individuals on the MSD waiting list must be served before individuals on the SD waiting list. Others Eligible are served only when all those from the SD waiting list have been served.

**Funding**

The Vocational Rehabilitation General Fund appropriation is used for the general operation of IVRS. The General Fund appropriation matches federal funds, and for every \$1 in State funding, IVRS receives \$3.69 in federal funds (21.3% State to 78.8% federal). The federal grant is subject to a maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement that requires the State to spend an amount equal to or greater than the amount spent the second previous year. If the State does not meet the MOE requirement, the federal grant is reduced by the amount of the shortfall.

**Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code chapter 84G

Iowa Administrative Code [877—33](#)

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