
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2020

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Vocational Rehabilitation

Overview

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) assists individuals with disabilities to achieve employment and live independently. IVRS is the largest division within the Department of Education. 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. section 701](#) et seq.), the federal Social Security Act ([42 U.S.C. section 301](#) et seq.), and corresponding federal regulations.

IVRS 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](#). IVRS serves individuals with disabilities by:

- 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 maintain independent functioning 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 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 the Division through the functions of fiscal accounting, budgeting, and payroll; statistical records, reporting, and closed case file control; personnel management and 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

More Information

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services: www.ivrs.iowa.gov/index.html
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Independent Living Council, as well as some direct service provision to lowans with independent living needs.

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

IVRS often does not have the capacity to serve all individuals with its current State and federal funding and, as a result, maintains waiting lists. The IVRS 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, or 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 Most Significantly Disabled waiting list are served first. All individuals on the MSD waiting list must be served before individuals on the Significantly Disabled waiting list. Others Eligible are served only when all persons from the SD waiting list have been served.

Funding

The Vocational Rehabilitation General Fund appropriation is used for the general operations 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 78.7% 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. For example, the MOE State funding level for FFY 2021 must equal or exceed the level of State funding match reported for FFY 2019. If the State does not meet the MOE requirement, the federal grant is reduced by the amount of the shortfall.

The annual appropriation for Vocational Rehabilitation has been between \$5.6 million and \$5.9 million since FY 2015.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [259](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [281—56](#)

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