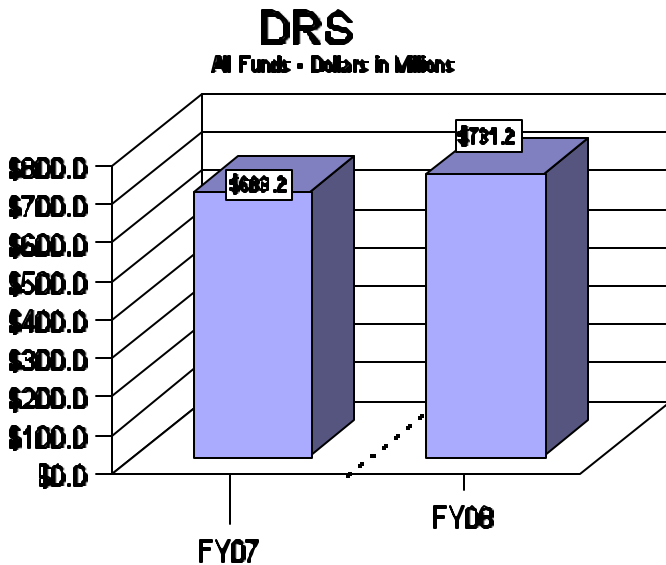


DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities, impacting the lives of more than 240,000 individuals with disabilities in Illinois. The Division administers an array of disability-related programs and services to assist individuals with disabilities and their families



in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities. Illinois continues to be recognized as a national leader in Vocational Rehabilitation with 27,619 DRS customers entering competitive employment in the past four years. Furthermore, DRS' federally-funded Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program provides benefits planning services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who receive Social Security benefits and want to work, enabling them to anticipate and plan for changes that may occur in their benefits when they obtain employment. The Home Services Program (HSP) is the largest single General Revenue Funded program in DRS. The program promotes independence

by offering an individualized, family centered approach for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are at risk of institutionalization. In addition to preventing institutionalization, the program provides services through Community Reintegration. DRS partners with staff from Centers for Independent Living to help people with disabilities transition from nursing homes into the community. Since the inception of this innovative program, more than 1,000 individuals with disabilities have moved from nursing homes back into the community.

Home Services Program

The DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services administers the Home Services Program (HSP), a Medicaid waiver program, which offers individuals with disabilities who are at risk of premature or unnecessary institutionalization, the alternative of in-home care when the cost of home care does not exceed the cost of a health care facility. The HSP provides the following major services: (1) Personal Assistants (PA), who are selected, employed and supervised by the individual and who help with household tasks and personal care; (2) Homemaker Services that offer personal care by trained and professionally supervised personnel for customers unable to direct a PA; and (3) Home Health Services such as nursing care and physical therapy prescribed by a physician and typically provided by a private home health agency. Other services provided include: home delivered meals, adult day care, assistive equipment, home remodeling, electronic home response, respite and diagnostic services, and case management.

Children's Residential And Educational Services

The Department provides residential and educational services to children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 at three state-operated schools, one in Chicago and two in Jacksonville.

The Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education (ICRE-R) in Chicago provides educational and related programs in a residential setting for approximately 41 students age 5 to 21 who: (1) have severe physical disabilities and associated chronic health conditions; and (2) through the application and evaluation process are determined to be able to benefit from very specialized programming. Most of the students are also enrolled in special education programs in Chicago schools near the facility. Other services include: occupational, physical and activity therapies; vocational evaluation and training; job and life coaching; 24-hour nursing; medical services; social work services; psychological evaluations; and recreational therapies.

The Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI) in Jacksonville provides a comprehensive educational program with emphasis on the development of independence and pre-vocational skills for approximately 96 students ages 3 to 21 for whom (1) a severe visual impairment is identified; (2) the local district recommends ISVI because the district believes the student would be better served or parents directly request admission; and (3) ISVI can provide an appropriate program to serve the student. ISVI also provides early intervention services for children from birth to three years and has a transitional living center through which older students are receiving hands-on independent living skill training as well as orientation and mobility training.

The Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD), also in Jacksonville, provides elementary and secondary educational programs to approximately 244 students ages 3 to 21 for whom: (1) a severe hearing impairment is identified; (2) the local school district recommends ISD as the most appropriate and least restrictive option or parents directly request admission; and (3) ISD can provide an appropriate program to serve the student. Programs emphasize total communication and include academic and vocational training programs, social and health services, and recreational activities. ISD also provides early intervention services for children from birth to three years and assessments and evaluations for adults through its evaluation center.

Centers for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) are non-residential, consumer-controlled, community-based, not-for-profit organizations that provide systems advocacy to create options and choices for independent living. CIL's provide services to individuals to help them in increasing skills and abilities for independent living and provide public awareness. Core services provided by all CIL's include advocacy, peer counseling, skills training, information and referral.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services - General/ Blind

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) employs Rehabilitation Counselors, Coordinators and other rehabilitation professionals in 51 local offices throughout the state to provide direct services to VR customers. Counselors determine eligibility, work closely with customers to establish suitable vocational goals and develop Individualized Plans for Employment to carry out the appropriate array of services. An

individual is eligible for the VR program if he or she has a physical or mental disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment, and needs vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment. Services include: training; medical services; physical and/or mental restoration; assistive technology devices and services; counseling and guidance; evaluation and diagnostics; basic adaptive skills; placement; follow-up and post employment services.

DHS DRS has a special focus on services to customers who have visual impairments. Besides the services described above, the VR Blind program offers adaptive skills for blind and visually impaired persons, mobility instruction, and Braille with an emphasis on Older Blind individuals. Approximately 2,700 individuals receive services each year. In addition, the Small Business Enterprise Program, also known as the Vending Facility Program, provides training to prepare individuals with the skills needed to manage a small business. Blind individuals who have passed a seven-month training program provided by VR Blind staff are served by this program. The Small Business Enterprise program carries out the federal Randolph/Shepard Act and is a component of the federal VR program allotment. It is anticipated that the number of primary vending facilities will be 105 with over 330 satellites.

A re-appropriation of the Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds is required to liquidate prior year obligations beyond the lapse period deadline for payment. Case Services to Individuals obligates a large dollar amount of hospital, surgical and other medical services in which partial payment can be realized through claims processed by insurance companies. Federal regulations mandate the use of all available similar benefits of the customer prior to paying for services from Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Other factors requiring the re-appropriation of Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds are: the federal and state fiscal years overlap; and VR funds have multi-year obligation and liquidation authority that allows multiple federal fiscal years to be simultaneously operational. DRS obligates the federal funds throughout the year when they become available, which means that ongoing services obligated at the end of the state fiscal year will not be completed in time to meet the lapse period deadline for payment.

A growing program within the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is the **Supported Employment Program**, which provides competitive work in an integrated work setting for individuals with severe disabilities who: 1) have not worked, or have worked intermittently in competitive employment; 2) have been determined by a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to have a reasonable expectation of achieving employment with services; 3) need ongoing support services; and 4) can work in a supported employment setting. Federal funds provide intensive training for the first 18 months to achieve stability and then General Revenue funds provide extended support services if and as needed. Approximately 2,600 individuals receive the short-term federally funded services each year while over 150 individuals are served by the State-funded long-term program.

Another major VR-related program is the **Client Assistance Program (CAP)** which is federally mandated to serve any individuals with disabilities who want, or who are receiving, services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. CAP works autonomously so that it can work most effectively to resolve differences between customers seeking services and the staff administering the programs. More than 3,000 customers are assisted by CAP each year.

Community & Residential Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CRSBVI)

This program provides services to newly blinded adults to enhance their ability to live independently and reduce their risk of need for long term care. Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Instructors teach independent living skills to customers in their own homes. Blind individuals who are not eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services are served by this program. In addition to offering counseling and support groups, the program provides training in: activities of daily living (cooking, caring for household and clothing, managing financial affairs, shopping, etc.); orientation and mobility; technology access including computer access; Braille; and communication skills.

A short-term residential training program for individuals with visual impairments is also available at the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Wood. The services provided at ICRE-Wood are similar to those provided to individuals in the community. However, most customers served by this facility are newly blinded and the intensive training and concentrated residential experience enables them to return to the community with the necessary skills to live independently. The training costs associated with ICRE-Wood are included in the CRSBVI budget. Approximately 270 individuals are served by this program annually.

Disability Determination Services

The Bureau of Disability Determination Services (BDDS) determines the eligibility of applicants for benefits under the Social Security Administration's (SSA) two disability programs: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) under Title II of the Social Security Act, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. Title II (SSDI) provides for payment of disability benefits to individuals who are "insured" under the Act by virtue of their contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund. Title XVI (SSI) provides for payments to individuals who are disabled and have limited income and resources.

BDDS is responsible for developing medical evidence and rendering eligibility determinations about whether an applicant is considered disabled or blind under the law. It also screens claimants for eligibility for vocational rehabilitation and refers them to VR, if appropriate. Approximately 150,000 eligibility determinations for SSDI and SSI benefits are projected to be completed in FY08.

The SSI Advocacy Program provides management of the Client Assessment Unit which annually provides over 70,000 medical determinations of employability for Transitional Assistance and Medicaid based on a disability. SSI Advocacy also provides services to individuals applying for Supplemental Security Income to assist them in obtaining federal benefits. DRS has contracted with Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago (LAF-C) to provide this service in Chicago.

FY08 Highlight

- ***The Home Services Program funding increased \$42.3 million to support estimated program liability. These funds will support the annualized cost of new clients to the program in FY07 and the cost for new customers entering the program in FY08. The***

Personal Assistants are also receiving a \$1.00 per hour wage increase effective August 1, 2007.

- *Funding for the Centers for Independent Living increased \$2 million to support formula funding. The budget request also includes funding to support a 3% COLA for these centers.*
- *The proposed budget reflects a 3% COLA for the Lekotek Play Libraries.*
- *In cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education, DHS will be procuring new replacement textbooks for students at the Illinois School for Visually Impaired and the Illinois School for the Deaf.*