

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services

State Estimate of the Number of Individuals in the State Who are Eligible Under this Plan

The University of Connecticut Health Center 2002 study indicates Connecticut had 326,913 individuals with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64 and an additional 27,181 individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20. Based on the 2000 census, 63% of the 21 - 64 age group is currently employed. The remaining 120,630 individuals of working age with disabilities are unemployed. All 120,630 of these individuals may be eligible for services under this State plan, as well as an unknown number of the 63.1% referred to above who might be under employed due to their disabling condition.

In the 1998 Harris poll data of working-age people with disabilities that are unemployed, only four percent are actively seeking work and another seven percent are students or are in vocational rehabilitation. Therefore, 13,269 individuals (11% of the 120,630 unemployed persons with disabilities) would be looking for or preparing for work, are students, or are in vocational rehabilitation. However, this approach does not count individuals who do not believe that employment is a viable option, especially those with the most significant disabilities. It also does not consider those persons with disabilities who are already employed, but may require services to attain employment consistent with his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

These points make it difficult, if not impossible, to accurately estimate the number of potentially eligible consumers of VR services. That number is many times more than BRS has historically served or has the resources to serve.

State Estimate of the Number of Individuals to be Served Under this Plan

For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006, the bureau projects that it will complete the year having served 5,103 eligible consumers in Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs). This is an 11.2% increase from FFY 2005, when 4,529 individuals received services under an IPE. BRS attributes this increase to a re-staffing and training plan that occurred in response to the Early Retirement Incentive Plan offered by our Governor in late FFY 2003. The bureau had several vacant positions well into FFY 2004 due to delays in receiving authority from the State to refill positions that were left empty in 2003. Our re-staffing and training plan was subsequently delayed and newly hired staff did not begin to become fully productive until various stages in FFY 2005. With the bureau's new staff now in place (gaining more experience) and working along with seasoned staff, the percentage increase in consumers served under IPEs will continue to move upward at a rate of approximately 5% and reach a total of 5,350 in FFY 2007.

During FFY 2005, the bureau provided services to eligible individuals almost exclusively with funds under part B of Title I of the Act. Only \$5,718 in funds under Title VI Part B of the Act was spent to serve 11 consumers during the FFY 2005. The limited service provision under

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these funds is directly attributable to the bureau's effort to primarily spend state match dollars in order to meet the maintenance of effort requirement under the law.

Currently, the bureau has returned to using funds under Title VI part B and has provided services to 30 individuals who are eligible for this funding in the amount of \$44,500. As of March 23, 2006, 162 (or 3.4%) of the 4,753 currently eligible consumers meet the requirements of Title IV funds and are potentially eligible for this funding. Given that only 18.5% of these 162 individuals have received purchased services under Title VI part B funds, it has become apparent that additional efforts are needed in directing bureau staff in the proper use of these funds and that training on the use of these funds is in order. As this training occurs, a significant increase in spending under Title VI part B can be expected for consumers eligible for this funding who are currently being served with funds from Title I part B.

Of the 5,350 individuals projected to receive services in FFY 2007, BRS anticipates that 182 will potentially be funded under part B of Title VI.

The bureau has been operating in an order of selection for several years now, serving only all priority I (most significant) and priority II (significant) consumers. Historically, approximately 60% of eligible individuals served meet the criteria for most significantly disabled, with the remaining 40% meeting that of significantly disabled. Based on these percentages, the bureau projects the following for FFY07:

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| Most Significant | 3,210 |
| Significant | 2,140 |
| Non-Significant | <u>0</u> |
| Total | 5,350 |

Costs of Services

Projected Title I purchased services costs for Priority I and Priority II consumers will total approximately \$9.5 million. This amount is higher than the FFY 2006 projected spending of \$9 million as the bureau continues to restore its staffing capacity to previous levels. This amount remains significantly lower than FFY 2003 when \$10.7 million was spent. This significant reduction reflects a continued effort by BRS to contain purchased services spending in light of reductions in State resources for the VR program and spiraling purchased services and personnel costs.