

State of Alaska FY2009 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Labor and Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary

Vocational Rehabilitation Results Delivery Unit

Contribution to Department's Mission

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation contributes to the department's mission by assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Core Services

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a combined federal/state program under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. The division works to assist in accomplishing the individualized employment goals of each person with a disability. A full array of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, support and assistance in employment, assistive technology, and referrals are offered.

In partnership with other state agencies, private sector businesses, vendors, and non-profit organizations, individuals are assisted in obtaining and maintaining employment.

The division adjudicates claims on behalf of the Social Security Administration for Title II and Title XVI applicants for disability benefits and provides referrals for services. In addition, the division is the agency responsible for executive branch compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Administrative Order #129.

End Result	Strategies to Achieve End Result
<p>A: Alaskans with disabilities enter employment and become more economically self-sufficient.</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> Equal prior year's number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program. <u>Measure #1:</u> Number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> The average wage of employed individuals exiting the program is 65% of the State's average wage. <u>Measure #2:</u> Percentage of the average wage of individuals exiting the program employed as compared to the federally reported average state wage.</p>	<p>A1: Improve timeliness of service delivery.</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> 85% of eligibility determinations made within 60 days. <u>Measure #1:</u> Percent of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.</p> <p><u>Target #2:</u> 70% of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) developed within 100 days. <u>Measure #2:</u> Percent of IPEs developed within 100 days.</p> <p>A2: Exceed the federal standard for successfully completed Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs).</p> <p><u>Target #1:</u> 56% or more of IPEs are successfully completed with individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program employed. <u>Measure #1:</u> Percent of successfully completed plans.</p>

Major Activities to Advance Strategies

- Improve customer service through integrated services at Job Centers to increase employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities
- Educate employers, partners and customers to assist people with disabilities to achieve their career goals.
- Develop partnerships with employers for assessment sites.
- Build partnerships with Centers for Independent Living.

FY2009 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2009 Results Delivery Unit Budget: \$24,211,700

Personnel:

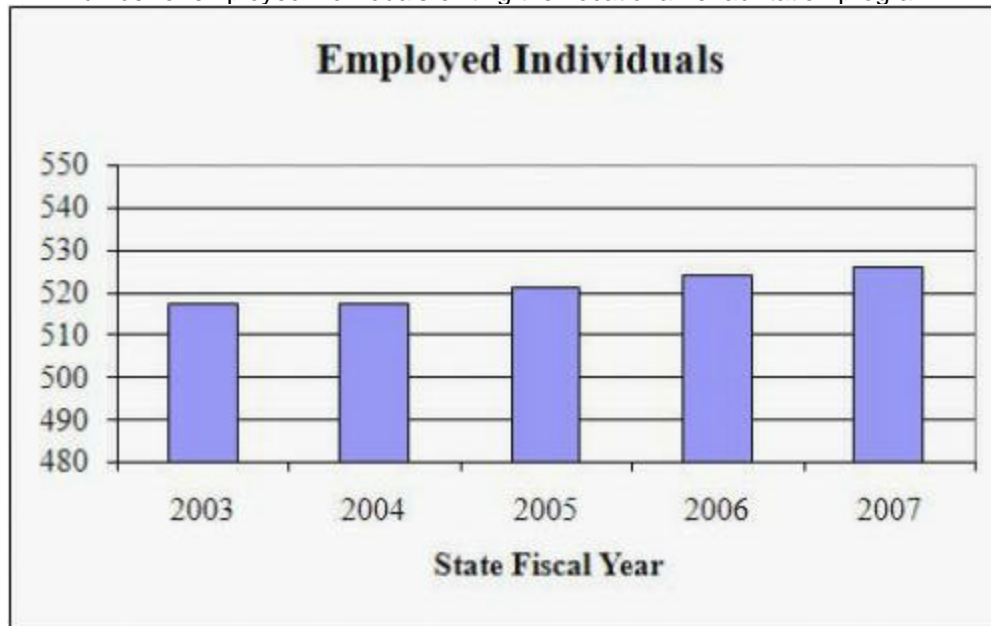
Full time	127
Part time	0
Total	127

Performance Measure Detail

A: Result - Alaskans with disabilities enter employment and become more economically self-sufficient.

Target #1: Equal prior year's number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.

Measure #1: Number of employed individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program.



Employed Individuals

Fiscal Year	YTD
FY 2003	517
FY 2004	517
FY 2005	521
FY 2006	524
FY 2007	526

Analysis of results and challenges: An individual must be working for a minimum of 90 days in order to be counted as employed. The number of individuals employed has increased annually even though the number of applicants entering the program has slightly declined. In FY2006 the division served 3,960 individuals and in FY2007 3,897 were served.

The decline of applicants is probably attributed to the strong Alaskan labor market and economy. During the past year, the Division has made a concerted effort to outreach to potential referral sources to insure people with disabilities know about and can apply for vocational rehabilitation services.

Both staff and financial resources affect the number of individuals the division is able to assist. With level funding and the difficulty of recruiting qualified staff to replace our retiring experienced counselors, maintaining the current level of production will continue to challenge the division.

Target #2: The average wage of employed individuals exiting the program is 65% of the State's average wage.

Measure #2: Percentage of the average wage of individuals exiting the program employed as compared to the federally reported average state wage.

VR Consumer Wages as a Percent of State Wages

Fiscal Year	YTD	Target
FY 2003	70%	65%
FY 2004	66%	65%
FY 2005	67%	65%
FY 2006	67%	65%
FY 2007	68%	65%

Analysis of results and challenges: The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works with individuals with disabilities to help them overcome their impediments to employment, to find good jobs with wages and career opportunities that allow them to become self-sufficient.

The federal standard is that the average wages of those exiting the vocational rehabilitation program employed should equal 52% of the state's average wages. The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation believes we should do better than this national goal and have set our target at 65%.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the current average wage in Alaska is \$19.33. The current average wage for vocational rehabilitation consumers exiting the program employed is \$12.98 which is well above the State's minimum wage of \$7.15.

A1: Strategy - Improve timeliness of service delivery.

Target #1: 85% of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.

Measure #1: Percent of eligibility determinations made within 60 days.

Percent of Eligibility Determinations made within 60 Days

Fiscal Year	YTD
FY 2003	80%
FY 2004	76%
FY 2005	84%
FY 2006	82%
FY 2007	92%

Analysis of results and challenges: Making an eligibility decision within 60 days from application is good customer service, good rehabilitation and is based on federal regulation. An individual is also less likely to leave the program if there is action on their case. The division's goal of 85% exceeds the Federal goal of 75%.

For the first time the division has met and surpassed the 85% target with 92% of those made eligible were done so within 60 days. This is due to training of our field staff and continued reinforcement of the importance of this measure.

Federal regulations do allow for eligibility extensions when there are circumstances beyond our control and the individual agrees to an extension. When these extensions are included, the percentage increases to 98%. Extensions indicate the vocational rehabilitation counselor is actively involved in the case and work is being done to make an eligibility decision.

Even with this success, the division will continue to positively reinforce the importance of timely service with staff.

Target #2: 70% of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) developed within 100 days.

Measure #2: Percent of IPEs developed within 100 days.

Percent of IPEs Developed within 100 Days

Fiscal Year	YTD
FY 2003	68%
FY 2004	63%
FY 2005	63%
FY 2006	56%
FY 2007	63%

Analysis of results and challenges: This is a stretch target for the division and is self imposed. The division believes timely plan development is good customer service and keeps the client active and involved with the vocational rehabilitation process.

Progress was made in FY2007 toward meeting the goal as there was an increase in 7% points from FY2006 to FY2007. The last half of FY2007 showed a further increase with 67% of the plans being implemented within 100 days. The increase is due to staff training and increased emphasis by the vocational rehabilitation managers.

The people we are serving have very complicated lives and the planning process often gets interrupted. Plan development is also the time in the vocational rehabilitation process when various assessments are done to determine the individual's interests and capabilities. These activities do not always go as planned due to missed appointments or other issues.

Analysis of the data indicates there is no one specific issue which causes plan development delays. Often, individuals are not ready to move forward with a plan, but do not want their cases closed. The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation would rather put the clients first and provide the additional time and support some individuals need rather than closing cases too soon. Even so, we do believe this goal speaks to good, timely customer service and will continue to work towards improvement.

A2: Strategy - Exceed the federal standard for successfully completed Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs).

Target #1: 56% or more of IPEs are successfully completed with individuals exiting the vocational rehabilitation program employed.

Measure #1: Percent of successfully completed plans.

Percent of Completed IPEs Resulting in Employment

Fiscal Year	YTD
FY 2003	58%
FY 2004	62%
FY 2005	62%
FY 2006	62%
FY 2007	60%

Analysis of results and challenges: An Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is considered successfully completed when an individual receives the necessary services as identified on the IPE to obtain employment and the employment is maintained for 90 days. The decrease in the percent from FY2006 to FY2007 is due to the considerable effort that was made this year to close older cases that were languishing.

This measure speaks to efficiency and effectiveness. IPEs are very comprehensive and time consuming to develop as they delineate the employment goal, the type of services required to reach said goal, the estimated

costs, who will provide the services and the length of time to complete the plan. Successful plans require the knowledge of certified vocational rehabilitation counselors, active client involvement, labor market research and evaluation of the client's abilities.

The division has elected to use the federal standard for this strategy as it helps to remind staff of the importance of good planning without giving undue emphasis to those plans that do not succeed. Too negative a focus on unsuccessful plans would discourage counselors from taking educated risks.

Key RDU Challenges

The unemployment rate of people with disabilities continues to be about 47% which is significantly higher than the general population. This unemployment rate is even higher in rural Alaska. The continuing challenge is to provide services to rural Alaska and develop employment opportunities.

Assist the department in implementing Worldwide Interactive Network for WorkKeys courses in Job Centers and train staff on the functionality of the software.

The division cannot meet all the resource needs of individuals with significant mental health disabilities necessary to become employed. The challenge the division is facing is to unite with partners in the State Divisions of Behavioral Health, Medicaid, Employment Security, Public Assistance and advocates at the state and local level to improve the coordination of funding and program staff to increase the employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities. The financial support to serve people with significant mental illness has as a current focus a medical model that supports independent living service and medical service with little emphasis on employment.

Ensure that people with disabilities are empowered to make meaningful and informed decisions consistent with the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

Currently vendor payment requests must be keyed into the division's Management Information System and then reentered into the State Accounting System for a payment to occur. This redundant entry is an inefficient use of staff and adds to the time between receipt of goods or services and payment to the vendor. To address this the division has requested a \$250.0 General Fund capital project to automate the transfer of information between systems.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2009

A requested \$39.5 General Fund increase in Independent Living (IL) funds will help fill critical gaps in IL services. Approximately 85 individuals will receive IL services with this increase in funding.

An increase of \$7.1 of General Funds requested for the Interpreter Referral (IR) program will be used with the \$25.0 increase from FY08 to further the establishment of an interpreter referral program on the Kenai Peninsula. Approximately 50 individuals will receive IR services in FY09 through the Kenai program.

The Division will increase outreach to employers to promote understanding of disability issues and the financial incentives to hire persons with disabilities.

Major RDU Accomplishments in 2007

526 individuals with significant physical and/or mental impairments that constituted barriers to employment were successfully placed in employment as a result of vocational rehabilitation services.

The division submitted all federal financial and program reports on time and met or exceeded all federal standards and indicators.

Progress toward expansion and sustainability of Customized Employment Grant (CEG) tools and strategies was achieved this year. Workforce partner agencies both within and outside our job-center system adopted CEG strategies as part of their regular practices. The consumers receiving Family Centered Services at the MatSu job-center received additional services since the CEG was adopted at that location. CEG staff conducted further training and technical assistance in Homer, Dillingham, Ketchikan and Sitka.

The Assistive Technology Library of Alaska (ATLA) has improved access to assistive technology with the Independent Living Centers around the state and continues to support their demonstration centers with technology and ongoing training. This includes increased collaboration with Arctic Access in the Nome and Kotzebue area to help local clinics acquire assistive technology devices that can be used by individuals with diabetes who are visually impaired and/or hearing impaired. ATLA has held numerous open houses for Hope Community Services staff and other non-profit organizations in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area so personnel could become more familiar with ATLA and how assistive technology equipment and services could enhance an individual's life.

The division served all eligible consumers without entering into an order of selection.

Contact Information
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**Vocational Rehabilitation
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2007 Actuals				FY2008 Management Plan				FY2009 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures												
None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures												
Voc Rehab Administration	3.2	1,260.8	36.0	1,300.0	3.9	1,407.8	52.9	1,464.6	3.9	1,445.7	52.9	1,502.5
Client Services Independent Living Rehabilatat	3,196.9	8,995.8	305.3	12,498.0	3,459.2	9,744.1	423.4	13,626.7	3,828.1	9,744.1	330.0	13,902.2
Disability Determination	823.8	559.4	0.0	1,383.2	848.8	770.8	0.0	1,619.6	888.3	770.8	0.0	1,659.1
Special Projects Assistive Technology	1.9	3,706.2	170.4	3,878.5	1.9	4,729.9	229.5	4,961.3	1.9	4,833.8	235.9	5,071.6
Americans With Disabilities	86.7	463.7	44.9	595.3	141.7	1,573.0	0.0	1,714.7	148.8	1,077.6	0.0	1,226.4
Totals	4,112.5	15,346.4	788.3	20,247.2	4,455.5	18,683.0	1,024.6	24,163.1	4,871.0	18,329.4	1,011.3	24,211.7

**Vocational Rehabilitation
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component
From FY2008 Management Plan to FY2009 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2008 Management Plan	4,455.5	18,683.0	1,024.6	24,163.1
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Voc Rehab Administration	0.0	37.9	0.0	37.9
-Client Services	368.9	0.0	0.0	368.9
-Disability Determination	0.0	103.9	6.4	110.3
-Special Projects	0.0	4.6	0.0	4.6
-Americans With Disabilities	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6
Proposed budget decreases:				
-Client Services	0.0	0.0	-93.4	-93.4
-Special Projects	0.0	-500.0	0.0	-500.0
Proposed budget increases:				
-Independent Living Rehabilitat	39.5	0.0	0.0	39.5
-Special Projects	7.1	0.0	0.0	7.1
-Assistive Technology	0.0	0.0	68.1	68.1
FY2009 Governor	4,871.0	18,329.4	1,011.3	24,211.7