B.   COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1.   Provide a numerical estimate of the potential respondent universe and describe any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., households or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular format for the universe as a whole and for each stratum. Indicate expected response rates. If this has been conducted previously include actual response rates achieved.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews will be conducted with a convenience sample of 100 veterans with severe injuries, including 50 individuals previously served through the Polytrauma Network Site program in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (1S128) at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center (HHMVAC) in Richmond, VA, and the other 50 individuals previously served by medical facilities that specialize in treating other severe disabilities. The sample for the veteran's interviews will be solicited through HHMVAMC inpatient and outpatient services and via VR&E's sampling of the CWINRS case management system which tracks veterans enrolled in the VR&E program.

Telephone interviewers will also be conducted with a convenience sample of 100 State and private sector employees of vocational rehabilitation programs at the state and local levels. These will be solicited via various professional organizations such as the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (CSAVR).

2.   Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including: Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose in the proposed justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Interviews with veterans with severe injuries will consist of a structured interview that assesses the employment, economic, and community adjustment of individuals after receipt of intense medical and rehabilitation services. In particular, the interviews will focus on:

- Personal demographics and health status – Including personal demographics, present health status, present level of functional independence, use of assistive technology, and health care utilization.

- Employment Status – Including number and types of jobs, earnings and benefits, type of employment, use of direct and indirect employment supports, use of public/private rehabilitation and employment service providers, and self-reported reasons for lack of employment.

- Benefits Status – Including type of benefit, health care coverage, access to financial supports, wealth and asset development, and use of work incentive provisions.

- Community Living / Participation Status – Including residential status, post-secondary education status, access to post-secondary education accommodations, social integration, and community mobility.

- Barriers to obtaining and keeping a job

3.   Describe methods used to maximize the response rate and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The following strategies will be employed to maximize response rate and minimize issues associated with non-response during the interview process.

1. Use of well-designed interview protocols and the promise of confidentiality. (See Attachments A and B)

2. Use of notification letters. (See Attachment C)

3. Providing a contact name and telephone number for inquiries.

Employing these strategies during the interview process will be crucial for maximizing high response rates across all respondent types. We fully expect to collect data from all 200 respondents in the two groups.

4.   Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions of 10 or more individuals.

A pretest of the interview protocol for veterans with severe injuries will be conducting with fewer than ten selected veterans with severe injuries from the VR&E program. We will consult with VR&E program personnel to help in identifying prospective interview subjects.

The purpose of the interview pretest will be to determine the appropriateness of the questions being asked and to identify issues or problems regarding the overall effectiveness of the interview protocols.

The pretest of the interview protocol for the representatives of successful vocational rehabilitation programs and veterans with severe injuries with seven volunteer veterans and give volunteer State personnel scheduled to be completed in early 2009.

5.   Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

- Dr. Lance Anderson, ICF International, 703-934-3674

- Dr. Ronald Szoc, ICF International, 703-934-3456

- Dr. Michael West, VCU, 804-828-5957