

APPENDIX B

DRAFT ADVANCE E-MAIL TO VR AGENCY DIRECTORS FROM RSA

<On RSA letterhead paper and sent separate from contractor's correspondence>

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), invites your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency to be part of a study of the delivery of services through the VR Grants Program. RSA oversees formula and discretionary grant programs that help individuals with disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently. The purpose of this study is to (1) determine the methods and practices used by State VR agencies in delivering services to individuals with disabilities, including optimal patterns of delivery in serving specific populations; (2) determine how, and to what extent, State VR agencies work with partner agencies or programs to deliver services; and (3) examine program outcomes and their associated costs, including identifying cost effective practices for serving specific target populations.

The information will be used for program evaluation and ongoing program improvement by RSA, including the development of training programs. The information might also contribute to legislative requirements and improvement of program processes and outcomes. RSA is working with an independent contractor, Westat, to conduct the survey of all 80 VR agencies. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) has been informed about this survey and has endorsed it.

All VR agencies are being asked to complete a web survey to gather information about service delivery, interagency collaboration, and costs. The opinions of VR agencies are valued and are important to RSA. Your responses are critical to provide a complete picture for the national VR system. After the surveys have been completed and analyzed, three agencies will be asked to also participate in case study interviews. The case study interviews are intended to help validate hypotheses developed from the analyses of administrative and survey data, as well as to follow up on interesting perspectives provided in the survey responses.

We are asking that you identify a staff member at your agency who should be contacted for the coordination of a response to the web survey. It is likely that survey will require the input from more than one staff member. Ideal respondents will have extensive experience and knowledge of your agency's policies and practices. It is critical that the staff member or members who complete the survey be able to respond on behalf of your agency, not just based on his or her personal experience.

Westat will be contacting you to determine the name, title, address, phone number and e-mail address for the staff nominated to coordinate your agency's response to the web survey. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact Robert Harmon by e-mail at RobertHarmon@westat.com or by telephone at 1-240-314-2348. You may also contact Julya Doyle, RSA, by telephone at 1-202-245-6170, or by e-mail at Julya.doyle@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Ed Anthony
Deputy Commissioner