

Rehabilitation Services Commission

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- While the number of individuals competitively employed is likely to remain constant at the FY 2005 level, RSC expects the hourly wage of those employed (a measure of quality) to increase over the FY 2006-2007 biennium

OVERVIEW

Duties and Responsibilities

The Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) provides vocational rehabilitation and other related services to eligible Ohioans with disabilities who seek employment. The mission of RSC is to work in partnership with Ohioans with significant disabilities to assist them in achieving greater community participation through opportunities for employment and independence. Most of the partnerships are designed to maximize federal, state, and local resources to promote quality jobs, improve access to employment services, and improve consumer choice in selecting community-based rehabilitation services.

The Rehabilitation Services Commission is comprised of three service bureaus: the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, and Bureau for Disability Determination. Two of these bureaus provide direct vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation aids people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities, while the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired assists Ohioans who are blind or have visual impairments. The Bureau for Disability Determination, by agreement with the Social Security Administration, is responsible for determining the medical eligibility of Ohioans seeking Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income.

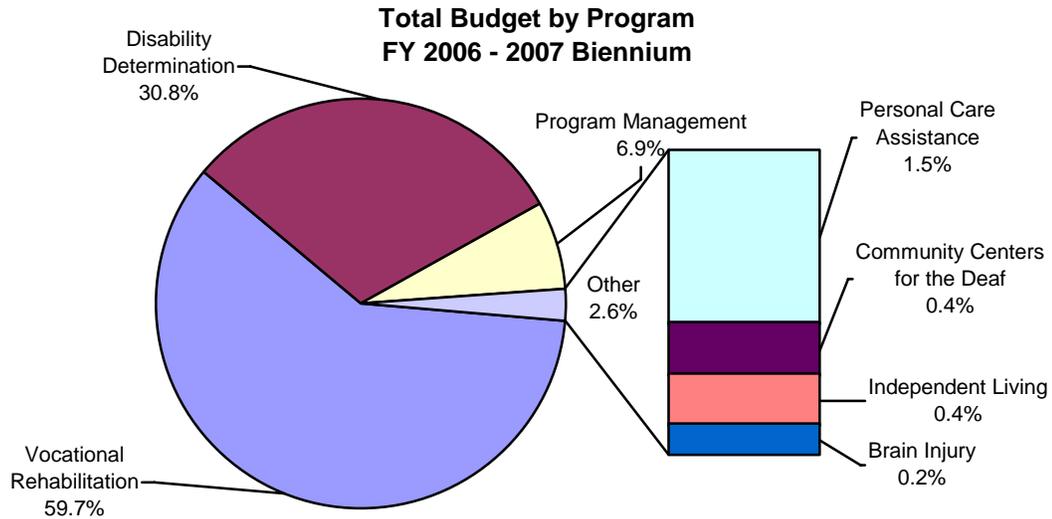
Agency in Brief

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Number of Employees*	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill
	2006	2007	2006	2007	
1,328	\$268.98 million	\$268.21 million	\$24.30 million	\$24.30 million	Am. Sub. H.B. 66

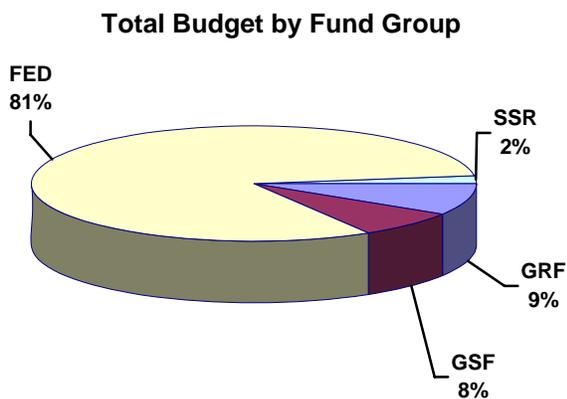
*Employee count obtained from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) report dated June 5, 2005.

Summary of FYs 2006-2007 Budget

The majority of the Rehabilitation Services Commission's funding is for vocational rehabilitation. A significant portion is for disability determination, which is 100% federally funded.



The largest source of funding for the Rehabilitation Services Commission is from the federal government (81%). Only 9% of the Commission's budget is from the General Revenue Fund.



Rehabilitation Services Commission Spending by Fund Group		
Budget Fund Group	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Revenue Fund	\$24,296,832	\$24,296,832
General Services Fund	\$20,189,122	\$20,189,122
Federal Special Revenue Fund	\$218,935,588	\$218,121,563
State Special Revenue Fund	\$5,555,407	\$5,605,407
Total	\$268,976,949	\$268,212,924

ANALYSIS OF THE ENACTED BUDGET

Program Series 1

Vocational Rehabilitation

Purpose: To primarily assist persons with disabilities in finding employment.

The following table shows the line items that are used to fund the vocational rehabilitation program series, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Revenue Fund				
GRF	415-100	Personal Services	\$8,851,468	\$8,851,468
GRF	415-403	Mental Health Services	\$717,221	\$717,221
GRF	415-404	MR/DD Services	\$1,260,816	\$1,260,816
GRF	415-405	Vocational Rehabilitation/Job and Family Services	\$536,912	\$536,912
GRF	415-406	Assistive Technology	\$47,531	\$47,531
GRF	415-431	Office for People with Brain Injury	\$226,012	\$226,012
GRF	415-506	Services for People with Disabilities	\$12,185,215	\$12,185,215
GRF	415-508	Services for the Deaf	\$50,000	\$50,000
GRF	415-509	Services for the Elderly	\$359,377	\$359,377
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$24,234,552	\$24,234,552
State Special Revenue Fund				
4L1	415-619*	Services for Rehabilitation	\$4,488,537	\$4,486,000
468	415-618	Third Party Funding	\$1,055,407	\$1,105,407
State Special Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$5,543,944	\$5,591,407
General Services Fund				
467	415-609	Business Enterprise Operating Expenses	\$1,632,082	\$1,632,082
General Services Fund Subtotal			\$1,632,082	\$1,632,082
Federal Special Revenue Fund				
3L1	415-601	Social Security Personal Care Assistance	\$3,743,740	\$3,743,740
3L1	415-605	Social Security Community Centers for the Deaf	\$1,100,488	\$1,100,488
3L1	415-607	Social Security Administration Cost	\$175,860	\$175,860
3L1	415-608	Soc. Sec. Special Programs/Assistance	\$2,246,991	\$131,716
3L1	415-610	Soc. Sec. Vocational Rehabilitation	\$1,336,324	\$1,338,324
3L4	415-615	Federal-Supported Employment	\$1,338,191	\$1,338,191
3L4	415-617	Independent Living/Voc. Rehab. Programs	\$1,508,885	\$1,608,885
379	415-616	Federal-Vocational Rehabilitation	\$123,565,158	\$119,998,470
Federal Special Revenue Subtotal			\$135,015,637	\$129,435,674
Total Funding: Vocational Rehabilitation			\$166,426,215	\$160,893,715

* Amount does not reflect total appropriation because line item is also used to fund the Independent Living program series.

Vocational Rehabilitation Case Services

Program Description: This program provides direct, personalized vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to help Ohioans with severe disabilities get and keep jobs and become self-sufficient. Vocational Rehabilitation Case Services is the core program of this program series. Staff of both the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired provide services for this program.

A professional VR counselor works one-on-one with a consumer to plan an individualized program designed to lead to gainful employment. Vocational rehabilitation services may include medical, psychological, and/or vocational evaluation; physical or mental restoration; vocational training; occupational tools and equipment; transportation and interpreter services; and job placement and follow-up. Rehabilitation technology may be used to modify a task or the environment to meet the needs of a person with a severe disability. The VR program provides counseling throughout the rehabilitation process.

The following table outlines performance outcomes for the VR Case Services program for FFY 2003 and FFY 2004, estimates for FFY 2005, and projections for FFYs 2006 and 2007, as reported by RSC.

Performance Outcomes for the VR Case Services Program					
Performance Measure	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005 (estimated)	FFY 2006 (projected)	FFY 2007 (projected)
Number Placed	6,781	6,779	7,600	7,600	7,600
Avg. Hourly Wage	\$10.35	\$10.63	\$10.75	\$10.85	\$11.00
Avg. Hours per Week	33	33	33	33	33
Annualized Income	\$17,761	\$18,241	\$18,447	\$18,619	\$18,876

Implication of the Enacted Budget: As the agency in Ohio designated to provide vocational rehabilitation services under the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, RSC is able to receive federal funding for its VR programs. **For every \$1 in state VR funds, RSC receives \$3.69 in federal match.**

RSC receives direct appropriations for the purpose of providing VR services to mutually eligible consumers between RSC and the departments of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, and Job and Family Services.

A cash transfer agreement (CTA) provides GRF dollars to match federal funds that are not directly appropriated in RSC's budget. During FYs 2004 and 2005, the Commission's CTA with the Bureau of Workers Compensation (BWC) provided \$1,158,428 in state moneys to leverage \$4,280,200 in federal matching funds for vocational rehabilitation services to mutually eligible clients of RSC and BWC. During FYs 2006 and 2007, BWC will transfer a total of \$1,193,181 to RSC pursuant to a CTA to provide vocational rehabilitation services to mutually eligible clients. As a result, RSC will be able to draw down \$4,408,607 in federal matching funds.

The Rehabilitation Services Commission also works extensively with the Department of Education (ODE) to build a statewide network of resources to support "transition to work programs" for youth. The current interagency agreement with ODE expires September 30, 2005. The Commission is working with ODE to extend that agreement.

The enacted budget for the vocational rehabilitation case services program is essentially flat funding at the FY 2005 level. The Rehabilitation Services Commission is working to redesign its service delivery system to maintain the number of Ohioians placed into competitive jobs. The Commission plans to pilot several new initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of service delivery to consumers. At the enacted funding level the number of individuals placed in competitive employment will either remain constant or decrease slightly. However, RSC believes that it will be able to improve the average hourly wage.

In addition, the enacted funding will allow RSC to maintain its 45 offices located throughout the state to serve consumers throughout Ohio. However, the Commission may be able to reduce its costs by consolidating some of the office space it leases for these statewide offices. Such consolidation will not affect a consumer's ability to meet with a VR counselor, since most counselors travel to meet with their clients.

Business Enterprise Program

Program Description: The Business Enterprise program is authorized by the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and sections 3304.28 to 3304.35 of the Revised Code to provide people who are legally blind with employment opportunities as managers and operators of food service and vending facilities. These facilities, which include cafeterias on federal and state property, are managed by licensed operators as self-employed individuals. The Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 expanded the priority to include vending machine businesses along the interstate highway system.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: Beginning in FY 2004, GRF funding for the Business Enterprise program was eliminated. The enacted budget continues this policy and provides funding for the Business Enterprise program through program revenues, which are then used to draw down the federal match. The program continues to try to maintain service levels by controlling program costs by using more refurbished equipment, negotiating deals for program vendors, and working to improve purchasing processes and reduce maintenance and repair expenses. The Rehabilitation Services Commission continues to seek additional sources of revenue for this program.

In addition, the Commission is aggressively seeking to locate Business Enterprise facilities in post offices around the state and at Ohio colleges and universities. If successful in securing these sites for the Business Enterprise program, RSC will have to increase its efforts to recruit additional program participants.

Brain Injury

Program Description: Over 220,000 Ohioians are living with long-term disabilities resulting from a brain injury. More than 20,000 new incidences of traumatic brain injury occur annually in Ohio and that number is increasing.

The primary purpose of the Brain Injury program is to promote a statewide system of services to return persons with a brain injury to a productive role in society. The program also works toward reducing the incidence of brain injury and the severity of impairments due to such injuries. The Brain Injury program provides information and referral services to individuals and families struggling with the aftereffects of traumatic brain injuries. Through an annual grant to the Brain Injury Association of Ohio, the Brain Injury Program supports a statewide, toll-free helpline and partially funds four Community Support Network (CSN) field offices. The CSN offices are located in Cincinnati, Dover, Marietta, and Toledo. Each network site serves an average of five counties. The main goal of the helpline and CSNs is to link consumers with existing services and local community support. In addition, the Brain Injury Association of Ohio maintains and continually seeks to expand its database of programs, services, and

educational materials, increase outreach and awareness efforts, and report on data collection and analysis about those served by the program.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The enacted budget for the Brain Injury program will enable the Brain Injury Association of Ohio to provide support for its current program of providing information and referral services to individuals and families. The four Community Support Network sites, as well as the statewide Helpline, will also be maintained. The enacted funding level will also allow for training of health care professionals and educators assisting individuals with a brain injury. In addition, RSC will prepare the statutorily required biennial report documenting the incidence of brain injury in Ohio.

Personal Care Assistance Program

Program Description: The primary goal of the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program is to provide services that allow persons with severe disabilities to live independently, and when possible, work. Created in 1981 and authorized by section 3304.41 of the Revised Code, the PCA program provides financial resources to Ohioans who are severely disabled so that they can purchase personal assistance services. These services, which include help with personal needs such as dressing and eating and assistance with grocery shopping and meal preparation, enable many Ohioans with disabilities to be able to work and live independently.

There are currently 297 participants in the program. The Rehabilitation Services Commission expects to maintain at least this number of individuals currently participating in the program at any given time. As individuals leave the program or reduce the number of hours needed, RSC will bring additional participants into the program.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: For the FY 2006-2007 biennium, the enacted budget provides for the use of earned Social Security reimbursement dollars for this program. (Prior to FY 2003, General Revenue Funds were appropriated for this program.) The enacted funding level will enable people currently on the program to remain there and also allow for replacements to be made when individuals leave the program.

Consumers have requested that the maximum number of hours per week be increased from 35 to 40 hours and that the wage reimbursement rate be increased as well (current maximum is \$8.00 per hour). However, given the enacted funding level, RSC will be unable to consider increasing either the maximum hours per week or the wage reimbursement rate.

Community Centers for the Deaf

Program Description: The primary purpose of Community Centers for the Deaf (CCDs) is to provide services to help people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind participate in, and benefit from, the vocational rehabilitation process and resources locally available to all members of the community. Community Centers for the Deaf provide services to enable individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind participate in RSC's vocational rehabilitation program and gain competitive employment. Community Centers for the Deaf provide sign language interpreter services, as well as access to support services including legal protection, health/mental health care, telecommunications, public transportation, government services, and other public and private social services. There are ten CCDs and three satellite offices throughout the state. Eight CCDs operate under the oversight of local host agencies; two are operated and governed wholly by the deaf community. Community Centers for the Deaf also pursue local sources of funding including charitable contributions, Title XX funds, and United Way grants.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The enacted budget will allow the CCDs to continue to provide services for the deaf and hard of hearing community so that individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind can participate in, and benefit from, the vocational rehabilitation process. While many of the CCDs actively pursue local funding, the funding that the CCDs receive from RSC helps the CCDs to maintain, and in some instances expand, services provided to the community.

Program Series 2

Disability Determination

Purpose: To prepare disability determinations for Ohioans who have applied to the Social Security Administration for benefits under Supplemental Security Income, a needs-based income supplement program, and/or Social Security Disability Insurance.

The Bureau of Disability Determination is the only program within this program series.

The following table shows the line item that is used to fund the Disability Determination program series, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
Federal Special Revenue Fund				
FED 317	415-620	Disability Determination	\$82,870,347	\$87,999,369
Total Funding: Disability Determination			\$82,870,347	\$87,999,369

Bureau of Disability Determination

Program Description: This program was established in 1954 through the authority of federal Social Security Act Section 221(b) and Section 304, Public Law 96-265. Under an agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Bureau of Disability Determination prepares disability determinations for Ohioans who have applied to SSA for benefits under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These programs, funded directly from the federal government, provide financial assistance to Ohioans who are totally disabled and recipients receive benefits until they are able to return to work or in the case of children, to age-appropriate activities. **The source of funding for disability determination is 100% federal.**

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The number of claims for SSI and SSDI continue to rise. To maintain the performance standards set by the federal government, RSC will need to hire an additional 60 claim adjudicators over the FY 2006-2007 biennium. Staffing levels are subject to SSA approval and will only be increased if the federal Disability Determination budget increases. The enacted funding level assumes approval of the staffing increases to handle the increasing workloads. However, RSC will be under significant pressure to explore either alternative work locations or telecommuting options so that employees can be accommodated within current space allocations.

The Social Security Administration made a decision to reengineer the disability process, including the conversion from a paper process to a totally electronic disability folder. The Bureau is currently working to convert all work units to the electronic folders. When conversion is complete, the federal government will come and certify the system to ensure proper handling of these confidential files.

Program Series 3**Independent Living**

Purpose: To provide services to maximize leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity and to support full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

The Independent Living program is the only program within this program series.

The following table shows the line items that are used to fund the Independent Living program series, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Revenue Fund				
GRF	415-402	Independent Living Council	\$12,280	\$12,280
GRF	415-520	Independent Living Services	\$50,000	\$50,000
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$62,280	\$62,280
State Special Revenue Fund				
4L1	415-619*	Services for Rehabilitation	\$11,463	\$14,000
State Special Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$11,463	\$14,000
Federal Special Revenue Fund				
3L4	415-612	Federal-Independent Living Centers or Services	\$894,662	\$686,520
3L1	415-614	Social Security Independent Living	\$154,942	\$0
Federal Special Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$1,049,604	\$686,520
Total Funding: Independent Living			\$1,123,347	\$762,800

* Amount does not reflect total appropriation because line item is also used to fund the Vocational Rehabilitation program series.

Independent Living Program

Program Description: The Independent Living program is federally mandated and independent from the Rehabilitation Services Commission, which only serves as a fiscal agent. Authority for the program resides in Title VII of the federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. **The Independent Living program receives a federal match of \$9 for every \$1 of state funds spent on the program.** In addition, Independent Living Services receives funds directly from the federal Independent Living Part C grant program.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: Beginning in FY 2003, the Rehabilitation Services Commission absorbed some of the budget cuts by replacing most of the GRF funding provided for the Independent Living (IL) program with Social Security reimbursement dollars. This funding stream for the IL program continued through the FY 2004-2005 biennium and is again continued in the enacted budget for FY 2006. The enacted budget for FY 2006 for the Independent Living program series will enable the Statewide Independent Living Council to continue providing support to the centers for independent living, monitoring, and evaluating the state plan for independent living, maintaining its web site, and publishing its quarterly newsletter.

The enacted budget for FY 2007 is a decrease of \$360,547 (all federal funds) from the FY 2006 appropriations. According to the Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council, this level of funding will require that the Council eliminate one full-time staff position and six contractors. It will no longer be able to maintain its web site or publish its quarterly newsletter. It will also only be able to provide minimal support to the Centers for Independent Living.

Program Series 4

Program Management

Purpose: To provide administrative support and program evaluation for the Rehabilitation Services Commission as a whole.

Program Management is the only program within this program series.

The following table shows the line item that is used to fund the Program Management program series, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Services Fund				
4W5	415-606	Program Management Expenses	\$18,557,040	\$18,557,040
Total Funding: Program Management			\$18,557,040	\$18,557,040

Program Management

Program Description: This program series provides administrative, budget, planning, evaluation, human resources, auditing, and information services to support the mission of RSC.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The enacted budget will permit RSC to maintain its current administrative functions to the extent that the levels of direct consumer services are maintained.