

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES  
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM  
RSA-IM-05-08  
Date: May 31, 2005

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)  
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)  
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS  
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS  
CONSUMER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS  
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
PROTECTION & ADVOCACY OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS PROGRAMS  
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS  
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: Request for Nominations for the Thirty-Second Institute on Rehabilitation  
Issues Primary Study Groups

CONTENT: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to request nominations  
for persons to serve as chairpersons and members on the following two  
Thirty-Second Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) primary study groups  
(PSG):

1. The VR-Business Partnership

The university coordinator for this study group is Ms. Jeanne Miller, the  
director of Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program  
(RRCEP) VI at the University of Arkansas.

2. Rehabilitation of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The university coordinator for this study group is Dr. Donald Dew, the  
director of RRCEP III at The George Washington University.

**The deadline for receipt of the nominations is June 30, 2005. Nominees  
for chairpersons for the PSGs must be current State vocational  
rehabilitation (VR) agency directors, or designees, who have  
demonstrated leadership qualities, an ability to facilitate group  
discussions, good writing and editorial skills, and who have served on  
previous IRI PSGs. Both the chairpersons and the PSG members make a  
commitment to attend three meetings for two to three days each, during which**

the topical issues are discussed and debated in great detail. Descriptions of the two IRI topics are attached to this memorandum.

The PSG will be primarily made up of representatives from State VR agencies and will include a total of approximately twelve persons, including individuals who are recognized authorities on the issue under study and/or represent important consumer perspectives. The PSG members define the issues in their topical area and write drafts of assigned chapters or sections. Their only compensation is reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses at the host university rate.

In submitting nominations, we encourage you to review the attached “IRI Primary Study Groups - Roles and Responsibilities” with each nominee before submitting his/her name. In order to receive consideration, each Nomination Form must be fully completed, including a brief justification. We also suggest that you ensure that each nominee requests his/her supervisor's approval prior to submitting a Nomination Form. Self-nomination is also encouraged. Our goal is to select a representative sample of persons knowledgeable of the topics from both inside and outside the State-Federal VR program, and to ensure participation of persons from minority backgrounds and persons with disabilities.

During the 32nd IRI Forum to be held in Washington, DC from May 8-9, 2006, the PSG chairpersons and members present their draft publications to a larger study group for review and comment, and are honored for their contribution to the field of rehabilitation literature.

Please provide the completed Nomination Forms for chairpersons and members of the IRI PSGs to:

Mr. Charles Sadler  
RSA IRI Coordinator  
Rehabilitation Services Administration  
550 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 5002  
Washington, DC 20004

E-MAIL: [charles.sadler@ed.gov](mailto:charles.sadler@ed.gov)  
TELEPHONE: (202) 245-7514  
FAX: (202) 245-7590  
RELAY: (800) 877-8339  
TTY: (202) 245-8352

We appreciate your continued support of the IRI.

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Edward Anthony, Ph.D.

Delegated the authority to perform the functions of Commissioner for  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

Attachments: IRI Primary Study Groups – Roles and Responsibilities Nomination Form  
Descriptions of the 32nd IRI Topics

### **IRI PRIMARY STUDY GROUPS - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following information is provided to persons who are either interested in nominating an individual to serve as a member or chairperson of an IRI PSG, or who are considering whether or not they are willing and able to be nominated to serve on an IRI PSG.

Persons nominating individuals to participate in the IRI should ensure that the nominees are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. In order to avoid misunderstandings, please review the information contained herein with each nominee before submitting the Nomination Form.

**PURPOSE:** To research, write and publish an IRI publication that provides a foundation for quality state-of-the-art training on a specific topic. RSA annually funds two grantees at the University of Arkansas and The George Washington University to serve as university coordinators for two IRI PSGs, and to convene the National IRI Forum in Washington. The IRI is not original research; the document is comprised of existent research applied to contemporary issues and challenges in the field of VR. Approximately 2500 to 3500 copies of each IRI publication are disseminated nationally to an audience of VR counselors, consumers, advocates, administrators, educators, researchers, and trainers. The publications are also placed on the two university coordinators' web sites with numerous links to other rehabilitation partners.

### **SKILLS NEEDED BY ALL PSG MEMBERS:**

- 1) Knowledge of the topic.
- 2) Writing skills. This includes the ability to discuss the issue and then create and write (outlining, developing and drafting) a section or chapter of the document.
- 3) The ability to work as part of a team.

### **ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE IRI STUDY GROUPS**

#### **UNIVERSITY COORDINATOR -**

Responsible for all facets of the PSG meetings, such as:  
arranging meeting times and hotel accommodations; providing travel

and per diem; arranging teleconferences, if necessary; duplicating and editing the draft IRI documents; publishing and disseminating the final IRI document; and, any other logistical support necessary during the course of the IRI cycle.

**CHAIRPERSON -** Facilitates the PSG meetings and maintains group focus on the topical issues. Assigns writing assignments and membership to the editorial committee that is responsible for editing the document after the national IRI Forum. Works closely with the university coordinator, and the PSG members to ensure that the IRI publication is published in a timely manner.

**RSA REPRESENTATIVE -** Ensures that the group fulfills the charge presented by the RSA Commissioner and that the final publication complies with Federal law, regulations and policy. Reviews the final draft of the IRI document and provides a written review to the RSA IRI Coordinator.

#### **WHAT KIND OF TIME COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IRI?**

The IRI requires an approximately one-year time commitment that includes three meetings of approximately two and a half days. **THE MEETINGS MAY ENTAIL WEEKEND TRAVEL.** The first meeting is devoted to a discussion of the topic and all the issues surrounding it. The group members are then assigned chapters to be written.

The second meeting focuses on a review and critique of the draft. Between the second and third meetings, the members of the PSG rewrite and refine their respective chapters into the final draft.

The third meeting occurs during the National IRI Forum in Washington, DC, during which time an expanded group of individuals reviews the final draft publication and provides feedback for further improving the document. The PSG editorial committee, who may meet in Washington, DC immediately following the Forum, considers these recommendations. The editorial committee is usually composed of 3-7 members of the PSG, including the chairperson and the university coordinator.

IRI PSG membership is an honor. IRI PSG chairpersons and members are accorded the title of “IRI Scholars” and receive certificates of appreciation signed by the RSA Commissioner. The IRI is an opportunity to work collaboratively with consumers and professionals with knowledge and expertise on a given topic, and to develop a publication useful in training VR professionals.

**Nomination Form**

**THIRTY-SECOND INSTITUTE ON REHABILITATION ISSUES**

1. Nominee Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/TDD: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The nominee is an individual with a disability.

\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_ No

The following question is to assist us in assembling an IRI PSG that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds. Answering this question is optional.

Race/Ethnic Status

- \_\_\_\_ White
- \_\_\_\_ Black/African American
- \_\_\_\_ American Indian
- \_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- \_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_



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Nominator Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/TDD: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF THE NOMINATION FORMS IS JUNE 30, 2005.**

## Topics to be Studied During the 32<sup>nd</sup> IRI

### Topic I --- The VR-Business Partnership

**INTRODUCTION:** The following IRI topic represents the next step in the evolution of previous IRI publications on employer partnerships and the employment of individuals with disabilities. Considering the national platform in rehabilitation, and the corresponding commitment of vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, Council of State Agencies of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to business partnerships, this topic needs to be studied for two primary reasons:

- It represents a progression in the guidance related to employer development and placement needed by the state VR agencies.
  - It will strategically support VR, CSAVR, and RSA initiatives to leverage VR-business partnerships at the state, regional and national level, particularly in the most recent initiative by CSAVR to build a national VR-Business network. Many VR agencies are seeking the strategic guidance that will be provided in this document in order to support this movement. With the inclusion of business partners on the IRI writing team, it will demonstrate their commitment to the future of the VR program.
1. Briefly describe the issues to be addressed in the publication:
    - A. Building state, regional and national networks between VR agencies and with employers who have a multi-state presence.
    - B. Leveraging relationships with employers among state VR agencies to enhance career opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
    - C. Building careers vs. jobs for consumers served by VR agencies.
    - D. Taking the VR-Business partnership to the next level of commitment and service delivery.
    - E. Addressing partnerships with staffing companies to whom businesses outsource entry-level positions and re-thinking the issue of “temp-to-perm” employment.
    - F. Reinforcing and improving informed choice with enhanced knowledge about the potential employers of VR consumers.
    - G. Incorporating business input “up front” in the rehabilitation process, subsequently impacting informed choice, empowerment, and career outcomes.
    - H. Effectively building mentorships for consumers with business partners.
    - I. Marketing the effective public-private partnerships between VR and business and, subsequently, delivering needed services.

2. Intended audience:
  - A. VR directors.
  - B. VR middle management, counselors, and specialists in employer development, business relations and job placement.
  - C. Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program staff.
  - D. Project With Industry (PWI), Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program (CRP), and other entities that partner with VR in employment activities.
  - E. RSA staff.
  
3. Describe the potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:
  - A. More effective partnerships between VR and employers at the state, regional and national level.
  - B. Up-front knowledge of business issues that impact career choices and planning.
  - C. Support for the development of careers and quality employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
  - D. Improved relationships with business that address and support not just recruitment and hiring, but also both retention and upward mobility for employees whose job is affected by disability, illness or injury.
  - E. Reinforced emphasis on the VR-business partnership as a strategy and a marketing tool for positioning VR at the state, regional and national levels as the employment program of choice for individuals with disabilities.

**NOTE:** Business representatives would participate in two ways depending upon their availability and the meeting location of the IRI group. The employers would be members of the IRI study group and/or participate in a business roundtable discussion that will be held as part of the IRI process. The purpose of the business roundtable will be to incorporate direct feedback, recommendations and strategies recommended by our employer partners into the IRI document for use by VR staff and consumers.

## **Topic II --- Rehabilitation of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

1. Briefly describe the issues to be addressed in publication:
  - A. State of the Science: Autism Spectrum Disorders – overview of the importance of early intervention and treatment on social development, academic and employment, and independent living outcomes.
  - B. Understanding of the continuum of the disorders and strategies for increasing awareness.
  - C. Enhancing implementation of informed choice throughout the VR process.
  - D. Issues and considerations for effective transition from school to work, training, or post-secondary education.
  - E. Building effective partnerships between academic, training, health, housing and other community-based social programs and agencies.
  - F. Improving the employers’ understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders.
  - G. Holistic VR: Integrating family, community, and social supports to improve employment outcomes.
  - H. Improving VR counselors’ and employers’ skills, competencies, and knowledge for increasing accessibility, employment opportunities, and improved job accommodation.
  - I. Evidence-based intervention strategies for effective job development, placement, and retention.
  
2. Intended audience:
  - A. VR Counselors, and middle management.
  - B. State VR agency directors.
  - C. Staff Development Specialists, and SRC Liaisons.
  - D. Rehabilitation Educators, especially RRCEPs.
  - E. Members of the State Rehabilitation Councils.
  
3. Describe the potential effects on improving services to individuals with disabilities:
  - A. Better understanding of accommodations will improve training and employment outcomes.
  - B. Increased understanding by service providers of autism.