

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION HISTORY IMPORTANT DATES

- 1918 Soldier's Rehabilitation Act -- Federal Board of Vocational Education.
- 1920 Smith Fess Act -- Extension of VR services to civilian physically disabled -- Federal Board of Vocational Education -- 50-50 match. (Incentives to states to pass similar legislation.)
- 1921 Montana Legislature passed state's first Vocational Rehabilitation Act. Located with Worker's Compensation under the State Board of Vocational Education until the late 1940's.

Allowable Services were vocational guidance, vocational education, occupational adjustment and placement services. Placement could not be a singular service. The Act mandated vocational training. Physical Restoration services were allowed only if a necessary "supply" to successfully complete training.

Homemaker – Home Economics was a legitimate training program under Vocational Education, thus homemaking was considered an appropriate occupation for which to provide training.

- 1935 Federal/State Vocational Rehabilitation program permanent -- program can be discontinued only by Congress.

Note: in the 1920's and early 1930's assumption was that persons who were blind or had severe visual problems had little potential for competitive employment.

- 1936 Federal Randolph Sheppard Act

- 1937 Montana Legislature establishes Visual Services Bureau in the Department of Public Welfare
- 1938 Federal Wagner O'Day Act
- 1943 Federal Barden La Follette Act -- Extended VR program to mentally retarded, mentally ill and blind.
- 1947 Montana Legislature created Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State Board of Education; performance of disability determinations for SSA.
- 1954 Matching ratio went from 50-50 to 75-25; VR services expanded to MR and MI with research and demonstration grants; establishment of rehabilitation facilities; medical by-products from WWII.
- Late 50's
Early 60's
- Beginning of the Independent Living movement with 6 and 18 month extended evaluation period to determine employment potential; expansion of definition of VR services.
- 1965 Expanded definition of "Handicapped" to include behavior disorder diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist; 80-20 match; elimination of economic need as a prerequisite for VR services -- Montana still requires such test; construction money for Rehabilitation Facilities; statewide planning grants
- Late 60's Momentum in consumer rights movement; severely disabled; accessibility; independent living.
- 1971 Montana's Executive Reorganization

- 1972 Congress passed maintenance of effort -- maintain expenditure rate of state dollars as reported in 1972 - still exists.
- 1973-1983 Billion dollar program; continued emphasis on severely disabled; funding of independent living - National Council for the Handicapped.
- 1981 Administration of Visual Services given to Rehabilitative Services Division.
- 1984 Client Assistance Project
- 1985 Montana's Legislature passes Special Populations (HB-798).
- 1986 Rehabilitation Act Amendments - supported employment; rehabilitation engineering; comprehensive statewide assessment of needs of severely disabled; employability definition; rehabilitation facility definition expanded to include psychological facilities; impartial hearings officer; public hearings; eventual change in matching requirements from 80-20 to 75-25.
- 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passes
- 1992 Emphasis on informed choice; presumption of disability; general presumption that individuals with disabilities are capable of work unless proven otherwise; 60-day eligibility requirement; Advisory Council requirements; maximizing use of rehabilitation technology in employment; renewed emphasis on purpose of program: **Employment, Employment, Employment**; matching rate changed to 78.7 -21.3; 1.5% federal allotment for statewide strategic plan.

Independent Living – major changes reflect the philosophy of consumer control and empowerment. States are given more choice in how to spend funds earmarked for IL case services. The State IL Council becomes directly involved with the Montana VR agency in the development of the Three Year State Independent Living Plan.

1993-1994

Montana Management Program Initiative - Program designed to review Montana VR practices and implement changes resulting from the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.

1997

Montana Legislature supplants Workers' Compensation funding for federal match with state general fund. Montana no longer relies on anything but state and federal funding to run its VR program with a funding mix of 78.7% federal funds and 21.3% state general fund.

1998

Congress reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act as Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. Emphasis on consumer choice, due process, Individuals Plans for Employment, use of existing information and data, transitions, and full integration of Vocational Rehabilitation programs within a larger workforce system.

2014

Reauthorization of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which amends the Rehabilitation Act. Emphasis is placed on services to youth (especially high school students) and employers and collaboration with workforce partners (Department of Labor and Adult Basic Education). The new law also emphasizes competitive integrated employment.