

AGENCY STRUCTURE

I. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The Office of Rehabilitation Services is charged to provide a comprehensive program of rehabilitation, social and independent living services to all eligible Rhode Island residents who have a disability and apply for services.

Direct services are provided by an array of qualified personnel in the form of vocational rehabilitation counselors, social workers, rehabilitation teachers, peripatologists, vending facility supervisors, as well as clerical and fiscal support staff.

In addition to services provided by staff, the Agency also utilizes community input and resources to insure adequate, appropriate and timely services to consumers. Through various Advisory Councils, the Agency presents, modifies, recommends, develops and implements a variety of programs which will allow for quality and variety of necessary services. These Advisory Councils include the State Rehabilitation Council, the State Independent Living Council, the Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the State Committee for Blind Vendors, and the Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology.

The Office of Rehabilitation Services affords Administrative, Fiscal, Human Resource Development and Consultant services to all units of the Agency. The Agency is comprised of three (3) distinct units – Disability Determination Services (DDS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI).

II. AGENCY UNITS

A. Disability Determination Services (DDS)

The primary purpose of the DDS unit is to provide fair and expeditious action to people in Rhode Island who are eligible for monthly Social Security Disability and/or Supplemental Security Income benefits and to conduct face-to-face appeal hearings for those beneficiaries who disagree with the decision in the event that their impairments have improved and benefits should cease. Each individual who files a claim for disability benefits must submit sufficient medical evidence to support her/his claim for benefits. If the claimant is determined ineligible for benefits and disagrees with the decision, s/he is offered the opportunity to obtain further medical evidence. This documentation must be provided by sources who have treated or evaluated the individual for impairments to support her/his disagreement with the determination. If the evidence is sufficient, further objective consultative evaluations may be purchased at no expense to the claimant.

**B. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR)**

The purpose of vocational rehabilitation is for states to assess, plan, develop and provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests, and informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment. The vocational rehabilitation program is a State/Federal program whose major function is to provide rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with physical and/or mental impairments. The types of services provided are designed to develop skills and abilities to enhance employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Services include, but are not limited to, counseling and guidance, medical, social, psychological and educational evaluations, physical restoration, medical services, personal adjustment, training, rehabilitation engineering services, job training, job finding, job placement, and post-employment services.

**C. Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)**

The purpose of SBVI is to provide necessary services to all Rhode Islanders with visual impairments in order to increase their ability to function at home, at work, and in the community. Individuals with a visual acuity of 20/60 or less or fields of 20° or less are eligible for services from SBVI.