

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CAREER EDUCATION
ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES (0520)
FISCAL YEAR 2013

I) AGENCY SUMMARY & REVENUE SOURCES

MISSION

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' (ARS) mission is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives. ARS provides statewide vocational rehabilitation services to disabled persons so they can return to or enter employment. ARS carries out its responsibilities through a field program that reaches all 75 counties through 19 field offices, the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center Hospital (HSRC), Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI), and Special Programs and Support Services.

TOTAL APPROPRIATION

The total appropriation for FY2013 is \$62,031,064.

FUNDING SOURCES

The appropriations for ARS are funded by federal funds, general revenue, fund balances, special revenue, cash funds and program income (cafeteria fees, contributions, reimbursement fees, hospital medical fees, interest income and institutional services).

II) SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 128)

This appropriation provides the operating costs for ARS, including Field Services, ACTI, and the HSRC Hospital. This appropriation is funded by general revenue, federal funds (including ARRA funding), fund balances and program income. The total appropriation is \$58,724,450 for FY2013, and includes the following changes from FY2012:

Contract Services - Provides a net increase of \$200,000 for FY2013 to serve an additional 115 individuals with various direct services.

ARRA - Discontinues a \$1,000,000 ARRA appropriation authorized for FY2012 due to anticipated depletion of the funds, appropriation was authorized to finalize the upgrade of facilities at ACTI.

III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

Total Positions for FY2012-13: 530
Total Positions for FY2011-12: 530
Increase / (Decrease): 0

IV) SPECIAL LANGUAGE

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT: Authorizes a general waiver of the Financial Management Guide "R1-19-4-522 Continuing Professional Education" to allow the agency to provide college level coursework in degree programs for eligible employees selected by the agency to insure that qualified, professional personnel are in place to provide rehabilitation services. This waiver is required so that ARS can comply with Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 which requires Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to establish qualified personnel standards for rehabilitation personnel, including VR Counselors, that are consistent with any national or state approved or recognized certification, licensing or registration requirement. Further provides, that the waiver is applicable to any and all formula and discretionary grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services, now or in the future, to the state general revenue share, and to program income.

FORGIVENESS OF STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM LANGUAGE: Requires the Forgiveness of Student Loan Program to provide up to \$2,000 per year or a maximum of \$10,000 per employee to counselors employed by ARS that are determined eligible by rules promulgated by ARS in compliance with ACA §25-30-206. The language further enumerates the eligibility requirements the rules must include: Satisfactory

completion of a probationary period; proof of student loan that remains unpaid; an executed employment contract in which the counselor agrees to work for ARS 2 years for each year the program makes a payment on a student loan and agrees to repay ARS if the counselor resigns or is terminated prior to the end of the contract period.

In addition, the language requires ARS to pay for the program (up to a maximum of \$80,000 each year) out of the Grants and Aid line item within the Rehabilitation Services' Operations appropriation.

Last, the agency is required to provide written notification to all Rehabilitation Counselors employed by ARS of the availability of the program, along with a copy of the program rules, by July 1 of each year, and must submit a copy of the notification to the Legislative Council. In addition, ARS shall report bi-annually to the Arkansas Legislative Council or Joint Budget Committee the number of employees participating in the program.

November 2011