

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CAREER EDUCATION  
ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES (0520)  
FISCAL YEAR 2016

As Enacted by Act 867 of 2015

**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, Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center (HSRC), Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI), Special Programs and Support Services, the Office for Deaf and Hearing Impaired, and the Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission.

**TOTAL APPROPRIATION**

The total appropriation is \$66,708,026.

**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, reimbursements, interest income and institutional services).

**II) CHANGE LEVEL REQUESTS**

**OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 128)**

This appropriation provides the operating costs for ARS, including Field Services, ACTI, and the HSRC. This appropriation is funded by general revenue, federal funds, fund balances and programs income. The total appropriation is \$62,963,237 and includes the following appropriation changes:

**Regular Salaries and Matching - Net Increase** of \$39,109 due to the reclassification of nine (9) positions and a decrease of \$143,019 due to the transfer of three (3) positions to the Statewide Disability Telecommunications Equipment Program.

**Capital Outlay - Increase** of \$1,100,000 for improvement of client service centers throughout the state.

**Contract Services - Increase** of \$2,000,000 to service clients with non-significant disabilities and transitional age students (ages 16-23).

**Project Search - Increase** of \$725,000 to expand the program partnership with UAMS to find sustainable, competitive employment for Arkansas Citizens with developmental disabilities.

**STATEWIDE DISABILITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PROGRAM (APPROPRIATION 374)**

This appropriation provides telecommunication devices for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or speech impaired. This appropriation is funded with special revenue from the 1 cent surcharge increase on land and cell phone lines, effective July 2013. Total appropriation is \$577,019 and includes the following appropriation changes:

**Regular Salaries and Matching - Increase** of \$143,019 due to the transfer of three (3) positions from the Operations appropriation.

**Operating Expenses - Increase** of \$16,000 for travel related costs for additional outreach opportunities and to train customers.

**Conference and Travel - Increase** of \$3,000 for staff to attend conferences on new technologies.

**Professional Fees - Increase** of \$47,000 for the transition from a paper-based client services file system to an electronic database system.

**Grants and Aid - Increase** of \$30,000 for program expansion and increase to

target specific disability groups.

The following appropriations are recommended to continue at the base level.

<b>Appropriation</b>	<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Increase Capabilities Access Network	Federal	\$298,690
People With Disabilities	Special Revenue	45,000
Technology Equipment	Cash	1,580,000
Rehab Services - Cash in Treasury	Cash	863,400

\*NEW APPROPRIATION\* **PROMISE GRANT (APPROPRIATION M89)**

Established through the Miscellaneous Federal Program Act, this appropriation is used to establish and operate model demonstration projects designed to improve the education and employment outcomes of child Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and their families. Funding is from federal sources and includes the following appropriation changes:

**Regular Salaries and Matching - Increase** of \$345,680 for seven (7) Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors that will serve program participants.

**Conference and Travel - Increase** of \$35,000 for administering services to program participants.

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS (Total Authorized Positions for FY 2015: 530)**

Total Authorized Positions FY2016: 537

Total Base Level Positions FY2015: 530

Increase / (Decrease) over Base Level: 7

Extra Help Positions FY2016: 19 (Total FY2015 Authorized Extra Help: 19)

Provides for seven (7) Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors over FY2015 authorized positions. These positions were obtained through a miscellaneous federal grant appropriation and will serve the Promise Grant program participants.

**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.

Revised: April 2015