

STATE OF ARKANSAS



Mike Beebe
Governor

Department of Career Education
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
Robert P. Treviño, *Commissioner*

Bill Walker
Director

August 9, 2010

Senator Henry Wilkins, IV, Co-Chair
Representative Allen Maxwell, Co-Chair
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Messrs. Wilkins and Maxwell:

This letter is in fulfillment of Section 10 of Act 29 of 2010 requiring Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to report to the Arkansas Legislative Council all counselors employed by ARS who are eligible for and have enrolled in the division's Forgiveness of Student Loan program benefit. The program has been very successful in enhancing the division's ability to recruit and retain vocational rehabilitation counselors. You may recall that an eligible ARS vocational rehabilitation counselor may elect to enroll each calendar year in the student loan forgiveness benefit for a total of 5 years and \$10,000 in loan payback assistance. As part of the benefit's obligation, every two years a VR counselor is employed at ARS the division will retire 1 year of the eligible student loan.

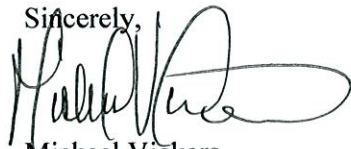
On August 24, 2009, notification of the program benefit was sent to all ARS counselors and district managers throughout the state. Additionally, notification was also included in the agency's newsletter and ads were placed in university newspapers of all 3 graduate vocational rehabilitation programs located within the state. As program administrator, I have conducted eligibility awareness presentations in each of the division's 19 field offices located throughout the state.

Currently there are 10 counselors taking advantage of the employee benefit. For the period July 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009, 7 vocational rehabilitation counselors enrolled in the program. For the period January 1, 2010 through July 30, 2010, 3 vocational rehabilitation counselors enrolled in the program.

The notification was completed on August 24, 2009 to comply with the July 1, 2009 notification requirement. The July 1, 2010 notification requirement will be sent out on August 12, 2010 to the vocational rehabilitation counselors. All future required reports will be submitted twice a year for July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010 report by or before January 15th and a January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011 report by or before July 15th. Additionally, enclosed are the notifications sent out to all vocational rehabilitation counselors.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide a status report to the Council and for the members' generous support of this program. If you have any questions, please let me know and I will gladly provide additional information for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Vickers", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Michael Vickers
Program Administrator