

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE EDUCATION  
ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES  
(AGENCY #0520) - 2009-11 BIENNIUM**

**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 (HSRC), and Special Programs and Support Services.

**TOTAL BIENNIAL BUDGET**

The total appropriation for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is \$59.6 million for FY2010 and \$60.1 million for FY2011, which results in an overall increase of \$529,591 for FY2010 and \$550,844 for FY2011 over the base level.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

Funding for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) is derived from federal funds (approx. 71%) and general revenue (approx. 22%), with the remaining 7% consisting of 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**

**REHABILITATION SERVICES - OPERATIONS (APPROPRIATION 128)**

This appropriation is used to fund the ARS field program and the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center which includes a medical unit and the Arkansas Career Training Institute. This appropriation is funded by general revenue, federal funds, and program income. The total appropriation is \$57,802,835 for FY2010 and \$58,309,312 for FY2011, which is an increase of \$176,591 and \$180,844, respectively.

The increase provides appropriation for salaries and matching costs of reclassifying three (3) existing agency positions to field Rehabilitation Counselor positions and for three (3) additional field Rehabilitation Counselor positions. These 3 additional positions were not authorized, however.

**STATEWIDE DISABILITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS (APPROPRIATION 374)**

This appropriation is funded with special revenues which are derived from Arkansas Public Service Commission surcharges of \$.03 per land line per month. The program provides telecommunication devices for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or speech impaired.

The total appropriation is \$498,851 for FY2010 and \$507,061 for FY2011 with the following increase/change:

**Operating Expenses** - A reallocation of \$15,000 each year from Professional Fees and Services to Operating Expenses to properly classify marketing and outreach activities of the Telecommunications Access Program.

**Grants and Aid** - An increase of \$20,000 for FY2010 and \$25,000 for FY2011 to purchase text telephones (TTY), TTYs with large displays, and/or Braille access, volume controls or signalers.

**REHABILITATION SERVICES CASH IN TREASURY PAYING (APPROPRIATION 903)**

This appropriation is funded by cash funding received from cafeteria fees, contributions, reimbursement fees, hospital medical fees, interest income, and institutional services fees. This funding is defined as program income and is used for ARS' maintenance and operating expenses. The total appropriation is \$851,400 for FY2010 and \$863,400 for FY2011 which is an increase of \$333,000 for FY2010 and \$345,000 for FY2011 to provide for increased utility costs for the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center(HSRC), and building and grounds maintenance costs for building separate from the main HSRC building.

**FORGIVENESS OF STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM**

This appropriation was first authorized for the 2007-09 biennium as a biennial appropriation of \$160,000 for the forgiveness of student loans for Rehabilitation Counselors. This appropriation is not continued, but special language requires ARS to pay for the Forgiveness of Student Loan Program from the Grants and Aid line item within the Rehabilitation Services - Operations appropriation in an amount not to exceed \$80,000 per year.

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS**

Total Positions for the 2007-09 Biennium: 530

Total Positions for the 2005-07 Biennium: 530

Increase/(Decrease): 0

**Note: Appropriation is provided for Regular Salaries and Matching for 3 additional Rehabilitation Counselor positions, but the additional positions and general revenue funding were not authorized or allocated.**

**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 Act 1207 of 2007. 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 report bi-annually to the Arkansas Legislative Council or Joint Budget Committee the number of employees participating in the program.

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