

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CAREER EDUCATION  
ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES (0520)  
FISCAL YEAR 2019  
AS ENACTED BY ACT 153 OF 2018**

**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 \$63,902,173 in FY2019.

**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**

No Change Level Requests

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS**

Total Positions FY2019: 510

Total Positions FY2018: 510

Increase / (Decrease): 0

Extra Help Positions FY2019: 19 (Total FY2018 Authorized Extra Help: 19)

**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:** 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

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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.