

Vocational Rehabilitation Transfers to Independent Living  
Report to the Legislature  
as required  
by Minnesota Session Law Chapter 135,  
Section 2, Subd 3 (f)

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Minnesota Session Law Chapter 135, Section 2, Subd 3 (f) requires that the Commissioner report on transfers to Centers For Independent Living (CILS) specified in the section and any other transfer to Centers for Independent Living made by the department by March 15, 2011.

Three separate transfers were specified in the section. The legislative language:

*(1) transfer \$115,000 of federal independent living Part B rehabilitation services funds to the Minnesota Centers for Independent Living each year contingent upon the availability of federal funds under Title VII, Part B, of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended under United States Code, title 29, section 711(c), and approved by the Statewide Independent Living Council;*

*(2) replace federal Part B funds in the State Independent Living Council budget transferred under clause (1) with \$115,000 of Social Security Administration program income funds each year; and*

*(3) provide an additional \$185,000 each year from the Social Security Administration program income to the Minnesota Centers for Independent Living to be allocated equally among the eight centers.*

Funds were encumbered and contracts let for these three provisions effective October 1, 2010.

In addition, the language specifies a report on any other transfer being made to Centers for Independent Living.

During the past three years, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and CILs have collaboratively built local service capacity in a mutual partnership to advance the employment and independent living of Minnesotans who require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living to achieve their goals for working and living in the community. The collaboration initiative, which ended December 31, 2010, has been funded through Social Security Administration (SSA) program dollars. The department granted a total of \$1,349,262 per year, through eight contracts with Centers to provide independent living services to clients of local Work Force Centers and Vocational Rehabilitation Services teams.

The Department agreed to make these funds available each year for three years, depending on the availability of Social Security reimbursement income available for program use.

This three-year effort has enabled VRS and CILs to explore a variety of approaches to collaborative service provision, all of which have demonstrated value and positive outcomes for VRS clients.

VRS has agreed to extend this collaboration to a fourth year, but due to the limited availability of Social Security reimbursement income funding, the SSA resources targeted for a VRS-IL collaboration initiative were significantly reduced. Only \$750,000 was made available for 2011, approximately half the amount provided each year from

2007 to 2010. VRS has determined to focus future funds on the promising VR-IL collaboration practices that have emerged during the past three years. Specifically, VRS was interested in providing access to IL services that will enhance VRS consumer's ability to achieve an employment outcome via the co-location of CIL staff at workforce centers or VRS offices or, alternately, demonstrate the equivalent benefit of co-location through CIL staff time dedicated to VRS-related services, available at predetermined times.

In addition to providing Independent Living services, staff funded through these grants are asked to provide consultation, training and related resource services to VRS staff.

As in previous year's grants, the primary goal of these grants is to leverage the services available through Minnesota's Centers for Independent Living to ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation Services customers have the requisite independent living skills necessary to be successful in competitive employment.

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