

CAREERS IN DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION

WITH:

STATE OF ILLINOIS

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS)

SUMMARY INFORMATION:

- **DRS Job Application and hiring process**
 - **Overview of DRS Services**

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DRS Application and Hiring Process

ILLINOIS DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS)

DRS Application and Hiring Process

To be a candidate for a position:

The title is a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee and the requirements are a master's degree in rehab counseling or closely related field. An individual can also have a master's degree in any area with a CRC [Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credential; see: <http://www.crccertification.com>]

To be a candidate for a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position, the individual must first have an "open competitive grade" through Central Management Services (CMS). To do this, the individual completes the CMS 100 form (the new one dated 1/07) and submits to Central Management Services (CMS) at the address on page 4 under #16. I have attached this CMS 100 form for your reference. The individual will receive a grade based on their education. The grades are A, B or C but if a candidate has the appropriate masters degree, they most likely will receive an A grade.

These grades are good for one year. Once they expire, the individual will have to repeat the above process.

When an Agency is able to hire from this open competitive listing, they request the listing by title and by county. At that point in time, the Agency is given the listing of candidates who have received an "A" grade for that title and county. On the CMS 100 form the individual can choose two counties. At any time, the individual can fax or mail to CMS a request to change one or both counties. They do not have to be stuck with their original counties forever.

How positions are filled:

Once the supervisor has indicated a need for a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position in their office and we have obtained approval to post the position, the position is posted in the DHS region where the office is located. It is posted for 10 work days. The Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position is not posted unless we do have an approved vacancy to fill.

Current state employees who bid are determined eligible through the collective bargaining agreement. They have first rights to this position. If this position is filled through these rights, most often DRS must start the process over to refill the vacancy from the office from which the person transferred.

If there are no candidates with rights through the collective bargaining agreement, DRS through our Personnel Office, requests the open competitive listing for the appropriate county. The Illinois state DRS Personnel Office must make the request directly to CMS.

Once the listing is received from CMS, interviews letters are sent out to the candidates on this listing. In Illinois, there is an absolute veterans preference which means we interview and choose from the veterans first prior to interviewing the applicants remaining in the open competitive listing.

If we are aware of an individual's interest in a particular office (and it may or may not be the one of the two counties the individual listed) we try to keep track of this and make contact with the individual to let them know we are requesting a list and we will wait for them to change their county before requesting. This is why we like to be aware of individual's interest in particular offices so we can be sure they are on the open competitive listing before we request it. Once the listing is requested and they are not on it, we have to proceed with the listing we have. We cannot cancel and re-request.

Additionally:

Central Management Services is a separate state agency which maintains open competitive listings for all state titles. All other Agencies in the state, when they are at a point to get to fill a position with a candidate outside of state government, requests of CMS the open competitive listing for the title and county where the position is. I know it is confusing as to why the Agency where the vacancy is and CMS are both involved with an individual looking for employment.

Also, there is a Successful Disabilities Opportunities (SDO) Unit within CMS which maintains a similar open competitive listing of candidates however these candidates are all individuals with disabilities. It is a Unit which was developed to allow individuals with disabilities a more even playing field to compete with their non disabled peers for certain titles. The individual could be on both the regular open competitive listing and the SDO listing. When an Agency wants to request the SDO listing, they have to specifically indicate such.

If an individual wants to get on this listing, they must first make contact with a VR counselor in a DRS office to complete the necessary forms for the SDO Unit. The counselor may explain the application process however, in filling a vacancy it is no different from the process explained above. DRS would, instead of requesting an open competitive listing, would request the SDO listing for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee job title in a specific county.

Notes from Dr. Currier, NEIU RCP Coordinator:

- Before directly contacting any DRS professional, please speak with Dr. Currier or Dr. Johnston first! The DRS staff are very busy and should not be contacted directly without first speaking with your advisor so that you are prepared and that your advisor adjudges and advised that your contacting DRS is appropriate.
- It is best to have all your “ducks in a row” for this process: buffed professional resume; review job title description (job description – paying close attention to specific job tasks and specific ‘keywords’ used in the job announcement and ‘official’ job description); know the agency and what they are all about! Do your homework first!!
- Consult closely with your academic advisor
- Explore, know, and identify your career interests, abilities, values, and locale desired ad any special skills you may possess or may need to aquire such as being bilingual or bicultural (including disability, American Sign Language). She will help you most willingly and skillfully.
- Applicants must submit CMS 100 form for each and every county one is interested. In Chicagoland, these counties include: Cook, DuPage, Lake, Will, Kane, McHenry, Boone (Huntley area), and Winnebago (Rockford area).
- DRS (or any organization, for that matter) job titles or positions may vary widely with similar or identical job tasks, responsibilities, and duties: Find out other specific job titles that you may be qualified other than Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Also, job titles in other agencies such as the many divisions of the Illinois Department of Human Services - which DRS is part - such as the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and within DRS such as Disability Determination and Home Services.
- Job openings or staffing needs are communicated from local offices and their ‘supervisors’ up the chain to Springfield and the state DRS and CMS offices. DRS and CMS operate independently although interactively. CMS is the authority for state of Illinois personnel and hiring – DRS personnel must go through CMS for approval. You will deal with both entities although DRS Personnel person, Ms. Sherrie Bridges, coordinates this process between DRS and CMS.
- If you are seriously interested in pursuing or exploring a position with DRS, it is highly recommended that you join and participate in the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) (<http://www.nationalrehab.org>). The Illinois division or state chapter of the NRA is called the Illinois Rehabilitation Association (IRA) (<http://www.illinoisrehab.org>) . This allows for ‘testing the waters’, professional training, and invaluable networking plus demonstrating professional commitment and interest.

State of Illinois DRS Contacts:

Personnel (Springfield)

Sherrie Bridges
Division of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services
100 S. Grand Avenue, East
Springfield, IL 62762
(217) 524-7550
Fax: (217) 558-4270
sherrie.bridges@illinois.gov

World Class Service

Vicki Draksler
Manager of World Class Customer Service
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Department of Human Services
400 W. Lawrence, P.O.Box 19429
Springfield, IL 62794-9429
(217) 782-2280
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Chicago Area Assistant Bureau Chief (excellent help with Internship DRS site referrals)

Dr. Elayne Weathersby
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Assistant Bureau Chief- BFS
Region One (Chicago)
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Chicago, Illinois 60601
Voice- 312-814-2924
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Elayne.weathersby@illinois.gov

[Overview of IL DRS Services follows]

OVERVIEW OF DRS SERVICES

Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services (“DRS” aka ‘doors’)

Web Site: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us>

Mission or Objective:

To assist Illinois residents to achieve self-sufficiency, independence and health to the maximum extent possible by providing integrative family oriented service, promoting prevention and establishing measurable outcomes in partnership with communities.

Overview:

To foster and provide equal opportunities for independence and participation in society for persons with disabilities.

Primary Illinois State government agency providing services to persons with disabilities. Agency also advocates on behalf of this segment of the state's population.

DRS cooperates with other state agencies, businesses and organizations to develop rehabilitative services and coordinate programs that bring people with disabilities into the mainstream of society.

DRS provides a wide variety of services to children with disabilities and their families. Available are vocational rehabilitation, skills training, school-to work and on-the-job training programs, parental advocacy training programs, residential educational facilities and assistive technology information and referral.

Disability Determination Services

Evaluates Social Security disability claims for adults and children. Bureau makes eligibility decisions, and provides special services to families through its Disability Assistance Unit. DAU attempts to resolve any problems that may arise during case processing, arrange transportation to medical examinations needed for disability determination, arrange for sign language or foreign language interpreters, provide referrals to legal, welfare, health or social agencies, and provide program presentations and workshops for interested organizations.

Home Services

This program is available for adults with a disability. It offers in-home support services to allow individuals the opportunity to remain in their homes. The services included are personal assistant care, respite care, home remodeling, home delivered meals, homemaking assistance, electronic home response and physical therapy. Individuals can have home care if the cost of in-home services is less than the cost of institutionalization.

Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education – Roosevelt Rd/Wood St, Chicago (ICRE/Wood Center)

ICRE-R is an accredited educational program for children with severe physical disabilities. The school offers horticultural therapy, extra-curricular activities including sports and Junior Achievement and independent living skills. Students may reside at the center or attend classes as day students. Medical personnel are on staff to attend to students needing medical assistance or therapies.

Students can take elective classes at a Chicago high school and are encouraged to work part-time at local state offices. Tuition, room, board and books are free to Illinois residents. (312) 413-1808 (voice) or (312) 413-1775 (TTY).

Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education – Roosevelt Rd/Wood Street, Chicago, IL (ICRE/Wood Center)

Training center for people ages 16 and above who have become blind. It helps individuals adapt to their blindness and re-learn the skills they need to remain independent and employed. Offers a low vision clinic with evaluations and assistive devices and class topics include cooking, housekeeping, sewing, money management, independent travel and leisure time activities. Choice between residential or day basis. Room, board, classes and equipment are free to Illinois residents. (312) 633-3520 (Voice) or (312) 996-1510 (DY).

Illinois School for the Deaf

Accredited educational curriculum to students ages 5-21. They use a system of "Total Communication" which combines sign language with residential hearing and voice. Also offers extra-curricular activities including cheerleading, intramural sports, drama and pep clubs, and social activities.

The school's Media Center maintains a video lending library that includes sign language classes, signed children's stories and captioned programs. Also holds an annual Parent/Infant Institute.

Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI)

Offers an accredited educational curriculum for students 5-21 who are blind or visually impaired. Students can be involved in sports, forensics, choir, and other activities. No charge to Illinois students or their families for tuition, room, board and books. ISVI emphasizes Braille instruction enabling children with visual impairments to have the strong reading and Writing skills. ISVI's Independent Living Curriculum enables high school seniors to spend part of their final year in an independent-living setting on campus, helping them gain the knowledge, experience and confidence they need to live on their own after graduation.

Also offers a Parent/Infant Institute designed to offer assistance, guidance and education to parents of children who have visual impairments; Offers extensive outreach services to the families and school districts of children with visual adapted computer assistance

Services for People with Disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino/a

What is the purpose of this service?

We help individuals with disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino obtain employment, education and training, and access a variety of community resources.

Who can receive these services?

We serve Hispanic/Latino individuals (ages 16-64) who are seeking employment. We also assist families of eligible customers in obtaining needed services and resources.

What services are offered?

Our Spanish-speaking staff offers services that are culturally sensitive:

Vocational Rehabilitation assists customers in preparing for and finding quality employment.

Migrant Worker Rehabilitation Project serves migrant and seasonal farm workers with disabilities and their family members.

Hispanic/Latino Rehabilitation Project provides statewide outreach, information and referral to assist customers in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Home Services programs.

Leadership Development Training Program prepares Hispanic/Latino customers to serve as advocates on boards and committees.

Our staff refers customers and their families to the Home Services Program and other needed services.

Our staff also provides technical assistance and support to Hispanic/Latino communities and serves as liaisons to Hispanic/Latino organizations throughout the state.

How to apply?

Use the online Rehabilitation Services Web Referral to refer yourself or someone else for services.

We provide services in 51 local offices located in communities throughout the state. Use the DHS Office Locator and search for Rehabilitation Services to find the nearest local office or call toll-free: (800) 843-6154 (Voice, English or Espanol) or (800) 447-6404 (TTY).

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

For people whose disabilities offer them a significant challenge in obtaining or keeping a job. Highly trained counselors provide evaluation and guidance, job development, placement and follow-up; Assistance with on-the-job training and evaluation, supported employment, assistive technology and other supportive services.

Eligibility: Anyone with a physical or mental disability that is a major obstacle to employment. By law, people with severe disabilities are served first. To be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services, a person must have a physical or mental disability which results in a substantial handicap to employment. To be eligible for Home Services, you must be under 60 years of age and have a physical or mental disability which results in an imminent risk that you require institutionalization without home services. To be eligible for CSCH or IVHI services, the person seeking services must be severely visually impaired and there must be a reasonable expectation you will benefit from adjustment training. If it is determined that one is not capable to benefit from services, you are entitled to annual review of this decision. Applicants denied services may appeal the decision as established by federal and state law.

Internet Resources

DRS operates community-based, accessible offices throughout the state of Illinois. A list of offices and other services and links may be found at:

Illinois Department of Human Services

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx>

IL DHS Disability and Rehabilitation webpage (many useful links)

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29727>

References

Quincynet (2008). *Division of rehabilitation services*. Retrieved September 6, 2008 from <http://www.quincynet.com/analists/npmessag/n5203.htm> (Revised Date: 5/05/08) [edited for clarity]

Illinois Department of Human Services. (2008). *Services for people who are Hispanic or Latino*. Retrieved September 6, 2008 from:

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29976>