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001. fax	Lisa Brown to Cynthia Rice and Cecilia Rouse re: BRIDGE Draft (8 pages)	10/21/98	P5

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b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
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Dec 2nd - 4th Task Force on People with Disabilities in D.C.

→ HHS long-term care + PAS

→ Kennedy-Jeffords

→ BRIDGE

→ Technology

→ Tax cut

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Cecilia E. Rouse
10/27/98 01:55:01 PM

Record Type: Record

To: ogle-becky @ dol.gov @ INET @ LNGTWY

cc: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP
Subject: Yet another draft...

To all:

Attached is a new draft of the BRIDGE memo for the upcoming Deputies meeting. The main change (relative to the last version) is that we have added back in the issue of which agencies should be mandatory and added the issue of whether an applicant consortium can exclude one or more agencies.

The Deputies meeting is still scheduled for Monday, November 2 at 4pm. Therefore, please get your comments to either Cynthia (phone: 456-2846/fax: 456-7431) or Ceci (phone: 456-5359/fax: 456-2223) by **10am Wednesday, October 28.** We will coordinate all comments and send the final draft to you and the Deputies tomorrow afternoon.

-- Cynthia & Ceci

brid1027.wp

October 27, 1998 1:00 pm DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group; 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process; and 3) decide which state and local agencies should be required members of the applicant consortium and to what extent, if any, that requirement can be waived.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998). The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. Many face a myriad of barriers to employment including discrimination and lack of health care, transportation, housing, and personal assistance services. Those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work. These efforts may require federal and/or state policy changes, including possible legislation.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor,

Education, and HHS which are designed to address barriers to employment and increase program coordination for people with disabilities, and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., young adults and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Grants would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issues to Consider

A. Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together and with other agencies to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

B. Mandatory Members of the Applicant Consortia

Staff agree that there are many agencies that could play an important role in integrating services for people with disabilities entering the workforce, and have agreed that extra points should be given in the application process to consortia that apply with more agency members. There is disagreement, however, about which of agencies would need to be members of an applicant consortium in order to receive BRIDGE funds. There are six agencies that have been proposed as possible mandatory agencies:

Local and/or district offices of SSA
Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers
State TANF agencies
State education agencies (either K-12 or post-secondary)

In particular, there is disagreement about whether the state TANF agency and/or a state or local education agency should be required participants. Some believe that because a significant proportion of individuals with disabilities also receive TANF, the state TANF agency should be a required agency. Similarly, many believe that because education is so critical to labor market success, education agencies must be involved. Others, however, believe that neither TANF or education agencies should be required participants because they will skew the distribution of applicants to those aiming to serve individuals on TANF or youth which is not the primary goal of the BRIDGE program (nor the primary focus of the Task Force).

In addition, there is disagreement as to what extent applicants should be permitted to exclude one (or more) of the required agencies if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

Options include:

(1) Include all six agencies, including TANF <u>and</u> education, as mandatory participants and either:
(a) allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium or
(b) do not consider applications that do not include all the mandatory agencies.

(2) Include five agencies, including TANF <u>or</u> education agencies, as mandatory participants and either:
(a) allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium or
(b) do not consider applications that do not include all the mandatory agencies.

(3) Include only Medicaid, Voc Rehab, One-Stops, and SSA as mandatory agencies but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes TANF and/or education, and either:
(a) allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium or
(b) do not consider applications that do not include all the mandatory agencies.

(4) Include three agencies as mandatory participants (Medicaid, Voc Rehab, and One-Stops) but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes SSA, TANF, and/or education and either:
(a) allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium or
(b) do not consider applications that do not include all the mandatory agencies.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within their community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Depending on the decision made at the deputies meeting, applicant consortia must include all or some of the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: Medicaid/state medical assistance, state vocational rehabilitation, state TANF, state or local education (either K-12 or post-secondary), local workforce investment board/One-Stop Center, and local and/or district office of SSA.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources to the work of the consortium or a through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance and self-employment/entrepreneurial training;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

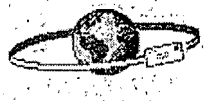
- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

Send Con Schade
→ amt of grants



Harris Seth <harris-seth @ dol.gov>
10/27/98 06:12:15 PM

Record Type: Record

To: 'Rouse Cecilia' <rouse_c @ A1.eop.gov>, Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP

cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

Subject: 10/27 BRIDGE Draft - Comments

I think the memo is in pretty good shape. There are a few changes I would suggest to make the options and the program clearer:

1. Page 1, Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure - I disagree with the re-wording of the first sentence. As I argued earlier today, the BRIDGE program will not help states and localities address their particular barriers. It will help them address one barrier only: the lack of coordination and service integration. It will not address discrimination, lack of transportation, housing, or personal assistance services, except perhaps indirectly. I think the combination of the last sentence of the "Program Need" section and the first sentence of the "Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure" section create a misleading picture.

Don't change

Therefore, I would strike "address their particular barriers" from the first sentence under "Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure." In the alternative, I would change the sentence to read "to address barriers created by the lack of a seamless service system for adults with disabilities to find and keep jobs."

2. Page 2, Section IIIA - Interagency Structure - I don't think there is a difference between Options #1 and #2 sufficient to justify having two separate options. Both would involve one agency managing the grants after consultation with other involved agencies. This is essentially the Welfare-to-Work Grants model.

Give Task Force reference

If the "inter-agency board" concept would involve agencies "voting" on grant applications (as distinct from a consultation process), then I am not aware of any model for the process in Option #1. That seems to be the intent behind making the Task Force serve in this capacity. I think this would be a serious mistake. The Task Force is pretty plainly not the right device for making decisions on grants. It was not constructed for that purpose and it is far too large (13 member organizations, some of which have absolutely no grant making experience) for this kind of decision making. Getting consensus has been hard enough when organizations' territorial interests are not as stake.

No

In sum, I strongly recommend eliminating Option #1 under IIIA.

Add page #5

3. Page 3, Section IIIB - Mandatory Members - I think the second and third sentences of the first paragraph of this section ("There is disagreement . . . as possible mandatory agencies:") and the first sentence of the second paragraph ("In particular, there is disagreement . . . .") paint a confusing picture.

In fact, there is complete agreement (every option includes them) that three agencies should be mandatory consortium members: Medicaid, VR, and the Workforce Investment Boards. The memo should reflect that. I thought there was agreement on SSA, but your options suggest there is not.

TANF in or out
SSA in or out
Educ in or out

I suggest re-writing Section B as follows:

"Staff agree that there are many local and state agencies serving adults with disabilities that should integrate their employment-related services. Staff also agrees that there are some agencies that must be included in every effort to integrate services for those efforts to succeed; thus, only applications including those agencies would be funded. Other agencies should be included, and staff agreed that applicants including those agencies would be given additional points in the selection process. Other agencies could be included at the discretion of the grant applicants.

He wants memo to say who's for what

Staff agreed that the Medicaid/state medical assistance agency, the local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers, and the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency must be included in every application. Staff disagreed about three other agencies: SSA's local or district offices, the state TANF agency, and a state education agency."

I would then give reconfigured and simplified options:

"Option #1 - In addition to the agencies listed above, (A) include SSA, TANF, and education as mandatory participants; or (B) Include SSA, TANF, and education as mandatory participants, but allow applicants to exclude one of these three if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency or agencies would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

Option #2 - In addition to the agencies listed above, (A) include SSA and TANF as mandatory participants; (B) include only SSA; (C) include only TANF; or (D) include only education. Under Options 2B, 2C, and 2D, the non-mandatory agency (agencies) would be added to the category of agencies for which substantial additional credit in the selection process.

Option #3 - Include only the Medicaid/state medical assistance agency, the local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers, and the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency as mandatory participants."

I suggest this reconfiguration because it makes the choices clearer and it eliminates options that I don't think anyone supports --- that is, allowing the exclusion of the WIB, the Medicaid agency, or VR from

any consortium. I also suggest quick pros and cons on each, as you have in the second full paragraph under Section IIIB.

Past options memos I have worked on with the NEC/DPC have clearly laid out for the decision maker which agencies supports which options. I think the memo should say that SSA and DOL feel strongly that SSA should be included but that others (I don't know who) disagree (DOL supports Option 2B above). There is plainly disagreement over the TANF agency and the education agency. Again, I would indicate who is for what: DOL is opposed to including either, SSA is opposed to including TANF (I don't know their views on education), while HHS wants TANF and Education want the educational agency. If you are not clear on each agency's view, I would poll them before distributing the memo. The Task Force staff should not be put in the position of having to express a view that is contrary to any of their members.

I also strongly suggest adding in a sentence or two expressing the group's goal, oft-expressed, that we want to preserve as much flexibility as possible for local and state applicants while assuring that the core services necessary to the employment of adults with disabilities are included in every consortium. You might also note that this Congress has generally been hostile to federal mandates and prefers block grant type systems.

You might say: "In deciding the number and type of mandatory consortium members, there is a need to balance providing as much flexibility to local and state applicants as possible while assuring that core services for adults with disabilities are included in every effort at service integration and coordination. This Congress has expressed strong opposition to attaching federal mandates to funds for state and local governments and generally prefers preserving the greatest possible flexibility."

4. Appendix, Page 1 - The first bullet under "To be considered for BRIDGE grant" is confusing, because it suggests that there is a preferred answer to one of the questions still to be decided by the deputies: which agencies are mandatory. I would change this bullet to read:

"Depending on the decision made at the deputies meeting, applicant consortia must include all (or some) of the "mandatory" agencies discussed in the preceding section. All mandatory agencies would be required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grant."

The second bullet could also be changed to reflect the new first bullet by putting TANF, SSA, and education on the list of "substantial additional credit" agencies in parentheses.

5. An Issue Not Addressed - Lori Schack has been quite adamant in the past about including a dollar figure cap on each grant. If it helps her make the sale to Jack Lew, I think it should be included. Does she still feel this way?

I hope all of this is helpful to you. Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of this further. I will let you know in the morning if we have any other comments.

Message Copied To:

Goddard Anna W-ETA <ETA.Jtp.Agoddard @ DOLETA.Gov>
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EZ/ECs

Community Empowerment Board

~20 agencies / review grants
~ staff assigned from agencies

USDA + HUD decide

but in practice reviewed by 20 person board

October 27, 1998 1:00 pm DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

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or

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(b) do not consider applications that do not include all the mandatory agencies.

(4) Include three agencies as mandatory participants (Medicaid, Voc Rehab, and One-Stops) but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes SSA, TANF, and education and either:
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or

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

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Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance and self-employment/entrepreneurial training;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

October 27, 1998 8:00 am DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process; and 3) which state and local agencies should be required members of the applicant consortium and to what extent, if any, that requirement can be waived.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998). The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. Many face a myriad of barriers to employment including discrimination and lack of health care, transportation, housing, and personal assistance services. Those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work. These efforts may require federal and/or state policy changes, including possible legislation.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor, Education, and HHS which are designed to address barriers to employment and increase program coordination for people with disabilities, and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., young adults and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Grants would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issues to Consider

A. Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together and with other agencies to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

B. Mandatory Members of the Applicant Consortia

Staff agree that to be considered for a BRIDGE grant, consortia must include the following four public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia:

Local and/or district offices of SSA
Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers.

The remaining two issues, however, are whether the state TANF agency and a state or local education agency should also be required participants and to what extent, if any, that requirement can be waived. Many believe that because a significant proportion of individuals with disabilities also receive TANF, the state TANF agency should be a required agency. Similarly, many believe that because education is so critical to labor market success, education agencies must be involved. Others, however, believe that neither TANF or education agencies should be required participants because they will skew the distribution of applicants to those aiming to serve individuals on TANF or youth which is not the primary goal of the BRIDGE program (nor the primary focus of the Task Force).

In addition, there is disagreement as to whether applicants should be permitted to exclude one of the required agencies if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

Options include:

(1) Include TANF and/or education agencies among the required participants but allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium; or,

(2) Do not include TANF and/or education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. Also, allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium; or,

(3) Do not include TANF an/or education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. And, do not consider applications that do not include all four required participants.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within their community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Depending on the decision made at the deputies meeting, applicant consortia must include all or some of the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: Medicaid/state medical assistance, state vocational rehabilitation, state TANF, state or local education (either K-12 or post-secondary), local workforce investment board/One-Stop Center, and local and/or district office of SSA.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources to the work of the consortium or a through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

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- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

Cecilia E. Rouse
10/26/98 07:26:37 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP

cc:
Subject: FW: Proposed Revisions to Deputies Memo

---------- Forwarded by Cecilia E. Rouse/OPD/EOP on 10/26/98 06:25 PM ----------

harris-seth @ dol.gov
10/26/98 05:36:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cecilia E. Rouse

cc:
Subject: FW: Proposed Revisions to Deputies Memo

This is a blind copy of some more coherent views on the local educational agency idea. I thought it might supplement our discussion earlier. Unfortunately, I don't have Cynthia's EMAIL address. Would you please forward this to her for me? Thanks.

From: Harris Seth
Sent: Monday, October 26, 1998 5:33 PM
To: Ogle Becky
Subject: RE: Proposed Revisions to Deputies Memo

I feel quite strongly that requiring that the local school board participate in every consortium makes no policy sense. It also moves far away from the original intent of the proposal.

Including the TANF agency is closer to the original intent, but turns BRIDGE into a welfare systems change program that will skew every application and every consortium to a population other than the SSI population in which we are most interested. But I am okay with the deputies considering options on this question. On the other question, I think it should not be raised to the deputies.

Our goal is to create systems change that integrates service delivery systems for employment-related services for people with disabilities. It is simply not possible to integrate K-12 public school education

service delivery with the work of the One-Stops, the health insurance agency, VR, and SSA. How would you establish a common intake system? How would you co-locate the systems? What would the front-end counseling service look like? Is every kid with a disability going to be tracked into VR? Is every kid with a disability going to be moved towards a job rather than further education?

Just asking these questions establishes that K-12 education serves a quite different purpose from the other "mandatory" systems we have discussed.

I think we are confusing two questions: (1) is it important for kids with disabilities to get help in preparing to enter the workforce; and (2) should the BRIDGE program be principally focused on kids with disabilities. I think you can answer the second question "no" without also answering the first question "no."

Including the boards of education requires that every consortium skew its work to young people. Should adults with disabilities not be the beneficiaries of systems change? Is it impossible to conceive of a system that serves a population other than school-age children? I think the list of systems change improvements that do not involve kids who may be years away from entering the workforce would be much longer than the list of those that involve kids.

I would also argue very strongly that our target must be adults, not children, with disabilities, as the President said in the Executive Order we are supposed to be implementing. A conscious decision was made when drafting the EO not to include children because of the complexity of the additional issues involved. It would be ironic, to say the least, if we took the opposite position now that the President is on the record endorsing our original decision.

The solution the group came up with to address this criticism is worse than the problem --- creating a waiver system that allows the exclusion of any of the mandatory agencies. Can you have real systems change if the SSI system, the VR system, and the WIB system are not integrated? Can you have real systems change that will improve the employment rate that does not include health insurance? I think that both of these questions must be answered with a firm "no." But the way the proposal is currently drafted, the answer is "yes." An applicant could propose a consortium that excludes the WIB, or the health insurance agency, or the SSI agency. Does that make sense? And the answer cannot be that we will exercise our discretion to refuse to fund those applicants. Why permit applications that you are definitely going to be forced to deny?

I agree with you completely that education, or "skills" more broadly, is a major issue in the employment of people with disabilities. I also agree that there is a lot wrong with how it is done now, as evidenced by the low employment rate of adults with disabilities. But including local boards of education in the consortia absolutely will not solve this problem. Education for kids with disabilities won't change a bit. As you and I have both said several times, the BRIDGE

program cannot solve every problem that contributes to low employment rates for adults with disabilities.

Finally, let me address your comment that One-Stops have not been doing a very good job serving adults with disabilities. First, One-Stops are very new, beginning with this Administration. You can't say the same thing about VR or SSI. Second, the One-Stops represent a sea change in the way job training and job placement is made accessible to everyone by co-locating various services. The solution to deficiencies in the system is more front-end counseling for adults with disabilities, expanding the list of core services provided through One-Stops, and integrating services for adults with disabilities. This solution cannot be reached by forcing the inclusion of K-12 education systems in consortia when they cannot participate in collective front-end counseling, cannot co-locate in the One-Stops, and cannot be integrated with other services for adults.

This is a long answer to your comments. I made similar points to Cynthia and Ceci earlier today. There is a grave danger of trying to do too much and thereby making the BRIDGE program completely ineffective. We must keep our eye on the ball.

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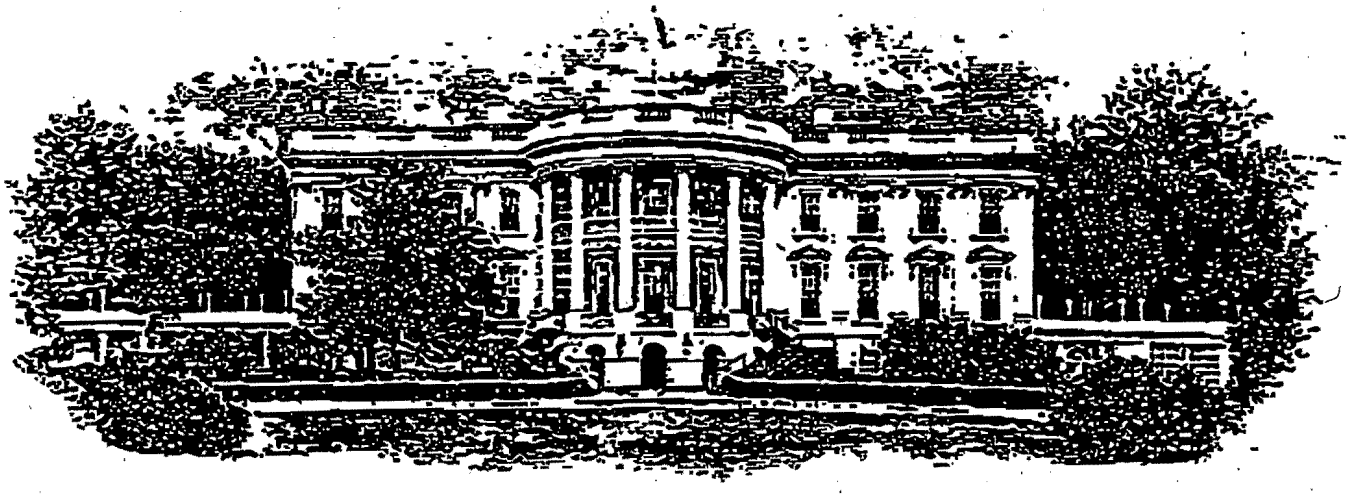

Office of Counsel to the Vice President
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C.

202.456.7022 Phone
202.456.6429 Fax

To: Sandra Rice + Ceci Rouse
Phone:
Fax:

From: Lisa Brown

Comments: I know you'd be disappointed if I didn't have a few comments....!

Lisa

ogle-becky @ dol.gov
10/23/98 03:41:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Lisa M. Brown @ OVP@EOP

cc:
Subject: FW: Please distribute this BRIDGE memo; comments due Monday at

here is the much awaited document.....

From: Cynthia_A._Rice@opd.eop.gov[SMTP:Cynthia_A._Rice@opd.eop.gov]
Sent: Friday, October 23, 1998 3:31 PM
To: Ogle Becky
Cc: Cecilia_E._Rouse@opd.eop.gov
Subject: Please distribute this BRIDGE memo; comments due Monday at noon

To all:

Attached is a new draft of the BRIDGE memo for the upcoming Deputies meeting. This meeting is now scheduled for Monday, November 2 at 4pm. Therefore, we do not need to circulate the memo until early next week. So, please get your comments to either Cynthia (phone: 456-2846/fax: 456-7431) or Ceci (phone: 456-5359/fax: 456-2223) by noon Monday, October 26. We will coordinate all comments and send the final draft to you and the Deputies shortly thereafter.

While we believe that it is fairly complete, we would like to bring your attention to one issue: on the first page of the "Appendix" in the paragraph listing the agencies that would need to be included to get "additional credit" we made a "decision" that these additional agencies could participate by either contributing resources or by having a formal agreement; this collapses the former categories two and three into one category. Another option would be to give substantial extra credit for additional agencies that contribute resources and only on "extra credit" for those that sign formal agreements. Still another option would be to simply state that the "application will be given additional credit if the consortium includes any of the following entities" (and leave out the extent of the participation.) We opted for the first option because it was simple but yet still gave some guidance on what participation means, but obviously you should weigh-in if you believe differently.

Thanks.

-- Cynthia & Ceci

(See attached file: brid1023.wpd)

October 23, 1998 3:00pm DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group and 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. However in many areas, needed services such as health care are unavailable and those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor, Education, and HHS which are designed to increase program coordination for people with disabilities and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will be encouraged to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., youth and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Each grant would be worth $1 - $2 million per year and would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issue to Consider: Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

Do we want to state the working group's preference?

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together with other agencies to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Consortia must include the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: local and/or district offices of SSA, Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, state TANF agencies, state education agencies (either K-12 or post-secondary), and local workforce investment boards/One-Stop Centers. All six agencies are not required to participate, however, if an applicant can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources ~~to the work of the consortium~~ or ~~a~~ through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service

providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

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- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

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market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

Curtis_Richards @ ed.gov (Curtis Richards)
10/26/98 04:52:07 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cecilia E. Rouse/OPD/EOP, Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP, Judy_Heumann @ ed.gov (Judy Heumann) , ogle-becky @ dol.gov

cc: cynthia_A._Rice @ odp.eop.gov
Subject: Comments on BRIDGE Memo

We have reviewed the latest draft of the BRIDGE Memo to Deputies that we received late on Friday, and have the following comments to offer:

First of all, under the "Program Need" section, we feel as if the complexity of barriers and issues facing disabled people isn't fully conveyed. We recognize that you have a need to be brief in this memo, but think it important to point out that there are a myriad of issues which people with disabilities face. These include outright discrimination, lack of knowledge and fear on the part of employers about legal obligations, a lack of accessible, affordable housing and transportation, and wages too low to support the additional health care or Personal Assistant Services needs of many folks with disabilities.

At the end of the first paragraph under the "Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure" section, we would suggest that you add a sentence something like this....."It is recognized that these efforts may require substantial federal and/or state policy changes, including possible legislation."

In the next paragraph, we suggest the following as a revision. "BRIDGE will build on....designed to address barriers to imployment and increase program coordination for people with disabilities. and BRIDGE will enhance the new...." Here, again, we're essentially suggesting an emphasis on needing to remove barriers to employment.

In the next paragraph that begins with "Bridge funds will....", a couple of suggestions. First, it should read "...serving individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities." In the next sentence, remove the words "encouraged to" so we're clear what it WILL do and "scarce," since in some cases money is not the issue.

Also, in that paragraph, we think some stronger reference to "removing barriers, such as discrimination, employer understanding/fears, housing, etc..." (like our earlier comment) should be added. We also think there needs to be a sentence here that clarifies that technical assistance will be an essential ingredient of the BRIDGE, as the federal government assists states and localities in addressing issues.

Judy still feels strongly that $1 - $2 million grants is the wrong

$1-5

approach, and would be too small an amount. Again, she believes that we should be funding states in the $5 - $10 million neighborhood, who would, in turn, fund locals.

One question which doesn't require a revision to the memo, necessarily, is: What are the budget (ie, Salary & Expenses) implications of the money all being funnelled through one agency. Will one agency be able to handle processing and monitoring that much money without a budget increase?

Aside from that, I think we're OK with the memo. Sorry for the delay in getting this to you today. I had computer troubles.

October 26, 1998 3:00 PM DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process; and 3) which state and local agencies should be required members of the applicant consortium and to what extent, if any, that requirement can be waived.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. However in many areas, needed services such as health care are unavailable and those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor, Education, and HHS which are designed to increase program coordination for people with disabilities and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will be encouraged to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., young adults and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Each grant would be worth $1 - $2 million per year and would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issues to Consider

A. Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

B. Mandatory Members of the Applicant Consortia

Staff agree that to be considered for a BRIDGE grant, consortia must include the following four public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia:

Local and/or district offices of SSA
Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers.

The remaining two issues, however, are whether the state TANF agency and a state or local education agency should also be required participants and to what extent, if any, that requirement can be waived.. Many believe that because a significant proportion of individuals with disabilities also receive TANF, the state TANF agency should be a required agency. Similarly, many believe that because education is so critical to labor market success, education agencies must be involved. Others, however, believe that neither TANF or education agencies should be required participants because they will skew the distribution of applicants to those aiming to serve individuals on TANF or youth which is not the primary goal of the BRIDGE program (nor the primary focus of the Task Force).

In addition, there is disagreement as to whether applicants should be permitted to exclude one of the required agencies if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

Options include:

(1) Include TANF and education agencies among the required participants but allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium; or,

(2) Do not include TANF and education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. Also, allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium; or,

(3) Do not include TANF and education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. And, do not consider applications that do not include all four required participants.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Depending on the decision made at the deputies meeting, applicant consortia must include all or some of the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: Medicaid/state medical assistance, state vocational rehabilitation, state TANF, state or local education (either K-12 or post-secondary), local workforce investment board/One-Stop Center, and local and/or district office of SSA.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources to the work of the consortium or a through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance and self-employment/entrepreneurial training;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

October 26, 1998 DRAFT 1:30 pm

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group and 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process. and 3) which state and local agencies should be required members of the applicant consortium.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. However in many areas, needed services such as health care are unavailable and those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor, Education, and HHS which are designed to increase program coordination for people with disabilities and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will be encouraged to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., ~~youth~~ young adults and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Each grant would be worth $1 - $2 million per year and would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issues to Consider

A. Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

B. Mandatory Members of the Applicant Consortia

Staff agree that to be considered for a BRIDGE grant, consortia must include the following four public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia:

Local and/or district offices of SSA
Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers.

The remaining two issues, however, are whether the state TANF agency and a state or local education agency should also be required participants. Many believe that because a significant proportion of individuals with disabilities also receive TANF, the state TANF agency should be a required agency. Similarly, many believe that because education is so critical to labor market success, education agencies must be involved. Others, however, believe that neither TANF or education agencies should be required participants because they will skew the distribution of applicants to those aiming to serve individuals on TANF or youth which is not the primary goal of the BRIDGE program (nor the primary focus of the Task Force).

In addition, there is disagreement as to whether applicants should be permitted to exclude one of the required agencies if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

Options include:

(1) Include TANF and education agencies among the required participants but allow applicants to exclude an agency (or agencies) if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium; or,

(2) Do not include TANF and education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. Also, allow applicants to apply for a waiver from including all four required agencies in the consortium if they can demonstrate that the excluded agency would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium (this standard would be higher than that in option 1); or,

(3) Do not include TANF and education agencies among the required participants, but give substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes them. And, do not consider applications that do not include all four required participants.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Consortia must include the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: Medicaid/state medical assistance, state vocational rehabilitation, state TANF, state or local education (either K-12 or post-secondary), local workforce investment board/One-Stop Center, and local and/or district office of SSA. All six agencies are not required to participate, however, if an applicant can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources to the work of the consortium or a through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance and self-employment/entrepreneurial training;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

10/26

Seth

Q= for mandatory agencies should be which ones have to be in every application

Why should we place burden on applicant to say why not TANF and not education

Goal= create incentives for systems [redacted] integration

[redacted]

Opt-out system ~~creates~~ wast of ideas

This will skew toward youth + welfare pops not the adults w/disabilities

1) all 6 w/ opt out & justify in application

2) 4 mandatory no opt out

2 w/ extra points TANF + educ

3rd level -

super extra points

3) 4 mandatory w/ limited opt out

waiver

2 TANF + educ super extra pts

3rd level - some extra points

October 23, 1998 3:00pm DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group and 2) consider how to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. However in many areas, needed services such as health care are unavailable and those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to address their particular barriers and create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. The expectation is that these efforts will ultimately inform statewide systems change in policies designed to help individuals with disabilities go to work.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor, Education, and HHS which are designed to increase program coordination for people with disabilities and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will be encouraged to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., youth and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Each grant would be worth $1 - $2 million per year and would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Program Design Issue to Consider: Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Use an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least through 2002 (the life of the Task Force); or

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Commissioners/Directors) of the other agencies; or

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance and technical assistance.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding. The BRIDGE program will need to be coordinated with implementation of the Kennedy-Jeffords legislation to improve health care access for people with disabilities who work.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Consortia must include the following six public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: local and/or district offices of SSA, Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, state TANF agencies, state education agencies (either K-12 or post-secondary), and local workforce investment boards/One-Stop Centers. All six agencies are not required to participate, however, if an applicant can demonstrate that the excluded agency (or agencies) would not help achieve the stated goal of the proposed consortium.

- Applications will be given additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities either through a demonstrated commitment of resources to the work of the consortium or a through formal agreement (such as an MOU): Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (Department of Veterans of Affairs), independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agencies, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance and self-employment/entrepreneurial training;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

October 22, 1998 DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR NEC-DPC DEPUTIES

FROM: "BRIDGE" WORKING GROUP

SUBJECT: The Proposed BRIDGE Program

On March 13, 1998 the President issued Executive Order 13078 directing the federal agencies to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to increase employment of adults with disabilities. The "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") program is one of several new proposals to grow out of this effort. BRIDGE is a competitive grant program designed to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration at the local level of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities.

The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) review the overall structure of the BRIDGE program developed by the interagency working group; and 2) consider two design issues: a) the proposal to create a strong federal interagency coordinating process while providing all, or nearly all, funding to one agency; and b) which state and local agencies should be required members of the applicant consortium.

I. Program Need

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, 66% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only 30% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs. However in many areas, needed services such as health care are unavailable and those services that do exist are fragmented and difficult to access.

II. Proposed BRIDGE Program Structure

BRIDGE will encourage states and localities to create seamless service systems for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep jobs. Every adult with a disability should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Each of the services provided should be sufficiently integrated with others so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce.

BRIDGE will build on current demonstration grant programs funded by the SSA, Labor,

Education, and HHS which are designed to increase program coordination for people with disabilities and will enhance the new workforce system infrastructure being expanded under the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop system.

BRIDGE funds will be available on a competitive basis to consortia of state and local agencies serving individuals with mental or physical disabilities. Grant proposals will be encouraged to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery. While the program is designed primarily to encourage state and local efforts to assist all people with disabilities, efforts can also focus on specific groups, e.g., youth and mentally ill.

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Grants would last for up to five years with funding beyond the first year contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

III. Particular Program Design Issues to Consider

A. Interagency Structure

Agency representatives involved in the working group consider it critically important that this new program be a true interagency effort. Reasons include: 1) the federal government can and should set an example; 2) multi-program expertise is essential for judging each proposal's quality and in helping the consortia access needed federal assistance. Options include:

(1) Create an inter-agency board to review applications and provide on-going policy guidance, but fund the program through one agency. The current Task Force could potentially serve as the inter-agency board, at least in the short-term.

(2) Fund the program through one agency, but require the Secretary (or Director) of that agency to make the BRIDGE grants in consultation with the Secretaries (or Directors) of the other agencies.

(3) Fund several agencies and require them to work together in awarding grants.

If funding is provided solely to one agency, the Department of Labor is the working group's consensus choice. If some funds are allocated to other agencies as well, then the Department of Education and SSA would also want to be considered for funding.

B. Mandatory Members of the Applicant Consortia

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant, consortia must include five public agencies which are required to contribute resources to the work of their consortia:

Local and/or district offices of SSA
Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Offices
State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers

Applicants will receive additional credit in the selection process for other members of the consortia. An unresolved question is whether State TANF agencies and educational institutions should be:

(1) A required member of the applicant consortia, meaning that a consortia that did not include the state TANF agency and at least one educational institution would be ineligible for BRIDGE funds.

(2) An optional member of the applicant consortia, meaning that a consortia including the TANF agency and/or an educational institution would get extra points in the selection process.

Appendix of "Non-Controversial" Program Design Issues

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with disabilities.

To be successful, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, they would need to demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, to be successful, applicants would demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Consortia must include the following five public agencies which must, in turn, contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants: local and/or district offices of SSA, Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies, Department of Veterans of Affairs (VA) regional offices, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, and local workforce investment boards/One-Stop Centers.

- Applications will be given substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities that demonstrate a commitment of resources to the work of the consortia: state TANF agencies, independent Living Centers, state developmental disability agencies, state mental retardation agencies, state mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation centers for the blind and deaf, state/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, and metropolitan planning organizations.

- Applications will be given some additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes the following entities as formal partners (e.g., through MOUs or other types of formal agreements): educational institutions, agencies, and boards of education, consumer organizations, economic development agencies, labor organizations, private non-profit service providers, protection advocacy agency, public housing authorities, small business administration offices and/or small business development centers.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence. Allowable activities include:

- Planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- Establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance;

- Providing training among consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- Providing comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of services available to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;

- Developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer databases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- Establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- Establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- Implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Funding available for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20% by the consortia's grant, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- Evaluating programs or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds cannot be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose.

Reed Gary <reed-gary @ dol.gov>
10/23/98 05:24:26 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP, Cecilia E. Rouse/OPD/EOP

cc: "'Fiala, Gerri'" <ETA.ED.FIALAG @ DOLETA.GOV>, Harris Seth <harris-seth @ dol.gov>, Ogle Becky <ogle-becky @ dol.gov>

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Deputies Memo

Having had an opportunity to consult with high-level ETA staff and Seth Harris, I believe that the Labor Department is opposed to making the revisions to the Deputies memorandum proposed by Education in today's meeting.

First, it is unfair to everyone involved in the process, and particularly unfair to both of you given the energy and attention you have devoted to this issue, for an agency to raise new issues at the last possible minute. You made every effort to get all issues on the table, discussed and resolved prior to this point. Today's meeting significantly undercut your efforts to run an open and fair process.

Second, we continue to be opposed to adding the TANF agency to the list of mandatory participants. In the previous draft, the placement of the TANF agency was an issue of the Deputies and we believe it should continue to be a Deputies issue. The primary reason, as we have offered before, is that making TANF a mandatory participant will skew the program toward a welfare focus, regardless of the intent of the grant recipient. TANF should be involved in a consortium only if the primary focus is to be on welfare recipients.

Third, we are adamantly opposed to Education's new proposal to add a State educational agency to the mandatory list of participants for the much the same reason. Such mandatory participation is likely to shift the focus of BRIDGE grants too much toward the ongoing education system (K-12 system and postsecondary) and away from moving adults with disabilities into employment. Again such agencies should be involved in a consortia when a primary focus is to be on the ongoing education system.

Four, we are also opposed to converting the mandatory list of participants into a quasi-mandatory list. As you have pointed out in our meetings, the Administration views the Workforce Investment Act, with the Workforce Investment Boards and the associated One-Stop Concept, as one of their most important accomplishments in the area of education and training. To now suggest that we might envision funding BRIDGE grant consortia without the involvement of the local workforce investment system would seem to run directly counter to Administration policy. If One-Stops are to be a focal point for the integration and

coordination of services at the local level, as envisioned not only by the Administration but also by key members of Congress, the Workforce Investment Boards and the One-Stops need to be mandatory participants in the BRIDGE consortia.

We are content to have these issues discussed and debated at the Deputies-level if no further resolution is possible at the staff-level.

Cecilia E. Rouse
10/21/98 12:16:37 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP

cc:
Subject: Our lost agencies

Cynthia,

I've asked Sonyia to call Mark Brennan (DOT), Jim O'Connor (SBA), and Chester Straub (Commerce) to ask that they make a special effort to be at Friday's meeting. Do you think that we need to do anything further? (Such as calling them ourselves?)

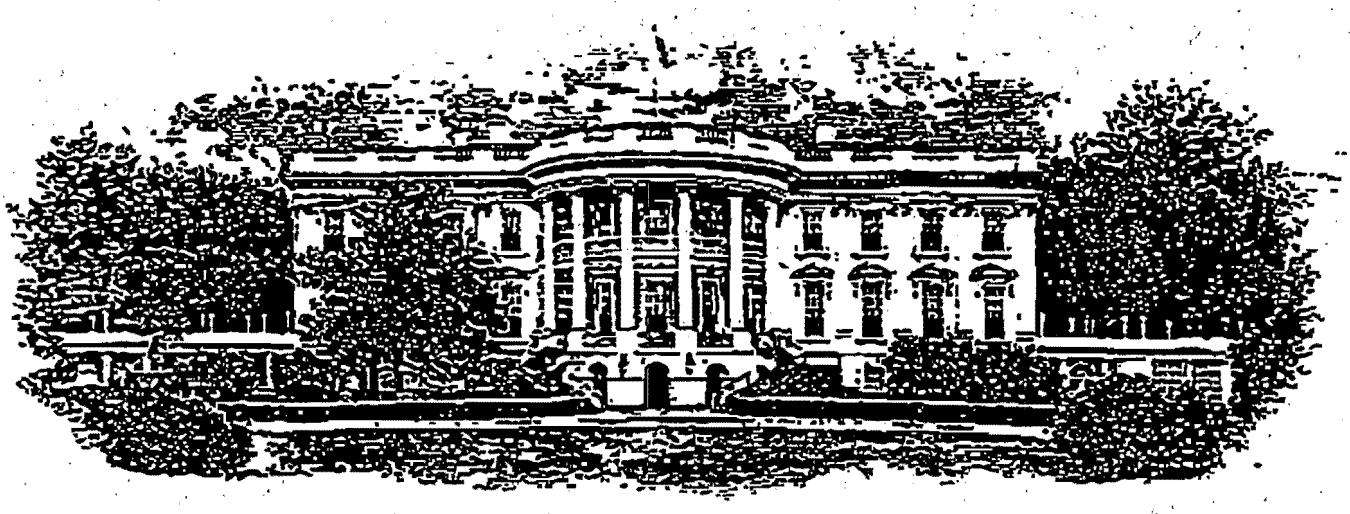
-- Ceci

Ron Stroman
Michael Winter
(FTA policy)

Sue Massolink

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER

BRIDGE



Office of Counsel to the Vice President
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C.

202.456.7022 Phone
202.456.6429 Fax

To: Cynthia Rivas + Cecilia Rosas

Phone:

Fax: 6 - 7431

From: Lisa Brown

Comments:

Nice job! A couple of suggestions.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker
Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. fax	Lisa Brown to Cynthia Rice and Cecilia Rouse re: BRIDGE Draft (8 pages)	10/21/98	P5

This marker identifies the original location of the withdrawn item listed above. For a complete list of items withdrawn from this folder, see the Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet at the front of the folder.

COLLECTION:
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rx37

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

HHS abts

DRAFT October 20, 1998

Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment (BRIDGE)

Introduction

On March 13, 1998, the President issued Executive Order No. 13078 entitled "Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities." The Executive Order directs federal agencies and departments to create a coordinated and aggressive national policy to accomplish that goal. As part of the effort to fulfill the President's mandate, the Departments of Labor, Education, Transportation, Commerce, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services along with the Social Security Administration and the Small Business Administration are proposing the "Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Employment" ("BRIDGE") Program.

BRIDGE will help to increase the employment rate of adults with disabilities by fostering integration of employment-related services and support services to adults with disabilities among state and local disability systems *at the point of delivery*. Through competitive grants, BRIDGE will help people with disabilities access all of the services they need to find and keep employment through a single point of entry, rather than having to sort through a dizzying bureaucracy on their own. BRIDGE will also foster effective integration of service delivery **by better ensuring** so that different agencies with related missions will work together to achieve their common goal: employment of adults with disabilities.

Background

According to the 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, two-thirds of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 are not working. Only three in ten working-age adults with disabilities are employed full or part-time. Seventy-five percent of those non-employed adults with disabilities have indicated that they would prefer to be working (Harris Survey, 1998.) The vast majority of these individuals receive income support and other services through federal, state, and local programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Medicaid (including **long-term services** Medicaid waiver programs), Medicare, mental health services, vocational rehabilitation , subsidized housing, and food stamps.

Even though legislation, technology, and changes in societal attitudes have improved the environment for employment, fewer than 1% per year of the eight million SSI and SSDI beneficiaries actually return to work and terminate benefits. In fact, over the past decade, the total number of SSI and SSDI disability beneficiaries has doubled and federal cash payments to these individuals have steadily increased to more than $75 billion annually (SSA, 1998). The costs of related Medicaid coverage also continues to escalate. These figures will continue to increase dramatically with the increased incidence of disability in an aging population, and the

migration of many Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients with disabilities from welfare to SSI/SSDI roles. **Moreover, as TANF roles go down, the percentage of those with disabilities continuing to received temporary cash assistance will likely increase.**

The Policy Problem

People with disabilities are a diverse population requiring a variety of services and supports to seek and retain employment. While a host of services and supports are currently provided by government, programs are dispersed among numerous departments and agencies. In addition, states and localities vary enormously in the structure, availability and effectiveness of their employment, health care, and other human services and support programs. For example, many states do not take full advantage of available authority to provide services that are vital to persons with disabilities returning to work, such as continued health care coverage, so that there may be a need for states to consider possible changes to their existing policies. Moreover, the current fragmented approach to supplying these needed services and programs has rendered them less effective in assisting adults with disabilities in finding and maintaining competitive employment. In addition, while the programs are intended to accomplish the same outcome --- that is, helping adults with disabilities become employed --- they frequently do not work well together. **Young people with with disabilities, graduating from high school or college, often lack accessible pathways to the world of work.**

Lack of service coordination and integration **frustrates the efforts of** (results in negative consequences for) employers and service providers, both public and private. Most important, they do not have ready access to skilled and effective workers with disabilities. But they also find their efforts frequently wasted. For example, in some states, job counselors do not have access to job listings from agencies that administer employment and training programs. In addition, many different service providers (a vocational rehabilitation counselor, an employment training specialist, a supported employment job developer, or a representative from Projects With Industry) may all be independently contacting the same employer to develop employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. This results in duplication of effort, confusion, and complications in the relationship between the service providers and employers; the very relationship that is often critical to employment success.

Current Efforts

Currently, the Social Security Administration, and the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services have grant programs to develop and evaluate models of program coordination, service/systems integration and systems change to increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities at the state and local level. These agencies have published individual and joint grant announcements for competitive grant awards that have been made in FY 1998.

- The Social Security Administration, jointly funded with Health and Human Services/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Center for Mental Health Services, is administering the "Cooperative Agreements for State Projects which Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities Who Receive Public Support."

- The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) administers a Disability Employment and Initiatives grant program that fosters linkages with the One-Stop Center system, interagency coordination of multiple service needs, and is designed to support the objectives of Executive Order No. 13078 to increase employment of people with disabilities.

- The Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)/ Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), jointly funded with DOL/ETA, is administering "Systems-Change Projects to Expand Employment Opportunities for Individuals With Mental or Physical Disabilities, or Both, Who Receive Public Support."

The BRIDGE Initiative

BRIDGE will build on the grant programs described above, with a greater emphasis on single-point-of-entry or "one-stop" service for adults with disabilities seeking to find and keep a job. Each adult with a disability --- each "customer" --- seeking the services needed to succeed in competitive employment should be able learn about, receive advice about, and gain access to all of the necessary services with the least effort possible, preferably with a single call or office visit. Thereafter, each of the services provided to our customer should be sufficiently integrated with all of the other services so that they collectively accomplish the common goal of long-term employment and permanent attachment to the workforce. BRIDGE exemplifies new workforce system infrastructure approaches at the state and local level that promote universal access through One-Stop Centers, integrated service delivery, enhanced customer information, and choice to improve employment potential and opportunity.

BRIDGE will emphasize the need to focus on the point of the delivery of services and the need to be flexible and adapt to state and local conditions as well as ensure that needed services are available. For this reason, state and local agencies will be given the greatest leeway possible to assemble and organize consortiums that best serve their populations. Grant proposals will be designed to enhance service delivery with expanded wrap-around counseling, provision of information that can maximize scarce resources and employment outcomes, and other approaches that address customer and community barriers to employment by integrated and coordinated service delivery.

BRIDGE would be linked to the existing grant programs in that grant competitions under BRIDGE would incorporate any lessons learned in the existing programs. Further, grantees under the existing programs would be allowed to apply for additional funds to expand their

current efforts. Finally, all applicants would be required to identify and discuss the implications of their proposed efforts to grants in their state or localities under the existing programs.

Target Population

Consortia of agencies providing services to **working age** individuals with mental **and** (or) physical disabilities, or both, who are participants in federal, state, and/or local public support programs (e.g., TANF, SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, subsidized housing, and food stamps, etc.) will be eligible for grants under the BRIDGE program.

Eligible Applicants

Each applicant must be a consortium of state and/or local agencies that provide or could provide a range of supports and services to adults with disabilities which lead to finding and keeping employment. The agencies must have the legal authority to provide the services they propose. Consortia may include not-for-profit providers of employment, assistive technology, health and other related services to adults with **and without** disabilities, **including young people transitioning to employment**.

Successful applicants would demonstrate that they have identified the means to integrate and coordinate the services provided across agencies and to remove barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. Further, successful applicants would demonstrate that they consulted with diverse elements within the community of adults with disabilities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. In addition, successful applicants would demonstrate that they will match BRIDGE funds with appropriate federal, state, and/or local funds or in-kind services. Finally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate how they would ensure the continuation of health care coverage to persons with disabilities after the return to work.

To be considered for a BRIDGE grant:

- Consortia must include the following five public agencies which must, in turn, contribute resources to the work of their consortia over the span of the grants:
  - Local and/or district offices of SSA
  - Medicaid/state medical assistance agencies
  - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Offices
  - State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
  - Local Workforce Investment Boards/One-Stop Centers

- Applications will be given substantial additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes any of the following entities that demonstrate a commitment of resources to the work of the consortia:
  - State TANF agencies

Independent Living Centers
State developmental disability agencies
State mental retardation agencies
State mental health agencies
Vocational rehabilitation agencies for the blind and deaf
State/local transportation agencies, public transit authorities, metropolitan planning organizations

- Applications will be given some additional credit in the selection process if the consortium includes the following entities as formal partners (e.g., through MOUs or other types of formal agreements):
  - Educational institutions, agencies, and boards of education
  - Consumer organizations
  - Economic development agencies
  - Labor organizations
  - Private non-profit service providers
  - Protection advocacy agencies
  - Public housing authorities
  - Small business administration offices and/or small business development centers

Finally, up to 5 percent of the grant amount would be reserved for rigorous evaluation. Each applicant would have to demonstrate an ability and willingness to cooperate in a meaningful fashion in an overall evaluation of their coordination and integration efforts.

Allowable Activities

Allowable activities include those needed to achieve program integration and improved coordination of existing local, state and federal programs in the delivery of services to adults with disabilities and their achievement of self-sustaining employment and economic independence.. Allowable activities include:

- planning, development and implementation of cooperative agreements, including service system planning, and development, planning and creation of core services structures;

- establishing partnerships among entities to provide integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services, such as transportation assistance;

- providing training amongst consortium partners and required partners under the Workforce Investment Act to increase knowledge and awareness of incentives, available services, and health care waiver provisions, and to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system;

- comprehensive pre-service assistance, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act and information on the array of available services to individuals with disabilities that increase the ability to obtain and retain employment;
- developing and implementing procedures that promote a "single point of entry" or "one-stop service delivery" such as common intake, coordination of customer data bases, customer service hotlines, and access to information resources through technology or staff assistance;

- establishing linkages of consortium partners with services provided through One-Stop Center system, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

- establishing linkages with other providers of services that people with disabilities may need to find and keep gainful employment, including local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;

- implementing accessible information technology linkages between programs and infrastructures, such as provided in One-Stop Centers that provide labor market, skill requirements, job listings and available training providers. Available funding for information technology infrastructure development and implementation will be limited to 20%, with any additional support funded by respective consortium partners; and

- evaluation of program or activities funded by BRIDGE grants.

With the exception of pre-service assistance, BRIDGE funds can not be used for direct services and direct services must be provided by the local, state and/or federally funded program available for that purpose. The intent of BRIDGE is to make these services readily accessible and comprehensible to the consumer.

Availability of Funding

BRIDGE grants would be awarded from a national account of $150 million in FY 2000. Grants would last for up to five years with funding in FY 2001 through FY 2004 contingent upon subsequent appropriations. Current funding for traditional disability employment programs would not be supplanted by this initiative.

Expected Outcomes

These grants will produce a diverse array of integrated and coordinated service systems in states and local areas across the country that will effect the following. Some of the expected outcomes will include the following:

Adults with disabilities will:

- Have a greater rate of gainful **and sustained** employment within a competitive work environment than before BRIDGE or compared to non-BRIDGE participants.
- enter into gainful employment within a competitive work environment at a higher rate of pay than they receive currently;
- more easily and rapidly access a wider and more diverse array of employment services resulting in efficient and rapid job placement that will improve job skills, job opportunities, job placement, and job retention for adults with disabilities;
- be more satisfied with employment and related support services;
- have more input concerning their life goals and career plans;
- have more choices with respect to employment and career decisions;
- be more readily accommodated within the work force;
- have a better understanding of work incentive provisions;
- report that their quality of life has improved; and

o **minimize or avoid relying on income support programs such as SSI, SSDI or TANF..**

State and local service delivery systems will:

- be less fragmented, have improved communication across systems, and be more efficient by decreasing duplication of services;
- be more user friendly and customer oriented;
- be more cost-effective than services provided in less integrated delivery service systems;
- systematically decrease barriers to employment of adults with disabilities at state and local levels (e.g. lack of: transportation, health care/insurance, education, workforce training, housing, assistive technology, civil rights, on-site and off-site job accommodations and long-term follow-along supports);
- increase the use of Medicaid waivers and individual waivers of SSA eligibility and income requirements; and
- realize substantial cost savings in terms of reducing the costs of public benefit programs.

Attachment: Proposed Legislative Language for Allowable Activities

SEC. ___. AUTHORIZED BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES.--

(a) Systems Change Grants.-- Funds made available from appropriations for carrying out this Act may be used to provide assistance pursuant to grants or contracts with eligible entities in each State for--

(1) the establishment of partnerships utilizing existing local, State, and Federal resources for the purpose of achieving the coordinated provision of integrated income assistance, health and other benefits, job training and placement, and other employment-related services for adults with disabilities;

(2) the planning, development, and implementation of cooperative agreements among consortium members establishing such new partnerships;

(3) making arrangements to link such services with local one-stop delivery systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in a manner that comprehensively supports coordinated delivery of employment-related services to individuals with disabilities;

(4) the provision of training and technical assistance to consortium partners under this Act and to all components of the Statewide workforce investment system under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in order--

(A) to increase awareness of the availability of and the eligibility requirements for employment-related benefits, services, and training for adults with disabilities; and

(B) to promote equal opportunity for the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities in the State through improved understanding and knowledge of program accessibility needs and requirements;

(5) the development and implementation of procedures designed to enhance the provision of services for adults with disabilities through such means as common intake, resource information and assistance (including assistance in resume preparation and career development, and information on employment-related services, programs, and benefits), the development of customer databases and customer service hotlines, and appropriate employment-related counseling and referrals, utilizing single point-of-entry systems involving appropriate electronic and staff assistance;

(6) the development of information systems that link consortium partners with the Statewide workforce investment system and with national, State, and local labor market information resources, including employment statistics and information on job vacancies;

(7) the establishment of linkages with other providers of services that adults with disabilities may need in order to find and keep gainful employment, including such providers as local public agencies, not-for-profit service providers, community-based organizations, and educational institutions;

(8) the establishment of arrangements for the provision of comprehensive pre-service assistance for individuals with disabilities, including counseling on benefits and incentives under the Social Security Act, and information on the array of available services, including transportation assistance and subsidies; and

(9) evaluation of programs or activities funded under this Act.

(b) IMPROVED SERVICES TO BETTER SERVE TARGETED POPULATIONS. -- In order to better serve targeted sub-populations among adults with disabilities, funds made available from appropriations for carrying out this Act may be used to provide assistance pursuant to grants or contracts--

(1) to enable a State's publicly-funded entities serving specific sub-populations of adults with disabilities (including individuals who are blind or deaf, or have psychiatric or developmental disabilities, and others) to provide training and technical assistance to consortium partners, relating to the specific needs and barriers faced by their clients;

(2) to identify and implement systems changes that address unique barriers to employment for targeted sub-populations, including--

(A) linkages and improved access to transportation for those with mobility impairments;

(B) resolution of housing issues facing those experiencing de-institutionalization or loss of public housing support; and

(C) other barriers to entry into employment and job retention; and

(3) to identify and implement service delivery approaches for targeted sub-populations that bridge or cut across the relevant State systems, in order to address specific barriers confronting such sub-populations.

(c) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.-- Not to exceed 20 percent of the amounts available for grants or contracts under this section may be used for the acquisition of computer hardware and software to facilitate linking or consolidating information or services provided by existing State, local, and Federal providers.