



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Ron Shanovich, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Workforce Development: Request for Increased Expenditure Authority for Federal Independent Living Stimulus Funding -- Agenda Item XIII

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) requests increased expenditure authority of \$915,962 in 2009-10 in the appropriation under s. 20.445(5)(n) to appropriate the state's allocation of federal Title VII funds for independent living grants under provisions of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

BACKGROUND

DWD is required to transfer \$600,000 in federal social security reimbursement funds to the Department of Health Services (DHS) annually for grants to Independent Living Centers (ILCs). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in DWD receives social security reimbursement monies for each successfully completed rehabilitation of supplemental security income (SSI) or social security disability insurance (SSDI) recipients.

The ARRA appropriates additional funding for Independent Living (IL) programs authorized under Title VII, Part B and Part C, and Chapter 2 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Under ARRA, \$140,000,000 in recovery funds are provided under three authorities: (a) \$18,200,000 for state IL grants under the State IL Services Program; (b) \$34,300,000 for IL services for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind program (OIB); and (c) \$87,500,000 for the Centers for Independent Living Program (CIL).

ARRA allocates \$915,962 in Title VII funds to Wisconsin. Of the total, \$248,731 is allocated for IL state grants. These funds are distributed to state vocational rehabilitation agencies on a formula based on population. A 10% match is required. The funds will be distributed as grants to independent living centers (ILCs) in Wisconsin, and to the Wisconsin Independent Living Council. Independent living centers are community-based, non-residential, non-profit

organizations that provide a variety of services to people of all ages with disabilities. ILC services are designed to maximize the independence of individuals with disabilities and expand the accessibility of the communities in which they live. The federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 establishes many of the definitions and requirements governing operation of ILCs. An ILC is required to provide four core services, and at least two additional services. The four core services are: (a) advocacy -- assisting in learning individual self advocacy skills and acting at the community, state, and federal levels for changes in legislation, benefits, and services; (b) peer support -- one-on-one matches and support groups with trained volunteers and staff with disabilities; (c) information and referral -- one-stop comprehensive information and referral information on disability-related issues, resources, and services; and (d) independent living skills training -- assistance in assessing and developing skills needed to live independently, including communication, financial management, household management, problem solving, and using supportive equipment. Other services provided could include consumer and community education, housing location, leadership development, assistive technology, employment services, children and youth services, and transportation.

The remaining \$667,231 in ARRA funding will be allocated for the OIB program. A 10% match is also required under this program. OIB funds are allocated by formula to the states. In Wisconsin, DWD is the grant recipient, but the funds are transferred to the DHS Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired. OIB funds provide independent living services to persons 55 or older, whose significant visual impairment makes competitive employment extremely difficult to obtain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. Eligible individuals are provided assistance in learning new strategies for accomplishing daily tasks, and participating in community and family activities. Basic IL services are provided including advocacy, peer support, information and referral, and independent skills training, as well as other services that assist individuals in maintaining or regaining independence, and in participating in their communities.

ANALYSIS

As noted, \$248,731 of the ARRA funds will be allocated to IL state grants. Including the required 10% match, a total of \$276,368 will be awarded. Of the total, \$160,506 will be provided to the Independent Living Counsel of Wisconsin to expand and support existing IL services within the state that are identified in the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approved state plan for independent living (SPIL). The funds will be distributed to the IL network for projects that support the SPIL. The remaining \$115,862 in ARRA funding will be distributed directly to each ILC, with priority given to the centers experiencing the greatest fiscal impacts from the reductions in state GPR funds. Table 1 shows the amount that will be awarded to each of the eight ILCs.

TABLE 1

ARRA Independent Living State Grants

<u>Independent Living Center</u>	<u>Independent Living State Grant Amount</u>	<u>Counties</u>
Access to Independence	\$17,620	Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green
Center for Independent Living of Western Wisconsin	2,250	Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix
Independence First	7,592	Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha
Independent Living Resources	17,680	Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Jackson, Juneau, Lafayette, LaCrosse, Monroe, Richland, Sauk, Trempealeau, Vernon
Midstate Independent Living Consultants	17,680	Adams, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Taylor, Vilas, Wood
North Country Independent Living	17,680	Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Pierce, Sawyer, Washburn
Options for Independent Living	17,680	Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond Du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago
Society's Assets	17,680	Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine, Rock, Walworth

ARRA funding of \$667,231 will be transferred from DWD to the DHS Office of the Blind and Visually Impaired for OIB program services. Table 2 shows the OIB program funding recipient, the amount of funding, and the use of funds.

TABLE 2

ARRA OIB Program Awards

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>Use of Grant Funds</u>
Badger Association for the Blind (Milwaukee)	\$130,000	\$80,000 for training; \$50,000 to purchase orientation and mobility services
Wisconsin Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Madison)	142,000	\$90,000 for individualized or group training on basic living skills for people who became blind later in life in Columbia, Sauk, Monroe, and Juneau Counties; \$52,000 for services to older blind individuals.
DHS Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Statewide)	240,231	For equipment aids and appliances for visually impaired individuals throughout the state.
Training (Statewide)	51,000	For advance statewide training of rehabilitation specialists for the blind.
Capital Investment (Statewide)	34,000	For purchase of laptop computers and software to be used throughout the state to meet federal reporting requirements.
Contracts (Statewide)	70,000	For contracts with professionals, such as opticians, throughout the state.

The increased expenditure authority for DWD is necessary to allocate the ARRA funds for IL state and OIB program awards.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the request of the Department of Workforce Development to provide increased expenditure authority of \$915,962 in 2009-10 in the appropriation under s. 20.445(5)(n) to appropriate the state's allocation of federal Title VII funds for independent living under provisions of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

2. Deny the request.

Prepared by: Ron Shanovich