



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 18, 2001

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #127

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation -- Position Transfer to DOA (DOA -- General Agency Provisions and Workforce Development -- Departmentwide)**

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 54, #7 and Page 720, #8]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) administers programs and provides services to people with disabilities to help them develop skills necessary to obtain employment and function independently. DVR allocates 1.0 PR position and \$45,000 PR annually to the injured state worker program.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Include nonstatutory language to require the transfer, from DVR to the Department of Administration (DOA), of 1.0 PR position and the incumbent employee having responsibility for the rehabilitation of injured state employees. The employee that would be transferred from DVR to DOA would have the same rights and status as he or she had at DVR, and would not have to serve a probationary period.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. The bill would transfer a reemployment specialist from the DVR to the DOA Risk Management program. The employee is currently assigned to the Risk Management program and funded under an interchange agreement with DOA to assist injured state employees under the Worker's Compensation law. The program has been successful at placing state employees in jobs enabling their early return to work. The current counselor also has strong capabilities in assisting agencies with developing their own return-to-work programs and conducting job analyses to assist

in accommodating disabilities. There were 27 cases referred to DVR during 1999-00. There are 12 employees enrolled in training.

2. Returning injured workers to work is a key component of the Wisconsin Worker's Compensation Act. Under this act, retraining is secondary to a quick return to the same or similar type of work. The DVR program has a broader focus including skill upgrades. Federal law requires DVR to favor retraining (such as a four-year degree program) rather than emphasizing return to work under State Worker's Compensation Law. Consequently, DVR has requested DOA to assume program responsibility for rehabilitating injured state workers.

3. DOA indicates that transferring the position and incumbent employee would be the most cost effective way to provide injured state employees with vocational rehabilitation services. Alternatively, DOA could contract with private vendors to provide the service. However, DOA notes that this would cost more and the current reemployment specialist would be unavailable to the Department.

4. DVR has expressed a desire to retain the position authority. The position could be redeployed to another activity by reallocating funding to support it.

5. As noted, the bill contains a nonstatutory provision that would transfer to DOA the position that is allocated to the state injured worker program. However, the bill does not adjust DWD's expenditure and position authority to reflect the transfer. If the Committee approves the transfer, \$45,000 PR and 1.0 PR position annually should be deleted from DWD.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to transfer 1.0 reemployment specialist position from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in DWD to the Department of Administration. Delete \$45,000 PR and 1.0 PR position annually from DWD and provide 1.0 PR position to DOA annually to reflect the transfer.

<b>Alternative 1, DWD</b>	<b>PR</b>
<b>2001-03 FUNDING</b> (Change to Bill)	- \$90,000
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Bill)	- 1.00

2. Maintain current law.

<b>Alternative 2, DOA</b>	<b>PR</b>
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Bill)	- 1.00

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