

PROFESSIONAL MANPOWER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING IN THE AREA OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF THE DEAF: NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Broadened legislation and increased funding of Vocational Rehabilitation programs during recent years have made possible increasingly effective training and adjustment services for handicapped people in general and deaf people in particular. In 1964, 2,243 deaf people were among the 119,708 handicapped Americans who were successfully rehabilitated, while in 1971 it is estimated that 288,000 handicapped citizens will be rehabilitated, of whom 8,900 will be deaf. These increases were made possible largely through new and expanded programs and the utilization of specialists with the deaf. At the present time, however, Vocational Rehabilitation efforts on behalf of deaf people are in danger of limited effectiveness unless provisions are made to overcome the critical manpower shortage in the field. This report discusses the problem and how it can be resolved.

The Needs of Deaf People

There are an estimated 250,000 deaf people in our country. Their hearing is non-functional for the ordinary purposes of life. They receive communication primarily through vision, and send messages by signs, speech, and writing. Most have normal strength, mobility and intelligence. Their handicaps are of an educational and psychosocial nature. Their educational handicap is related to language deficiencies, which are rooted in inadequate

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communication between the deaf child and his family and intensified by the heavy emphasis upon speech skills by teachers of the deaf. This emphasis has resulted in disproportionate amounts of time spent in acquiring speech skills at the expense of acquiring language and knowledge in general. Their psychosocial problems are primarily a result of their language deficiencies, which make educational development, vocational training, and subsequent occupational and personal adjustment more difficult.

It has been demonstrated that with quality, in-depth training and adjustment services, provided by knowledgeable and skilled professionals from the various disciplines, deaf people achieve satisfactory levels of development and adjustment and contribute significantly to our nation's productivity. Without the assistance of such services, however, they become the victims of serious underemployment, unemployment, and unhappily, a drain on our country's resources.

Personnel Needs

Personnel needs in the Vocational Rehabilitation of deaf people are related to the kinds of services needed to effect proper vocational adjustment. Specifically, deaf people benefit from vocational training, counseling and guidance, psychological counseling, work adjustment training, personal adjustment training, psycho-diagnosis, vocational evaluation, mental health services, and community services that make available a wide range of helping services normally available to those with hearing. Such services are essentially similar to those provided to other people, but different in that the personnel who provide them have an understanding of deafness and its impact on learning and adjustment, and possess skills in communicating with deaf people. Unfortunately, there is a serious undersupply of such personnel, and as a consequence many existing service programs for the deaf adult cannot fully implement their objectives.

The Manpower Poverty

The number of Vocational Rehabilitation specialists with the deaf continues to be small in comparison to the need and the demand. Within State Agencies, only 35 agencies have counselors with special competence in serving deaf persons. Of these 35 agencies, only eight employ more than one such special counselor. The Rehabilitation Services Administration has recently estimated that last year (1970) 275 counselors and other personnel were needed

to fill positions in expanding programs of service to deaf people, and by 1973 about 500 per year will be needed for replacements or to fill new positions.² Tully's study³ substantiates this prediction. He reported that 276 new positions for rehabilitation counselors for deaf clients within state agencies alone will be opening up by 1975.

Growing and expanding post-secondary education and vocational training facilities for deaf people are requiring increasing numbers of counselors and other support personnel. Among these facilities are the three regional vocational-technical facilities for the deaf (Delgado College, Seattle Community College, and St. Paul Technical-Vocational Institute), the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and rehabilitation center programs for the deaf such as those at Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Cave Spring, Georgia. As examples of the need, the N.T.I.D. counseling program now has seven counselors for its 350 deaf students, but will need 15 when its full enrollment of 750 is reached in approximately 1975. Gallaudet College is currently expanding its counseling program. San Fernando Valley State College, which is expanding its program for undergraduate deaf students, will also be increasing its counseling staff. Similar expansion is being demonstrated at such schools as Denver Community College, Golden West Community College (California), Iowa Western Community College, and Johnson County (Kansas) Community College.

Elementary and secondary school programs for the deaf frequently recruit personnel trained in rehabilitation counseling. Accordingly, two streams of development will directly affect the current and projected picture of manpower development and recruitment. First, many schools for the deaf are establishing new counseling programs, while others are expanding existing programs. Second, the new Model Secondary School for the Deaf is developing a strong counseling program, and the new Kendall School program will include provisions for parent counseling as well as student counseling. Thus, it can be expected that these as well as future regional high schools for the deaf will be active in recruiting from among the manpower pool in rehabilitation of the deaf.

The Congress is presently considering a bill, H.R. 5610 introduced by Rep. Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, designed to provide for the establishment and initial operation of national comprehensive rehabilitation centers for low (under) achieving deaf people. The establishment of these centers will create an even greater demand

for rehabilitation specialists with the deaf.

It is important to point out that many deaf persons reside in areas where special facilities and specialists with the deaf do not exist. These persons need access to the services of counselors who are familiar with the problems of deaf people, who can communicate with them, and who have knowledge of the facilities and resources available to the deaf. The general caseload counselor who serves all types of clients, including those who are deaf, can provide a valuable service if he has had some preparation in working with deaf people.

A growing number of community service and mental health centers for the deaf are being established in metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Present centers are drawing from among the available pool of rehabilitation specialists with the deaf, and as more centers are established it can be expected that they, too, will join the number of programs actively recruiting rehabilitation workers with the deaf.

The foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that there is a current urgent demand for rehabilitation counselors and other support personnel for work with deaf people, and that this demand will triple within the next two to four year. Yet, as can be seen from the next section, this demand cannot be met unless the Federal government and colleges and universities greatly increase their efforts in training rehabilitation specialists with the deaf.

Present Manpower Training Efforts

At the present time the Social and Rehabilitation Service sponsors six college and university programs that prepare rehabilitation workers with deaf people. Four of these (University of Arizona, New York University, University of Pittsburgh, and San Fernando Valley State College) provide graduate, degree-type preparation, and two (Oregon College of Education and University of Tennessee) provide non-degree preparation. Table I (see Appendix) shows that together these six training programs will prepare a total of 91 rehabilitation workers with the deaf during the 1970-71 school year. In terms of funding, these six training programs are provided \$330,364 for tuition and stipends by the Social and Rehabilitation Service. Of this amount, \$95,364 is used by the two non-degree programs and \$187,000 is used by the degree programs (see Table 2 in Appendix), two of which share another \$50,000 for short-term training purposes.

These training efforts have made important contributions toward easing the manpower shortage. As Table 3 (see Appendix) demonstrates, 94 percent of the 576 rehabilitation workers trained through these six programs have entered and remained in rehabilitation work with deaf people. However, it is to be noted that these 540 workers with the deaf were prepared over a 9-year period (1962-1970), whereas by 1975 there will exist a need for 500 new counselors and replacements *per year*.

Existing training programs in the area of deafness rehabilitation focus upon preparing workers from the various disciplines (counseling, psychology, special education, speech pathology and audiology, and social work) to function with deaf people. Such training has built upon each discipline by adding coursework on deafness and communication skills with the deaf along with clinical practica and internships with deaf people. These efforts have been based upon the rationale that working with the deaf requires the expertise available from each of these disciplines, along with a special understanding of the developmental and adjustment problems of deafness, skill in communicating with deaf people, and experience in actually working with the deaf under supervised conditions. Such training ensures that rehabilitation specialists with the deaf will be able to *communicate* with their clients, which is the keystone for success in effective rehabilitation service.

Projected Manpower Training Needs

Present training efforts are now producing approximately 91 rehabilitation workers with the deaf each year. These efforts fall short of the 275 specialists that were projected for 1970 by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and, unless training efforts are tripled immediately, will fall far short of training the estimated 500 specialists projected for 1973 by RSA. Accordingly, there is a need not only for existing training programs to expand their efforts and train more workers with the deaf, but also for more colleges and universities to establish similar training programs. The problem of geographical distribution of these training programs needs to be considered, also, since at the present time many states fail to recruit specialists with the deaf due to the distance to the nearest training facility. Ideally, a multi-disciplinary in-depth-training-in-deafness program should be established in each HEW region, and on-going non-degree training in deafness for employed

rehabilitation workers should expand their programs. These programs should provide appropriate orientation and training in deafness rehabilitation to such professionals as counselors, psychologists, speech pathologists, and audiologists, social workers, and special educators. Each training program should make provisions for appropriate supervised practica and internships, and should be staffed with the appropriate number and kinds of rehabilitation educators.

Recommendations

For decades deaf people have been denied the right to full development of their potentialities for want of proper rehabilitation facilities and personnel who understand their needs and can communicate with them. The toll of this neglect has weighed heavily on the deaf individual his parents, and society. The American public and its elected representatives have recognized the need for quality services in sufficient depth and have made possible the facilities described in this report. However, the services anticipated through these facilities have been limited as a result of the critical manpower shortage in the field. In order for these facilities and programs to be of full effectiveness, it is recommended that the following personnel training efforts be initiated without delay.

1. *That the Social and Rehabilitation Service ensure sufficient funding on a continuing basis to permit existing training (degree and non-degree) programs in the area of deafness rehabilitation to greatly expand their efforts.*

2. *That the Social and Rehabilitation Service facilitate the establishment and continuation of at least one multi-disciplinary training-in-deafness program in each HEW region.*

Programs in Hearing, Speech, and Language. Unpublished document, Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1970.

Tully, Norman L. Role and Function of Rehabilitation Counselors With the Deaf. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, 1970.

APPENDIXES

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF REHABILITATION OF THE DEAF TRAINEES
SUPPORTED BY SRS TRAINING FUNDS AT SIX COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES, BY DEGREE AND AREA: 1970-1971

College or University	Total	Non-Degree	Rehab. M.A.	Coun. Ph.D.	Leadership M. A.	Sp. Ed. M.A.	Ph.D.	Other M.A.
TOTALS	91	54	11	6	14	-	2	4
Arizona	7	-	5	2	-	-	-	-
New York	12	-	4	4	-	-	-	4
Oregon	24	24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pittsburgh	4	-	-	2	-	-	2	-
San Fernando Valley Stage	14	-	-	-	14	-	-	-
Tennessee	30	30	-	-	-	-	-	-

Also includes Counselor Education, Clinical Psychology, and School Psychology.

TABLE 2

AMOUNTS FOR TUITION AND STIPENDS IN TRAINING
GRANTS AWARDED TO PREPARE PERSONNEL TO WORK
WITH DEAF PEOPLE IN THE REHABILITATION PROCESS:

1970-1971

College or University	Training Degree	Grant Award Non-Degree
Totals	\$187,000	\$145,364
Arizona	26,000	-0-
New York	65,000	15,000 ^a
Oregon	-0-	39,364
Pittsburgh	33,000	-0-
San Fernando Valley State	63,000	35,000
Tennessee	-0-	56,000

^a Source of funds: SRS Research and Training Center funds

TABLE 3

**NUMBER OF TRAINEES COMPLETING SRS-SUPPORTED TRAINING
PROGRAMS IN DEAFNESS REHABILITATION AND NUMBER
PRESENTLY EMPLOYED IN THE FIELD OF DEAFNESS
REHABILITATION: 1971**

Training Program	Year Began	No. Grads.	No. Employed in Field	Percent
GRAND TOTALS		576	540	94
Arizona	1966	12	12	100
New York	1967	22	20	90
Oregon	1963	225	211	94
Pittsburgh	1965	32	30	94
San Fernando Valley	1962	118	111	95
Tennessee	1963	167	156	93