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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
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DATE: March 30, 2001

TO : State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (General)
State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (Blind)
Client Assistance Programs
Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs
RSA Senior Management Team

SUBJECT: Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program, FY 1999 Annual Report

CONTENT: Attached is a copy of the Rehabilitation Services Administration FY 1999 annual report that is based on the "Report of Vending Facility Program" (Form RSA-15) for the reporting period October 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999 submitted by State licensing agencies pursuant to the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

The Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program has continued to provide persons who are blind with remunerative employment at increasing levels of earnings. A total of 2,813 blind vendors operated 3,351 vending facilities located on Federal and other property. The program generated $448.1 million in gross income and $90.6 million in net earnings to vendors. This resulted in national average annual vendor earnings of $32,556.

The Mississippi Rehabilitation, Research and Training Center on Low Vision and Blindness prepared this comprehensive Annual Report. Funding was provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Report contains extensive statistical and financial information that can be used to enhance and promote the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Inquiries: Please direct any questions concerning this report to Mr. George F. Arsnow, Randolph-Sheppard Program Specialist, MES Building, 330 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20202-2738, telephone number: (202) 205-9317.

/s/
Mark E. Shoob
Deputy Commissioner

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD
VENDING FACILITY PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vending Facility Program authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Act (P.L. 74-732, as amended by P. L. 83-565 and P. L. 93-516; 20 U.S.C. section 107 et seq.) provides persons who are blind with remunerative employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on Federal and other property. The program, enacted into law in 1936, was intended to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed blind persons to operate facilities. At the outset, sundry stands were placed in the lobbies of Federal office buildings and post offices. The law was subsequently amended in 1954 and again in 1974 to ultimately ensure individuals who are blind a "priority" in the operation of vending facilities, which included cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, on Federal property.

Over 30,000 persons who are blind have been employed in this program since its inception in 1936. The program has broadened considerably from Federal locations to also include State, county, municipal, and private installations. The gross sales of the program rank it within the fifty largest food service corporations in America. The Randolph-Sheppard program can, therefore, most accurately be characterized as "big business".

The following statistical information is based upon the form "RSA - 15" submitted by the 51 State Licensing Agencies (SLAs) for the period October 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999 to satisfy the statutory requirements for an annual report under 20 U.S.C. section 107b(4) and 34 CFR section 395.3 (11) (ix).

In FY 1999, there were 3,351 vending facilities in which 1,119 were located on Federal property and 2,232 on non-Federal property, providing employment for 2,813 blind vendors of which 925 were on Federal property and 1,888 were on non-Federal property. These figures represent an overall decrease of 40 vending facilities and 140 vendors, relative to FY 1998.

The gross income (including gross sales, vending machine and other income) from all facilities totaled $448.1 million, up $22.6 million over FY 1998 ($425.5 million). This produced total vendor earnings of $90.6 million -- $4.2 million more than in FY 1998. The national average annual earnings of all vendors was $32,556 in FY 1999, $2,741 more than in FY 1998.

The average annual earnings of vendors is determined by dividing the vendors' total earnings by the number of vendor person years. In FY 1999, the number of vendor person years was 2,783.4.

There are marked differences in the administration of the Vending Facility Program from State to State. This report identifies differences in data on the following specific types of facilities: Snack Bars and Other Facilities, Vending Machines, and Cafeterias.

In FY 1999, there were a total of 3,351 vending facilities of which 1,569 (46.8%) were Snack Bars and Other Facilities, 418 (12.5%) were Cafeterias, and 1,364 (40.7%) were Vending Machines. Of the total vending facilities, there were 1,119 (33.4%) on Federal property, and 2,232(66.6%) on non-Federal property.

Snack Bars and Other Facilities were the largest of the three categories with 1,569 facilities. The gross sales for this type of facility were $201.1 million or 45.9% of the total program gross ($437.7 million). The average vendor earnings were $29,411.

There were 418 cafeteria facilities. The gross sales from cafeterias were $114.7 million, or 26.2% of the total. The average vendor earnings for this category were $39,131.

There were 1,364 vending machine facilities. The gross sales from vending machines were $122.0 million or 27.9% of the total gross sales. The average vendor earnings for this category were $34,630.

The total program expenditures for administering the Vending Facility Program by the State Licensing Agencies were $67.6 million in FY 1999. The funding for those expenditures came from the following sources of support: machine income - $15.3 million; levied set-aside from vendors - $11.7 million; State appropriations - $6.6 million; and Federal (Section 110 funds) - $34.0 million.

The General Services Administration was the largest Federal property landlord with 437 facilities. The U. S. Postal Service was second with 334 facilities, and the U. S. Department of Defense was third with a total of 114 facilities. The Tennessee Valley Authority had 26 with the remainder being dispersed among a variety of Federal agencies.

In FY 1999, the 51 State Licensing Agencies reported that 564.8 person years were used to administer the Vending Facility Program. They also reported that 259 blind persons were trained to become vendors of which 146 or 56.4% were placed as licensed vendors, and that 651 potential sites were surveyed of which 278 or 42.7% were accepted.

In addition to the 2,813 licensed blind operators employed by the Vending Facility Program, the program employed 502 individuals with visual impairments and 351 with other disabilities.

The RSA - 15 report provides data on State participation in the Interstate Highway Program. In FY 1999, 41 States participated in that program. Since the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the States of Alaska and Hawaii have no interstate highways, only 5 States eligible to participate are not taking part in this program.

In reviewing this statistical program summary, it should be recognized that business opportunities for blind persons in the Randolph-Sheppard Program may be limited by the resources available to the State Licensing Agency and/or by the availability of vending sites on Federal and other property in a given State. State licensing agencies should find the comparative data available in these tables helpful for making program decisions and expanding business opportunities for blind entrepreneurs. States with similar profiles may wish to enter discussions about mutual problems and achievements. One important gauge of the value of this report will be the advancement of employment opportunities for blind persons in each State's vending facility program.

PROGRAM DATA HIGHLIGHTS

This report and accompanying tables are based on RSA - 15 data reported by State licensing agencies for the blind on three specific types of vending facilities, as defined under the Randolph-Sheppard regulations in the following manner:

1. “Snack Bars and Other Facilities” means all types of business enterprises, which are not included under the cafeteria and vending machine definitions. The category includes snack bars (wet/dry facilities) and sundry locations.

2. “Vending Machine Facility” means an automated coin or currency operated facility which dispenses a variety of food and refreshment items and services. The licensed business operator is responsible for the complete management of the machines and the area in which they are located. The vendor also must be located on the premises and provide such functions as loading and servicing such machines and other necessary customer - related services.

3. “Cafeteria” means a food dispensing facility capable of providing a broad variety of prepared foods and beverages (including hot meals) primarily through the use of a line where the customer serves himself from displayed selections. A cafeteria may be fully automatic or have some limited waiter or waitress service, and table or booth seating facilities are always provided.

INCOME STATEMENT

The Vending Facility Program utilizes an income account of about nine items. Gross profits and net earnings are reported with adequate supporting information indicating how the figures were obtained, as shown in the following statement for FY 1999:

Item	$Million	Percent
Gross Sales	437.7	100.0
Cost of Goods Sold	235.8	53.9
Gross Profit	202.0	46.2
Operating Expenses	109.9	25.1
Other Income	10.3	2.4
Net Proceeds	102.4	23.4
Set-Aside Funds	11.8	2.7
Net Profit	90.5	20.7
Earnings	90.6	20.7

Fig. 1 - Sales, Profit, Earning, FY 1999

Gross Sales and Profit

In FY 1999, the Vending Facility Program reported gross annual sales of $437.7 million, cost of goods sold of $235.8 million, for a gross profit of $202.0 million, or 46.2% of gross sales.

The margin of gross profit among the 51 State programs ranged from 22.8% in Massachusetts to 72.2% in Kentucky. The margin of profit varied also among the three types of facilities as follows: 52.5% for cafeterias, 47.9% for vending machines, and 41.4% for snack bars and other.

Operating Expenses and Profit

After deducting $109.9 million operating expenses in payments for equipment, maintenance and repairs, supplies, wages, rent, utilities, insurance, licenses, State and local taxes, the program realized an operating profit of $92.0 million, or 21.0% of gross sales.

Vending Machine/Other Income and Net Proceeds

The $10.3 million vending machine income distributed to vendors and other income from subsidies and other sources accruing to the vending facilities, added to the $92.0 million operating profit, yielded $102.4 million in net proceeds, or 23.4 percent of gross sales.

As a percent of gross sales, net proceeds indicate profitability after the normal revenues and expenses are accounted for. By this criterion, vending machines were the most profitable type of facility with net proceeds of 32.0 percent, followed by snack bars and other with 23.5 percent, and cafeterias with 14.1 percent.

Set-Aside Funds, Net Profit and Fair Minimum Return

Set-aside funds assessed against the net proceeds of vending facilities, an accountable item but optional with the States, amounted to $11.8 million. The funds collected in participating programs that used them to pay for the purchase, maintenance and replacement of equipment, management services, fair minimum return payment to vendors, and fringe benefits.

The remaining net profit to the vendors, after subtracting the $11.8 million set-aside from net proceeds, was $90.5 million, or 20.7 percent of gross sales nationally. By type of facility, the margin net profit from gross sales was 28.9 percent for vending machines, 20.6 percent for snack bars and other, and 12.1 percent for cafeterias.

Fair minimum return may be paid to vendors from set-aside funds in order to provide a more uniform and equitable income from all vendors. Only 8 States used this provision of the Act to contribute a total of $226,740.

Vendors' Earnings

The amount of vendors earnings is determined by the volume of the program net profit to vendors (i.e. the profit after set aside funds) and the supplementary fair minimum return payments to the vendors. In FY 1999, the vendors' earnings totaled $90.6 million, as shown in the following statement:

Item	$Million	Percent
Gross Income	448.1	100.0
Operating Profit	92.0	20.5
Fair Minimum Return	0.1	----
Aggregate Earnings	90.6	20.2
Average Earnings	32,556.0	----

Fig. 2 - Income, Earnings, FY 1999

This means that, after all kinds of income and expenses were accounted for, the vendors take home earnings represented 20.2% of the program revenues from all sources, that is, about twenty cents on the dollar.

The vendors' national average earnings, an important management figure in the program, was $32,556, and ranged from $6,045 in the Virgin Islands to $74,850 in Nevada. Vendors in 40 State programs received additional fringe benefits valued at $7.1 million.

Vendors operating vending machine facilities made an average of $34,630, compared to $39,131 for those operating cafeterias, and $29,411 for those in snack bars and other.

NUMBER OF VENDORS AND VENDING FACILITIES

A vendor is a blind person licensed by the State Licensing Agency to operate vending facilities on Federal, public (State, county, municipal) and private property. The vending facilities are classified into three categories: cafeterias, vending machines, snack bars and other.

In FY 1999, 2,813 vendors managed and operated 3,351 vendors facilities, distributed by location as follows: 925 vendors operated 1,119 vending facilities on Federal property; 1,785 vendors operated 2,112 facilities on public property; and 103 vendors operated 120 facilities on private property.

Of the total 3,351 vending facilities, 418 were cafeterias, 1,364 vending machines, and 1,569 snack bars and other.

A total of 1,118 vending facilities were granted permits or contracts to operate on Federal property by the following identified Federal Agencies: General Services Administration -437, U.S. Postal Service -334, Department of Defense -114, Tennessee Valley Authority -26, Department of Health and Human Services -15, Department of Transportation -5, Department of Energy -22, Department of Veterans Affairs -8, other agencies - 157.

In FY 1999, the VF program trained 259 blind persons and placed 146 as vendors. Another 79 were certified but they had to wait for employment. Lack of available facilities was a factor.

In FY 1999, 973 blind individuals received upward mobility training. Of the 973 who received upward mobility training, 160 or 16.4% were promoted to a more lucrative job in the program.

Mandatory annual surveys (651 in FY 1999) for potential vending facility locations were conducted, 185 in Federal sites and 466 in non-Federal sites. As a result of the surveys, 85 Federal sites vs. 193 non-Federal sites were accepted as vending locations. A total of 278 surveyed sites were accepted in FY 1999. During the same year, 203 new facilities were established and 212 were closed - a net loss of 9. Leading reasons for not accepting surveyed sites were “infeasibility of site” (161) and “denied by property manager” (59).

FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

Total public support for the VF program amounted to $40.6 million, $6.6 million from State appropriations and $34.0 million from Federal funds allocated under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act. The remainder was paid for from set-aside funds assessed against the net proceeds of vendors ($11.7 million) and from unassigned vending machine income ($15.3 million).

The expenditures’ share among the four sources was:

Item	$Million	Percent
Total	67.6	100.0
Vending Machine Income	15.3	22.6
Levied Set-Aside Funds	11.7	17.4
State Appropriations	6.6	9.8
Federal Funds	34.0	50.2

Fig. 3 - Funding Sources, FY 1999

The funding from these four sources amounted to $67.6 million, administered according to the purposes and priorities set forth in the State plans, as follows (All data were taken from Part III - Section B of the RSA-15):

$11.2 million for <u>the purchase of new equipment</u> needed for the new as well as for already existing facilities. Federal funds financed 63.7% of the expenses involved. The national average cost to establish a new facility was estimated at $36,616.

$6.1 million <u>to maintain the equipment</u> in good repair, and

$8.0 million <u>to replace equipment</u>. Set-aside and Federal funds paid respectively for most of these two items. The national average cost to maintain and replace equipment was estimated at $4,234 per facility.

$5.9 million <u>to refurbish existing facilities</u> in order to improve their appearance and efficiency were paid for by funds from the four sources.

$26.2 million <u>for management services</u>. These are services provided on a systematic basis by the program management services staff to support and improve the business operation. Federal funds financed 63.1% of the expenses involved.

$226,740 <u>as fair minimum return</u> payments to vendors, from set-aside funds, to provide a uniform minimum income to all vendors under the program.

$7.1 million, paid for almost entirely from vending machine income funds, **<u>for fringe benefits</u> under the form of:**

> **<u>retirement/pension</u>.....................................$3.6 million**
> **<u>health insurance</u>...$2.8 million**
> **<u>sick leave/vacation time</u> ....$.7 million**

$1.3 million, paid for almost entirely by Federal and State funds, for **<u>initial stock and supplies</u>.**

$1.5 million for <u>other expenditures</u>, paid for from State and non-Federal vending machine income funds.

Here is a summary of the program handling expenditures and funding priorities:

Item	$Million	Percent
Total	67.5	100.0
Facilities Upkeep	31.2	46.2
Management Services	26.2	38.8
Fringe Benefits & FMR	7.3	10.8
Stock/Supplies, Other	2.8	4.2

Fig. 4 - Expenditures, FY 1999

The Interstate Highway Program

In FY 1999, total receipts of all 921 vending locations operated under the Interstate Highway Program amounted to $42.6 million. The total from vending machine receipts, or profit generated at these locations, was $34.4 million. The number of vendors employed in the highway program was 393.