



November 22, 2010

Lynnae M. Ruttledge, Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
Potomac Center Plaza
550 12th Street, SW, Room 5086
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Commissioner Ruttledge-

APSE is a growing national non-profit membership organization, founded in 1988 as the Association for Persons in Supported Employment, now known as APSE. APSE is the *only* national organization with an *exclusive focus* on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities. APSE has chapters in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Our members come from all 50 states and Puerto Rico, as well as several foreign countries. APSE supports the only annual national conference focused solely on the advancement of integrated employment.

Our goals are to:

- ▶ Promote employment opportunities for all people, through local, regional, and national networks.
- ▶ Help establish and expand equitable employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- ▶ Advocate with federal, state, and local legislators for legislation promoting integrated employment.
- ▶ Work with federal, state, and local policy makers to increase funding for integrated employment.
- ▶ Raise awareness within the business community as to the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.
- ▶ Advocate for social change to help those with severe disabilities achieve a lifestyle that approximates that of individuals without disabilities.

The purpose of this communication is to encourage your support of retaining a separation of Title I and Title VI (B) funding for supported employment. As you are aware, “it is the purpose of this part [Title VI (B)] to authorize allotments, in addition to grants for vocational rehabilitation services under Title I, to assist States in developing collaborative programs with appropriate entities to provide supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities to enable such individuals to achieve the employment outcome of supported employment.” Supported employment



funding continues to be inconsistent and fragile state to state. Some state partners have closely collaborated with their state VR authority while others exhibit a lack of understanding of the positive impact that collaborating with VR has on the employment of people with the most significant disabilities. It becomes even more important to preserve the separation of VR supported employment funding under Title VI (B) during these difficult economic times when the federal government and individual states will be under tremendous pressure to simplify programs in the name of efficiency. We strongly urge you to support the continued integrity of the separate funding stream for supported employment under the Rehabilitation Act.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you desire a dialogue on this extremely important issue to job seekers with the most significant disabilities.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Owens
Executive Director
APSE