



STATE OF ARKANSAS
SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
GOVERNOR

April 6, 2026

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair
Representative Lane Jean, Co-Chair
Joint Budget Committee
Arkansas General Assembly
State Capitol Building
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Co-Chairs:

I respectfully request the following amendments to the 2026-2027 Operations Appropriation Bill for the Department of Commerce – Division of Workforce Services.

Immediately following Section 62, please insert the following and renumber accordingly:

SECTION XX. SPECIAL LANGUAGE – NOT TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE ARKANSAS CODE NOR PUBLISHED SEPARATELY AS SPECIAL, LOCAL, AND TEMPORARY LAW. TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY – VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES.

(A) Appropriation and Funding Alignment.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, appropriations, positions, and related funding associated with vocational rehabilitation services shall be utilized in a manner that supports the planned consolidation of services, subject to existing appropriation authority and applicable provisions of law.

(B) Transitional Authority for State Plan Submission.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Division of Workforce Services, through Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, is authorized during the transition period to:

(1) Submit amendments to Arkansas’s vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified or Combined State Plan;

(2) Represent to the United States Department of Education and other appropriate

federal agencies that Arkansas intends to operate as a combined vocational rehabilitation agency.

(3) Undertake planning, coordination, and other administrative actions necessary to obtain federal approval for the transition to a combined vocational rehabilitation agency structure; and

(4) Take such actions prior to the effective date of any statutory amendments necessary to fully implement the consolidation of vocational rehabilitation services.

(C) Designated Agency and Designated State Unit.

To ensure compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Division of Workforce Services shall serve as the designated state agency, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services shall serve as the designated state unit for the administration of vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired shall continue to be provided through a distinct organizational unit within Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, to be known as the Office of Blind Services, in a manner consistent with federal law and ensuring the provision of specialized and comprehensive services.

(D) Limitation of Authority. The authority granted under this section:

(1) Is limited to actions necessary for fiscal alignment, federal planning, submission, approval, and transition coordination; and

(2) Shall not, by itself, effectuate the transfer of statutory authority, programs, appropriations, positions, or funding except as otherwise authorized by law or by further action of the General Assembly.

(E) Continuity of Services and Federal Compliance.

This section is intended to ensure continuity of services and funding and shall not be construed to interrupt services or federal funding. All actions taken under this section shall:

(1) Preserve services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired;

(2) Maintain eligibility for all federal vocational rehabilitation funding;

(3) Protect maintenance-of-effort requirements; and

(4) Ensure uninterrupted service delivery to current and future program participants.

(F) Expiration.

This section shall be in effect only from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

The above request will give Arkansas Rehabilitation Services transitional authority and allow them to act as the designated state unit for administering State Vocational Rehabilitation grants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor of Arkansas