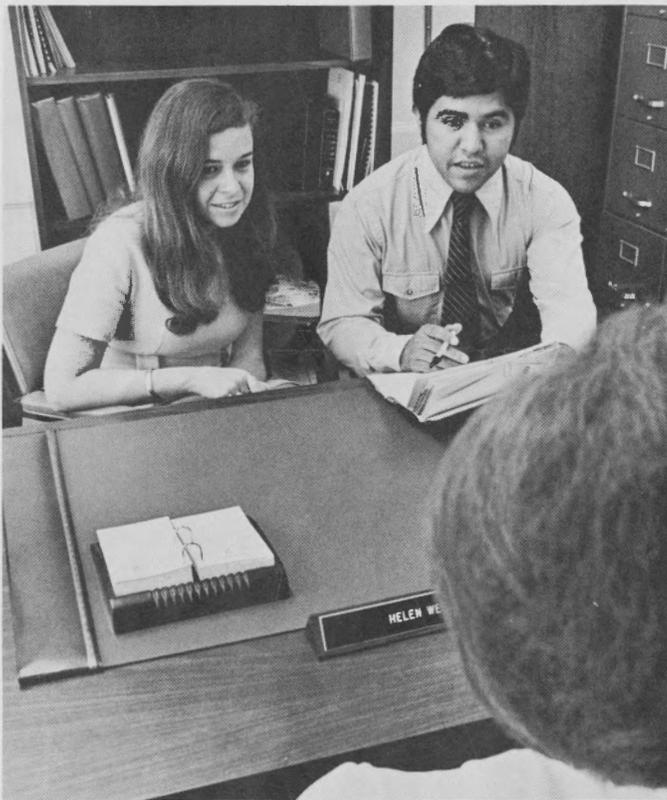


HIRING THE HANDICAPPED:
A SPECIAL REPORT



**TEXAS STATE AGENCIES SET THE PACE IN HELPING THE
HANDICAPPED BECOME TAX CONTRIBUTORS —
BY WORKING—RATHER THAN TAX CONSUMERS**

employing the handicapped



Two case workers at TRC interview and counsel an applicant. This method requires individual attention.

**TPEA WELCOMES HANDICAPPED STATE
AND COUNTY EMPLOYEES!**

*by Dora Huston
State Coordinator, Texas Rehabilitation Commission*

As the new Commissioner for the recently organized state agency, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, sat in his office and looked out the window, he saw the State Capitol Building and other state buildings grouped around it. As he looked at this impressive sight, stone and marble symbolizing the solid foundation of the State, he thought about the many people that worked for Texas. The complex of buildings contained thousands; many more were scattered over the State. Everyday people left State work only to be replaced by new personnel. Why not by handicapped people?

Jess M. Irwin, Jr., Commissioner of the new Texas Rehabilitation Commission was new to the field of vocational rehabilitation but not to state government. He had served his state as Assistant State Auditor, Director of the Budget Division for two Governors and Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. He recognized that in state government a meaningful program of selective placement of qualified handicapped people was an area long neglected.

If the Texas Rehabilitation Commission was asking the business community to hire their clients, he thought, then the Commission should be able to say with pride that our clients were working very successfully in state government service. He also knew that state government would benefit by the selective placement of qualified handicapped people. Thus, the State Employment of the Handicapped Section was created, and as far as we have been able to determine, it is the first in any state. The implementation of the program was not an easy task in Texas where the State Constitution provides for the election of many of the heads of state agencies, and where there is no civil service system for all state employees. All 177 state agencies had to be approached individually and each one "sold" on the idea of being an active participant in the program of placement.

The Federal Government had set, for the State, a good example by forming a well organized program of selective placement for qualified handicapped people, using the Civil Service Commission as the vehicle. So, as a first step in getting the State Employment of the Handicapped Section started, a visit was made to the regional office of the Federal representative of Placement of Handicapped for their advice and help. The organizational structure used by the Federal Government was modified to meet the needs of the State.



The Governor of Texas, Preston Smith, aided and endorsed the program with a press release and a letter to all agency heads asking for their cooperation and help. In his letter he stated:

"Inasmuch as the State Government, in cooperation with the Federal Government, is in the forefront of the effort to prepare the handicapped to take his place in the labor market and thereby know the satisfaction of being a tax contributor rather than tax consumer, it seems most fitting to me that the State should also be in the forefront in utilizing this readily available source of man power."

The staff of the State Employment of the Handicapped Section called on the heads of each state agency and requested them to do two things. First, they were to select a member of their staff to act as Coordinator for the employment of the handicapped in their agency. The Coordinator would be responsible for assuring that all handicapped applicants have an equal opportunity within that agency for available employment for which they could qualify. The Coordinator must convince his agency of the merit of employing the handicapped. He is the person that the Texas Rehabilitation Commission staff relates to in the program.

The second request was for the agency head was to write a letter to all of his field offices, if any, informing them of his endorsement of the program and requesting their cooperation with Texas Rehabilitation Commission field staff that would be contacting them.

Halfday workshops were conducted by the State Employment of the Handicapped Section for small groups of approximately fifteen Coordinators. The workshops were held for the purpose of giving the Coordinator a better understanding of the services the Texas Rehabilitation Commission offered, what kind of clients they have and how the Texas Rehabilitation Commission counselors worked with the client and employer.

A newsletter, published once a month, kept the field staff informed on what state agencies were participating in the program and to what extent, along with other pertinent information regarding the program. A brochure was printed primarily to

be placed in other state agencies. It contained a brief description of the program for employment of the handicapped in state service and a list of all Texas Rehabilitation Commission district offices with addresses and telephone numbers.

The staff of the State Employment of the Handicapped Section spoke at many Texas Rehabilitation Commission staff development workshops in order to keep the TRC staff abreast of developments in the program.

An arrangement was worked out with the Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped for presentation at their annual meeting, of three awards pertaining to employment of the handicapped in state service. Awards were given for:

1. The outstanding handicapped state employee,
2. The outstanding state agency in the placement of handicapped people, and
3. The state employee who made the most outstanding contribution to handicapped personnel employed in state government service.

A one day workshop was held for all state agency Coordinators and selected staff from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission's six regions over the state. The purpose was to bring two groups together for communication, in order to identify problems and make recommendations. A resulting publication, "Excerpts and Recommendations from the Workshop for Placement of the Handicapped in State Government Service," was printed and mailed to all participants in the workshop and other interested persons.

A major recommendation coming from the workshop was the necessity of the supervisory personnel in all state agencies being better informed about the program. As a result an in-service training program was started in the agencies. The staff of the State Employment of the Handicapped Section conducts them and they vary from 30 minutes on a regular scheduled staff meeting to a halfday structured program.

Since feedback from the field was almost non-existent, a method was devised to get the essential information. A form is mailed on the tenth of each month to all supervisors of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission requesting information regarding the previous month placements by the counselors under their supervision. The information requested includes: name of clients and state agencies where they are placed, type of job, and type of disability.

Since the first Texas state agency was contacted to participate in the program over ten months ago, a majority of the large state agencies and many of the smaller ones have been contacted; however, there are many yet to be brought into the program. This is a long range project requiring continuing effort. It has been determined that state government service is one of the best placements that can be made for a client because of the stability of the job, good salaries with regular increases, and fringe benefits. It means security for that client. A great variety of jobs exist in state work and people with all types of disabilities can qualify.

THE HANDICAPPED

prologue—

In 1970 the Texas Rehabilitation Commission closed 12,006 clients employed in jobs over the state. This gives an average of 1000 closed each month. The first five (5) months of the State Government Placement Report indicates that 13 out of the 1000 closed each month would be in State Government Service. The 12,006 clients closed by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission were earning \$9,146,000 when first accepted and when they were closed they were earning \$38,360,000. The variety of the types of jobs where the Texas Rehabilitation Commission clients are working shows the versatility for placement and that handicapped persons can fill many of the state government job classifications. This list indicates the wide variety.

Laboratory
Welfare Service Technician
Computer Operator

Secretary
X-Ray Technician
Nutrition Aide
Bus Driver
Guard
Nurses Aide
Stenographer
Janitor
Child Care Attendant
Radiology Technologist
Right-of-way Dispersal Agent
Custodian
Bus Lady
Social Worker
Accountant
Stock Clerk
Plumber
Ward Attendant
Therapist Technician Assistant
Rehabilitation Technician
Printer
Librarian
Supervise Distribution of Surplus
Food Commodities
ADP Clerk
Community Service Aide
Receptionist

The statistics revealed a wide range in the types of disabilities the clients have that were employed in state government service. This list will indicate a handicapped person

with severe barriers to employment may become a valuable employee with rehabilitation services.

Amputee
Deaf
Public Offender
Arrested Pulmonary TB
Mental Illness
Epilepsy
Mental Retardation
Residual Scarring Disfigured Face
Due to Burns
Drug Addiction
Impaired Spine
Alcoholism
Speech Impairment
Cardiacs and Circulatory Condition
Post Polio
Genito-Urinary System Disorders
Digestive System Disorders

With the first five (5) months return of the placement form, it is apparent that the state administrators have responded widely to the challenge given them by their Governor through the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. They are making the placement of handicapped in state government service an **action** program resulting in benefits for both the handicapped and Texas.

----- PLEASE CLIP AND RETURN TO -----

TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
STATE EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED
SUITE 502
7700 CHEVY CHASE DRIVE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78752

WE WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM OF STATE
EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED. PLEASE HAVE YOUR TEXAS
REHABILITATION COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT:

NAME _____

AGENCY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____