# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Commissioner of the Rehabilitation SErvices Administration, Department of Education

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. |
| Position Overview | The commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration leads the administration in its mission to offer leadership and resources to help states and other agencies provide vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other services to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence and integration into the community and the competitive labor market. The commissioner serves as the principal advisor to the assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services on issues affecting people with disabilities, and coordinates relevant programs across agencies.  |
| Compensation | Level V $145,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5316)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Education (or Undersecretary or appropriate Assistant Secretary as designated by the Secretary) (29 U.S.C. § 702) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Rehabilitation Services Administration consists of two divisions (state monitoring and program improvement, and the training and service programs) and one support office under the Office of the Commissioner. The agency administers the programs under three statutes: 1) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)2) Helen Keller National Center for Youths and Adults Who are Deaf-Blind Act3) Randolph-Sheppard ActThe agency administers various programs, including: * VR State Grants
* American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
* Client Assistance State Grants
* Rehabilitation Training
* Demonstration and Training
* Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights
* Supported Employment State Grants
* Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
* Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults (HKNC)
* Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program
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| Primary Responsibilities | * Advises the assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services on programs and problems affecting individuals with disabilities”[[2]](#endnote-2)
* Provides leadership among divisions to help state and other agencies provide rehabilitation services to people with disabilities[[3]](#endnote-3)
* Coordinates vocational rehabilitation programs across federal, state and private agencies[[4]](#endnote-4)
* Manages the administration of grant programs authorized by Congress[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Oversees evaluation, monitoring and reporting of policy implementation related to vocational rehabilitation[[6]](#endnote-6)
* Directly oversees the Office of Program Support Staff
* As per the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (SEC. 12. (a), in carrying out the purposes of this act, the commissioner may:
	+ Provide consultative services and technical assistance to public or nonprofit private agencies and organizations, including helping them facilitate meaningful and effective participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities
	+ Provide technical assistance to the designated state units on developing successful partnerships with local and multistate businesses in an effort to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities
	+ Provide technical assistance to providers and organizations on developing self-employment opportunities and outcomes for individuals with disabilities
	+ Provide technical assistance to entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs to build their internal capacity to provide individualized services and support, which leads to competitive integrated employment and helps transition individuals with disabilities away from nonintegrated settings
	+ Provide short-term training and technical instruction, including training for the personnel of community rehabilitation programs and other providers of services (including job coaches)
	+ Conduct special projects and demonstrations
	+ Collect, prepare, publish and disseminate special educational or informational materials, including reports of the projects for which funds are provided under the rehabilitation act
	+ Provide monitoring and conduct evaluations (29 U.S.C. § 709)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Substantial experience in [vocational] rehabilitation and rehabilitation program management (29 U.S.C. § 702)
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| Competencies | * Ability to integrate information from various sources to advance the best policies related to employment of individuals with disabilities
* Ability to communicate effectively with individuals at various levels, including consumers with disabilities, state directors of vocational rehabilitation and other workforce development programs, and representatives of Congress
* Ability to manage a national vocational rehabilitation program effectively
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Janet Lorraine LaBreck (2013 to 2017) – Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind |
| Lynnae M. Ruttledge (2010 to 2012) – Director of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Teacher in Michigan Public Schools[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Joanne Wilson (2001 to 2005) – Director, Louisiana Center for the Blind |
| Fredric K. Schroeder (1994 to 2001) – Executive Director of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/ioc.html [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/ioc.html [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/ioc.html [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/ioc.html [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/ioc.html [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.ilru.org/users/lynnae-ruttledge [↑](#endnote-ref-7)