

## State Rehabilitation Council

NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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July 2, 2025

Kenneth Gill, Ph.D., Department Chair  
Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling Professions  
Rutgers - School of Health Professions  
675 Hoes Lane West – 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Research Tower  
Piscataway, New Jersey 08854

Dear Dr. Gill:

I am writing on behalf of the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in support of the application of the Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling Professions of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey for a grant under the Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-term Training Program (CDFA 84.189). We understand these funds would be used primarily for scholarships for students in the M.S. program in Rehabilitation Counseling. This is of particular concern to us given that nine of eighteen (50%) of the state's local DVRS office managers are program graduates, ten of eighteen office supervisors (56%) are program graduates, and one of three field chiefs (33%) is a program graduate. I cannot stress enough the long-term benefits of this program to the successful employment of New Jersey's disabled citizens.

The Rutgers program has been a major source of well-qualified rehabilitation counselors for our state agency, the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). DVRS and the program have long maintained a close working relationship. This includes offering practicum and internship placement to students in the Rutgers program, advising on program curriculum, teaching classes in which DVRS personnel have special expertise, serving on the program's Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and making regular presentations to students about career opportunities with DVRS. Rutgers is the only university in New Jersey offering a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling.

The program has also been of service to the DVRS and the SRC. Dr. Janice Oursler, the Rehabilitation Counseling Program Director, is a member of the SRC, as appointed by the Governor. She has assisted DVRS and the SRC in various projects and is a member of the SRC Policy Committee. Her expertise is invaluable.

The program has been instrumental to DVRS in meeting agency needs for highly qualified rehabilitation counselors. Grant funding to assist students with tuition scholarships would be a great benefit in addressing the severe shortage of qualified rehabilitation professionals in New Jersey. On behalf of the council members, I urge the Rehabilitation Services Administration to approve funding for your grant application under the Long-term Training Program.

Respectfully submitted,



Margaret T. Gilbride, JD  
Chair  
New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services State Rehabilitation Council