



Highlights of [GAO-07-236](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

Congress has created 20 federal employment-related programs that are aimed at helping people with disabilities obtain jobs. Little is known about the effectiveness and the management of some of these programs. GAO was asked to review four of these programs; the Department of Education (Education) oversees three—Projects with Industry (PWI), Supported Employment State Grants, and Randolph-Sheppard. An independent federal agency, the Committee for Purchase, oversees the fourth, Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD). Specifically, GAO assessed the extent to which (1) performance goals and measures have been established for these programs and (2) the agencies responsible have established adequate oversight procedures. We reviewed program planning and performance information, interviewed agency officials, and visited each of the four programs in four states.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that Education establish goals for the Randolph-Sheppard program and strengthen program monitoring and guidance. GAO also recommends that the Committee for Purchase ensure JWOD goals and measures are clear and measurable and strengthen its procedures for overseeing the JWOD nonprofit agencies. In their comments, Education and the Committee for Purchase generally agreed with GAO's recommendations.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-236](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-236).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Robert E. Robertson at (202) 512-7215 or [robertsonr@gao.gov](mailto:robertsonr@gao.gov).

# FEDERAL DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

## Stronger Federal Oversight Could Help Assure Multiple Programs' Accountability

### What GAO Found

Three of the four programs have federal performance goals. No federal performance goals or measures currently exist for the Randolph-Sheppard program, which provides opportunities for individuals who are blind to operate vending facilities on federal properties. Without goals, it is difficult to assess the program's performance, but Education officials told GAO they are developing them. Education has a goal and a measure for the Supported Employment State Grants program—a federal grant program that provides job coaching and other support to help individuals with severe disabilities secure jobs. The goal indirectly measures the program's performance because grant funds are mixed with other funding sources to provide supported employment services. Education has also developed one goal for the PWI program—a federal grant program that helps individuals with disabilities obtain competitive employment—that is consistent with the mission of the program. The goal is to create and expand job opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging business and industry, and one of the measures tracks the percentage of individuals placed in employment in work settings making at least minimum wage. The Committee for Purchase, which oversees the JWOD program—a program that helps to create jobs through the federal property management and procurement systems—first developed federal goals and measures for its fiscal year 2005-2007 strategic plan and has since revised them. The revised measures still have limitations, such as not being clearly defined or being difficult to measure.

Education's and the Committee for Purchase's oversight of the four programs has been uneven. Education has established procedures, such as on-site reviews, for the PWI and Supported Employment State Grants programs that, if consistently followed, would provide reasonable assurance that the programs are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. However, Education conducts limited oversight of the Randolph-Sheppard program. For example, Education does not routinely analyze or report the data it collects from states and has provided little guidance to ensure states comply with laws or consistently interpret program requirements. One area in which Education has not provided sufficient guidance is the circumstances under which federal agencies may charge fees to licensed vendors operating vending facilities on their properties. As a result, vendors in some locations were paying commissions or fees but those in other locations were not. Finally, the Committee for Purchase delegates most of its oversight responsibilities to two central nonprofit agencies that also represent the interests of the JWOD nonprofit agencies they oversee. This arrangement, as well as the fact that they receive a percentage of the total value of the contracts from the JWOD nonprofit agencies, raises questions about their independence and gives them little incentive to identify instances of noncompliance that could result in the JWOD nonprofit agency losing its federal contract.