

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

8/15/2026

2. Department

California Department of Rehabilitation

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division

4. CEA Position Title

Assistant Deputy Director

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose.
(2-3 sentences)

The proposed position serves as an Assistant Deputy Director (ADD) responsible for providing leadership and operational support to the Division's regional districts that deliver vocational rehabilitation services statewide. By supervising and guiding Regional Directors, and supporting teams responsible for policy implementation, special projects, and program operations, the role ensures consistent, high quality service delivery. This position directly advances the program's mission by strengthening oversight, enhancing policy execution, and supporting the effective delivery of services to Californians with disabilities.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Deputy Director – CEA B

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one*)

- ☐ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☒ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*):

8. Organizational Level (*Select one*)

- ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☒ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The CEA serves as a senior program leader responsible for directing and coordinating the operations of four Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) districts within the Department's largest division. The position provides strategic direction to district leadership, ensures consistent implementation of statewide priorities, and maintains full compliance with federal and state VR regulations. The CEA plans, organizes, and oversees district operations by monitoring performance, evaluating program effectiveness, and ensuring that direct employment services are delivered efficiently and equitably. This includes providing direct supervision and leadership support to assigned Regional Directors, guiding contract administration for service providers, ensuring fiscal accountability for federal VR funds, and supporting succession planning through ongoing coaching and leadership development. The CEA advises and consults with the Executive Leadership Team and Directorate on issues with significant programmatic, policy, or fiscal implications. This includes raising district level trends that affect service access, program quality, or expenditure patterns, and recommending actions to improve outcomes. The position builds and maintains collaborative relationships with internal and external partners, such as Local Education Agencies, Workforce Development Boards, disability service providers, and businesses. Through these partnerships, the CEA helps shape divisional priorities and ensures that departmental initiatives, such as expanded services for students with disabilities or efforts to strengthen employer engagement, are implemented consistently across the assigned districts.

The CEA leads cross divisional and cross departmental initiatives aimed at improving service delivery, enhancing efficiency, and supporting regulatory compliance. This includes directing policy implementation, identifying operational issues, recommending procedural improvements, and overseeing the execution of adopted changes. The CEA ensures responsiveness to audit findings by directing corrective action plans and maintains oversight of district efforts to meet all regulatory and performance obligations. Additionally, the position represents the Department with state and federal control agencies and engages directly with stakeholders to resolve service concerns, address program barriers, and communicate departmental expectations. These responsibilities ensure high quality VR services, effective use of resources, and consistent alignment with departmental mission and statewide goals.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division (VRED) ensures full compliance with state and federal regulations while overseeing the largest Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in the country. The CEA's work directly supports four of the twelve districts statewide, making the program essential to delivering equitable, high quality VR services across California. The CEA is central to meeting required performance measures and maintaining strong community partnerships. It also provides comprehensive support to the field, including personnel and administrative guidance, hearings coordination, data collection, auditing functions, and interpretation and implementation of policies and procedures. This includes oversight of key initiatives such as the Order of Selection and fiscal stewardship of VR services.

Additionally, the CEA plays a vital role in long term organizational health through succession planning and the consistent application of policy and operational standards. Collectively, these responsibilities ensure the department can effectively fulfill its mission and deliver meaningful outcomes for individuals with disabilities statewide.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The request for the CEA position is necessary due to substantial operational and programmatic changes over the past several years. Since 2020, the Department of Rehabilitation's program caseload size has increased by over 80%, accompanied by a rise in Mediation and Fair Hearing requests. This increases the workload across all levels, requiring more coordination, oversight, and staff guidance to ensure compliance, consistent decisions, and high-quality service delivery.

At the same time, personnel management needs have expanded. More staff, more complex cases, and greater expectations for accountability require strengthened supervision, coaching, and performance oversight. Regional Directors also need increased support as they navigate higher volumes, evolving service delivery models, and new program requirements, especially with the added complexity of student services, which demand specialized expertise and strategic coordination with schools and community partners.

In addition, DOR is leading innovation in business engagement and service delivery. As the largest vocational rehabilitation program in the nation, remaining competitive with other states requires dedicated capacity to design, implement, and sustain new approaches that improve consumer outcomes. Together, these changes represent a clear increase in workload, responsibility, and organizational expectations, fully justifying the need for additional support to maintain quality and advance program performance statewide. This position was approved through a BCP in the 2026-2027 Budget Act. This reflects the Administration and Legislature's recognition of the need for additional senior leadership resources within the Department.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

1. Order of Selection and Consumer Access Policies

The CEA will be a principal policy leader in interpreting and applying Order of Selection within the assigned districts, including determining how limited VR resources are prioritized and ensuring equitable consumer access. Decisions in this area directly influence which individuals receive timely services, waitlist management, and the Department's compliance with federal requirements. Because Order of Selection is a statewide mandate, district-level implementation guided by this CEA has a measurable impact on service consistency and fairness across California.[VD4.1]

2. Caseload Management, Expenditures, and Post Approval Practices

The CEA will shape policy related to caseload expenditures, service authorizations, and post approval review practices. For example, the CEA may establish districtwide thresholds for service authorizations or corrective actions to address spending trends. These policies ensure responsible use of federal VR dollars, maintain fiscal integrity, and support statewide performance benchmarks. The impact extends beyond the four districts because expenditure compliance is tied directly to federal funding for the entire program.

3. Policies on Service Delivery for Diverse Disability Populations and Students with Disabilities

The CEA will lead policy development and interpretation regarding how the Department serves individuals with differing disability related needs, including students and potentially eligible youth. For example, the CEA may set expectations for transition services, LEA coordination, and service pathways for consumers with complex support needs. Decisions in this area influence service quality, equity, and compliance with WIOA requirements statewide, as student services continue to grow as a significant portion of the VR program.

4. Community Partnerships, Workforce Development Board Engagement, and Employer Focused Initiatives

The CEA will make policy decisions governing district participation in workforce development activities, employer partnerships, and collaboration with community based organizations. For example, the CEA may develop partnership protocols, employer engagement strategies, or local implementation standards for statewide initiatives. These policies influence how the Department integrates with regional labor markets and directly affect employment outcomes for consumers across the assigned districts, while also shaping statewide partnership models.

5. Technology Adoption and Innovation in Service Delivery (including use of AI tools)

The CEA will guide policy decisions on the adoption and use of new technologies in the assigned districts, including data tools, case management enhancements, and emerging technologies such as AI supported functions. For example, the CEA may determine district level protocols for technology rollouts, staff training, and risk mitigation to ensure ethical, secure, and effective use. These decisions support statewide modernization efforts and improve service efficiency.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The CEA has authority to develop, recommend, and implement district-level policy decisions that directly impact program operations, service delivery, and resource management within its four assigned districts. The position exercises independent judgment in interpreting state and federal regulations, overseeing complex program issues, and setting operational direction for district leadership teams. While the CEA does not represent Executive Leadership or oversees the entire statewide program, the role carries substantial delegated authority to make decisions that shape how policies are applied, how resources are managed, and how service models evolve at the district level. The CEA is also expected to elevate significant issues, propose policy changes, and provide expert recommendations to Executive Leadership.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The CEA will both interpret existing policy and develop new policy recommendations. Interpretation is required to align program operations with federal regulations, state mandates, budget constraints, and compliance requirements. The position will also identify gaps or emerging needs, such as evolving disability populations, technological changes, or shifts in workforce demands, and develop new policy proposals for Executive Leadership consideration. Implementation occurs through district leadership guidance, operational directives, training, and collaboration with community and state partners.