

# State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services State Plan for Fiscal Year 2015 (submitted FY 2014)

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## Preprint - Section 1: State Certifications

1.1 The ***NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development - Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation*** is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended [] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act [].

1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the ***NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development*** [] agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan [], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations [], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.

1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan [], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations [], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan. **Yes**

1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to

perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**

1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**

1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law. **Yes**

1.7 The (enter title of state officer below) **Yes**

***Commissioner of NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development***

... has the authority under state law to receive, hold and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement.

1.8 The (enter title of state officer below)... **Yes**

***Commissioner of NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development***

... has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services.

1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

State Plan Certified By

As the authorized signatory identified above, I hereby certify that I will sign, date and retain in the files of the designated state agency/designated state unit Section 1 of the Preprint, and separate Certification of Lobbying forms (Form ED-80-0013; available at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed80-013.pdf>) for both the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

Signed? **Yes**

Name of Signatory ***Harold J. Wirths***

Title of Signatory ***Commissioner NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development***

Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) ***06/30/2014***

Assurances Certified By

At the request of RSA, the designated state agency and/or the designated state unit provide the following assurance(s), in addition to those contained within Section 2 through 8 below, in connection with the approval of the State Plan for FY ***2015No***

Section 1 Footnotes

☐ Public Law 93 112, as amended by Public Laws 93 516, 95 602, 98 221, 99 506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

☐ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

☐ All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[] No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR part 361.

[] Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.

[] No funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[] Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

## **Preprint - Section 2: Public Comment on State Plan Policies and Procedures**

### **2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))**

#### **(a) Conduct of public meetings.**

The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.

#### **(b) Notice requirements.**

The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council.

#### **(c) Special consultation requirements.**

The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

## Preprint - Section 3: Submission of the State Plan and its Supplement

### 3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)

(a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Rehabilitation Act.

(b) The state submits only those policies, procedures or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.

(c) The state submits to the commissioner, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:

1. comprehensive system of personnel development;
2. assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
3. innovation and expansion activities; and
4. other updates of information required under Title I, Part B, or Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act that are requested by the commissioner.

(d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Rehabilitation Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361 or 34 CFR 363.

### 3.2 Supported Employment State Plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

(a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B, of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.

(b) The Supported Employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

## Preprint - Section 4: Administration of the State Plan

### 4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))

(a) Designated state agency.

1. There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
2. The designated state agency ***is a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section (Option B was selected/Option A was not selected)***

3. In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

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**(b) Designated state unit.**

1. If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section, the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division or unit that:
  - A. is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
  - B. has a full-time director;
  - C. has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
  - D. is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
2. The name of the designated state vocational rehabilitation unit is

***Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services***

**4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)**

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

(a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission that

1. is responsible under state law for operating or overseeing the operation of the vocational rehabilitation program in the state and is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(A) of this section.
2. is consumer controlled by persons who:
  - A. are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
  - B. represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated state unit under the direction of the commission is the state agency for individuals who are blind;
3. includes family members, advocates or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and
4. undertakes the functions set forth in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4).

(b) The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.17

(c) If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

***(Option B was selected)***

**4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of**

The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) the director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.

**4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)**

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state or, if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

**4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)**

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency. **No**

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and
- (b) develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with the State Plan.

**4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.27)**

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities. **No**

If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) a description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) the services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) the respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) the share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

#### **4.7 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))**

This agency is **not** requesting a waiver of statewideness.

**(a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.**

**(b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:**

1. nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization or individual;
2. services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
3. state, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in Attachment 4.7(b)(3) a waiver of the statewideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
  - A. identification of the types of services to be provided;
  - B. written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
  - C. written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
  - D. written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

**(c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.**

#### **4.8 Cooperation, collaboration and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))**

**(a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide work force investment system.**

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide work force investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide work force investment system.

**(b) Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.**

Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:

1. cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide work force investment

2. coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
3. establishment of cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
4. efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.

**(c) Coordination with education officials.**

1. Attachment 4.8(b)(2) describes the plans, policies and procedures for coordination between the designated state agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.
2. The State Plan description must:
  - A. provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
  - B. include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
    - i. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to postschool activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
    - ii. transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
    - iii. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
    - iv. procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

**(d) Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.**

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

**(e) Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.**

1. There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the

provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations. **No**

2. If "Yes", the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act:
  - A. strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;
  - B. procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
  - C. provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

#### **4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (b))**

##### **(a) In general.**

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the plan and 34 CFR 361.

##### **(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.**

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

##### **(c) Facilities.**

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Rehabilitation Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the regulations implementing these laws.

#### **4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.18)**

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

##### **(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.**

Development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development with respect to:

1. Qualified personnel needs. [You Are Viewing an Archived Report from the New Jersey State Library](#)

- A. The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- B. The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in five years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

2. Personnel development.

- A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- B. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- C. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

**(b) Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel.**

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare and retain personnel who are qualified in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

**(c) Personnel standards.**

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including:

- 1. standards that are consistent with any national- or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.
- 2. To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the state plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the time lines for taking each step.
- 3. The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:

- A. specific strategies for retraining, recruiting and hiring personnel;
- B. the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
- C. procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period; and
- D. the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards and the identification of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

**(d) Staff development.**

Policies, procedures and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

- 1. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement and rehabilitation technology.
- 2. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

**(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs.**

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

**(f) Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

Procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

**4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports.**

(Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

**(a) Comprehensive statewide assessment.**

- 1. Attachment 4.11(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every three years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a council). The assessment describes:
  - A. the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:
    - i. individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

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- ii. individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and
  - iii. individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide work force investment system.
- B. The need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.
2. For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.

**(b) Annual estimates.**

Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:

1. number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the plan;
2. number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
3. costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

**(c) Goals and priorities.**

1. Attachment 4.11(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
2. The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.
3. Order of selection.  
If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, Attachment 4.11(c)(3):
  - A. shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
  - B. provides a justification for the order; and
  - C. identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
4. Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds.  
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

**(d) Strategies.**

1. Attachment 4.11(d) describes the strategies, including:

- A. the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
  - B. outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
  - C. as applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs;
  - D. strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
  - E. strategies for assisting other components of the statewide work force investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
2. Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:
- A. address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);
  - B. support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the plan; and
  - C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

**(e) Evaluation and reports of progress.**

- 1. The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.
- 2. Attachment 4.11(e)(2):
  - A. provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3) were achieved;
  - B. identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
  - C. describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
  - D. assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
  - E. provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

**4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.35)**

**(a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the:**

1. development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in Attachment 4.11(a) and goals and priorities of the state identified in Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3); and
2. support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).

(b) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.

(c) Attachment 4.11(e)(2) describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

#### **4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.40)**

(a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.

(b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

## **Preprint - Section 5: Administration of the Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

#### **5.1 Information and referral services. (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.37)**

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide work force investment system in the state.

#### **5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))**

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

#### **5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.36)**

(a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services. *No*

**(b) If No:**

1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
2. Attachment 4.11(c)(3):
  - A. shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
  - B. provides a justification for the order of selection; and
  - C. identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
3. Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

**5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.53)**

**(a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.**

**(b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:**

1. assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
2. counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act;
3. referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide work force investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;
4. job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
5. rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices; and
6. post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.

**(c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:**

1. progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
2. an immediate job placement; or
3. provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme

medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

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**(d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Rehabilitation Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide work force investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.**

### **5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)**

**(a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, and is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.**

**(b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.**

### **5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.52)**

Applicants and eligible individuals or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

### **5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.30)**

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

### **5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.55)**

**(a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:**

1. who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
2. whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.

**(b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for two years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative) to determine the interests, priorities and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.**

(c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.

(d) The individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation and, through signed acknowledgement, attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

### **5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))**

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

(a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for that fiscal year.

(b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Rehabilitation Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.

(c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

### **5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)**

#### **(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.**

The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than nonprofit agencies and organizations.

#### **(b) Cooperative agreements with private nonprofit organizations.**

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

## **Preprint - Section 6: Program Administration**

### **Section 6: Program Administration**

#### **6.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))**

The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act.

#### **6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))**

Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

### **6.3 Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))**

Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.

### **6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)**

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act.

### **6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))**

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

### **6.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))**

Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

### **6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)**

The designated state agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the commissioner may require and collects the information required by Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B, of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Preprint - Section 7: Financial Administration**

### **7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))**

The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

### **7.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))**

[Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act](#) are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.

(b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B, are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.

(c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Preprint - Section 8: Provision of Supported Employment Services**

**8.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))**

(a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).

(b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.

(c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

**8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities. (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))**

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

**8.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))**

(a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.

(b) The individualized plan for employment:

1. specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
2. describes the expected extended services needed; and
3. identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.

(c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

## Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

The New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides oversight and advises the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the designated state unit (DSU) within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). The LWD is the designated state agency (DSA). The SRC is a partnership of people with disabilities, advocates, and other interested persons who are committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation, and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient, and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in gainful employment. Representing the myriad of diversity that is New Jersey, council members believe that individuals with disabilities are the "untapped resource" to the business community and assert that disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes a person's right to fully participate in all aspects of American life. Members of the SRC in New Jersey believe in a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it; they believe that competitive jobs generate tax revenue and enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to spend discretionary income which contributes to the state's economy.

The SRC recommendations for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 and their status updates are as follows:

### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC appreciates the continued success the DVRS had in 2012 with filling staff counseling vacancies and backfilling supervisory personnel. Hiring of qualified staff and maintaining an appropriate number of personnel are integral to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends that the DVRS restore the rehabilitation counselor aide position within the local offices as a method of recruiting more consumers with disabilities to the front line staff. The aide position requires an associate's degree and offers flexibility in hiring and can act as a feeder to the counseling position.

### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and notes that the Civil Service Commission recently tested for the rehabilitation aide position. Upon the announcement of the test, the agency conducted a campaign to reach out to consumers and employees interested in this paraprofessional opportunity. The DVRS will work towards reestablishing this vital position within the local offices.

### Status Update:

The Civil Service Commission has certified its rehabilitation aid position list. The DVRS has not been able to hire any aide positions at this time. The new upgrade of the current WORCS data base system to a full AWARE system may provide an opportunity for the DVRS to convert the current clerical support staff positions to align with the rehabilitation aide position.

### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC acknowledges its duty to examine the success of the DVRS program through public hearings. The SRC recognizes the importance of keeping open lines of communication with the DVRS and consumers of vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC appreciates the efforts made by the DVRS in 2013 to utilize

technology for its first public forum teleconference and recommends that the DVRS continue to explore technology and alternate public hearing venues to maximize opportunities for consumer input.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS appreciates the continued need and accepts the recommendation and will explore alternate venues and the use of technology to enhance participation of consumers at our public hearings.

Status Update: The DVRS provided two public forums via teleconferencing in 2014. Additionally, the DVRS director met with two Deaf/HH consumer groups to maximize consumer input from this group of stakeholders.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that jobseekers with disabilities sometimes require innovative approaches to enhance their chance to garner gainful integrated employment. The SRC recommends that the DVRS pursue strategies such as using paid internships for DVRS consumers and increase the use of on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for qualified DVRS jobseekers as appropriate.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop strategies that increase innovative approaches to ensure that jobseekers with disabilities garner gainful integrated employment.

#### Status Update:

The DVRS identified state resources to use for a DVRS specific opportunity that provided training for DVRS consumers in New Jersey's industry sector strategy. Milestone benchmarks were developed that increased the outcome of employment with this dedicated funding stream.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that people with disabilities need full access to the One-Stop Career Center system. The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue in its direction regarding universal access to the One-Stop Career Center system throughout New Jersey.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will continue to provide technical assistance, training, information and coordination regarding universal access design to the One-Stop Career Center system throughout New Jersey.

#### Status Update:

The DVRS provided opportunity, through its DEI grant, to fund local One-Stop Career Centers with technology in their public access areas. No VR dollars were used in this effort.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is mindful that there are emerging groups of people, in particular individuals identified by the Governor's Employment First Initiative who demonstrate a need for intense vocational rehabilitation. The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to develop and enhance services to these segments of the state's population.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop policies and procedures as appropriate to provide tailored vocational rehabilitation to emerging groups of people, in particular individuals identified by the

#### Status Update:

The DVRS, along with the SRC, is currently working on its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). As part of the CSNA the DVRS determined that an Employment First strategy is an appropriate outcome. Five objectives have been identified under the DVRS Employment First strategy and will be included in the DVRS state plan 2015 goals.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that the DVRS program is affected by state funding cuts. The Council also understands that an inability to match funds from the state will impact the ability to draw down full federal funds for Title I. The SRC understands that, at this point, the DVRS will be flat funded for state year 2014, and it recommends that the DVRS identifies and advocates strategies to ensure that state matching funds will be consistently available for future fiscal years.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with the SRC to implement strategies to identify match funding to preserve the ability to draw down full federal funds for Title I.

#### Status Update:

The SRC initiated and presented to the New Jersey Casino commission to discuss the ongoing need for state match. This is the first step toward being included for the consideration of these funds. The DVRS was successful in identifying approximately \$2.5 million in WDP state funds for a specific DVRS consumer training NGO. The DVRS is also exploring ways for individuals currently under LTFA who demonstrate the need for more intense support to be served under VR using state funds. For instance, individuals previously funded for long term support by the DDD who are no longer eligible for DDD services due to their inability to become Medicaid eligible are being advised to go to their local DVRS offices and when appropriate reopen their cases. State funds under LTFA have been designated to be used for this population and counselors have the authority to commit these state funds for services to these individuals.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC further recommends that the DVRS develop strategies that will enhance opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities currently participating in segregated employment programs who, through informed choice, identify the desire to move into integrated employment.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with community providers to develop strategies to provide opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities to move into integrated competitive employment.

#### Status Update:

The CSNA identified a strategic objective that focuses on creating opportunities for individuals currently in a sheltered workshop to move into competitive employment when appropriate. Goals will be identified in the FFY 2015 state plan based on this objective.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recommends that the DVRS examine its policies regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will continue to examine policies regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment. The DVRS is keeping careful eye on the current reauthorization drafts for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); proposed language mandates increased services for students in transition.

#### Status Update:

The DVRS provided innovation funds geared towards students in transition. Additionally, the DVRS has worked with the New Jersey Centers for Independent Living using an integrated resource team approach that is increasing the number of student referrals in the local offices. The CILs are funded by the local school districts for this effort.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the state public vocational rehabilitation program, including the return on investment from using vocational rehabilitation services.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and plans to assess the actual return on investment for state funds. The DVRS and the SRC are working closely to develop this assessment. The LWD is currently rebranding the programs within workforce development, including the DVRS, to update existing information for distribution.

#### Status Update:

The DVRS has not made progress on this recommendation.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is excited that New Jersey became the 14th Employment First state. The SRC recommends that the DVRS take the lead to develop, revise and monitor agreements with other state agencies and community partners to ensure success of this critical change in policy.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with other state agencies to develop, revise and monitor agreements supporting policies that promote Employment First in New Jersey.

#### Status Update:

The DVRS has developed an Employment First strategy as part of its CSNA. The division utilized state funds to promulgate an Employment First training grant during FFY 2013/2014 as well.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands the importance of working with community-based organizations that provide supported employment services that are integral to the success of many customers of the DVRS. The SRC appreciates the assessments being done concerning vendor rates and recommends that the DVRS continue to reevaluate its current hourly rate for supported employment.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will continue to evaluate its fee structures. The DVRS will elicit input from the SRC prior to finalizing any changes.

## Status Update:

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The DVRS has made updates to the following fees:

- Group Supported Employment fee was increased to \$10.20 per hour;
- Clinical psychological and report fee was changed from a flat fee of \$175 to \$125 per unit. This was necessary so counselors have more control on what specific assessments and tests are being purchased; and
- Trial Work Experience fee of \$51 per hour was implemented.

## SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is aware that New Jersey is a very diverse state and recommends that the DVRS evaluate demographics of disability populations to keep abreast of possible underserved populations.

## Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop strategies to determine disability populations by region. This information will be gathered as part of the DVRS comprehensive needs assessment and will be used to establish goals for the DVRS state plan in FFY 2015.

## Status Update:

The DVRS spent the last year evaluating demographics and disability populations for its CSNA. Goals for FFY 2015 will reflect the results of the CSNA.

## State Plan Recommendations for FFY 2015

The SRC and the DVRS jointly developed and reviewed elements of the state plan. An assessment of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation delivery system has resulted in the following recommendations based on suggestions from the RSA monitoring report from April 2011 as well as the public forums held March 5 in Monmouth County; March 12 in Essex County; March 19 and March 26 via teleconference. Additional forums specifically for Deaf/hard of hearing were held September 28, 2013 and October 12, 2013.

## SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands that the RSA monitoring visit in FFY 2010 identified several recommendations for the DVRS and advocates that the DVRS implement strategies to address the suggestions, as follows:

- Develop strategies to increase wage levels for individuals served;
- Explore relevant training and education to increase wages, and expand relationships with employers throughout the state;
- Analyze the decline in the number of individuals who have SE goals on their IPEs and achieve SE to determine the reasons underlying the decline in these respective performance measures and develop strategies to address the reasons identified;
- Review and analyze the case management settings utilized to identify SE goals and SE services on an IPE and the case closure page and develop a systematic process to ensure accurate coding and reporting;
- Provide training to staff related to the definition of SE and SE services to include appropriate identification of SE goals on the IPE, coding of SE services on the IPE and the case closure page in the case management system;

- Develop fiscal controls and evaluation methods to ensure that providers are not billing DVRS through multiple contracts;
- Conduct surveys of transition-age youths who exit the VR program after eligibility is determined, but before their IPEs are developed, to determine the reasons why these individuals are withdrawing from the program;
- Develop a plan for training on existing and revised policies and procedures for all staff involved in their implementation;
- Resume the QA process for the review of service records by staff not functioning as VR counselor supervisors;
- Review and refine instrumentation for conducting service record reviews; and
- Develop mechanisms to collect and aggregate the results of the review process and provide the results to the training function to inform the design and evaluation of training.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts these recommendations and will establish measurements and performance targets for each that will enable the agency and its stakeholders to accurately assess progress.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is pleased that the DVRS has worked with them in performing a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) in FFY 2014 and recommends goals and objectives based on information garnered from the CSNA be identified for FFY 2015, 2016, and 2017.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts these recommendations and will identify goals that incorporate the needs of its stakeholders and the individuals served by the DVRS identified in the FFY 2014 CSNA.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the state public vocational rehabilitation program, including the return on investment from using vocational rehabilitation services.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and plans to assess the actual return on investment for state funds. The DVRS and the SRC are working closely to develop this assessment. The LWD is currently rebranding the programs within workforce development, including the DVRS, to update existing information for distribution.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC appreciates the continued success the DVRS had in 2012 with filling staff counseling vacancies and backfilling supervisory personnel. Hiring of qualified staff and maintaining an appropriate number of personnel are integral to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends that the DVRS restore the rehabilitation counselor aide position within the local offices as a method of recruiting more consumers with disabilities to the front line staff. The aide position requires an associate's degree and offers flexibility in hiring and can act as a feeder to the counseling position.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will work towards reestablishing this vital position within the local offices.

#### SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands that the job of the counselor is unique and requires knowledge of vocational rehabilitation specific to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends continued requirement of the New Jersey DVRS counselor position to include a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation or a closely related field as per current civil service description.

#### Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will advocate maintaining this requirement.

This screen was last updated on Sep 24 2014 9:03AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

This agency **has not** requested a waiver of statewideness.

This screen has never been updated.

## Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) believes that collaboration with stakeholders is essential to assisting people with disabilities to successfully become employed. Such an ongoing effort maximizes resources and addresses the quality of life issues that can impact the ability of a person with a disability to obtain and maintain employment.

The DVRS is part of Workforce Development within the DLWD and is a strong partner with the One-Stop Career Center Workforce Investment System throughout the state. The agency also enjoys a cooperative relationship with state and community-based agencies to collaborate on programs that will promote the empowerment and economic independence of individuals with disabilities in an effort to encourage employment. The agency arranges memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for the purpose of carrying out activities that require a formalized response or protocol in the delivery of services. Since the Governor has declared through Executive Order, that New Jersey become the 14th Employment First state, it is critical that the DVRS reexamine all of the current MOUs in order to ensure policy aligns with the intent of Employment First. MOUs that will be revised include the following:

- The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI)

The CBVI provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with visual disabilities that constitute, for that individual, a substantial impediment to employment. In addition to serving individuals with physical or mental disabilities, the DVRS also serves individuals with visual disabilities. Our MOU with the CBVI specifies

the eligibility criteria for our respective agencies in the area of visual disability, the inter-agency referral and consultation process, and the criteria by which our agencies would share clients in order to provide that individual with comprehensive services. The current MOU is being revised to reflect New Jersey's Employment First initiative.

- The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

The DDD serves individuals with disabilities that manifest in the developmental years, are lifelong, and substantially limiting in major life activities. Conditions generally considered developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spina bifida and autism, and we share many clients in common. The DDD recently changed its policy to require Medicaid eligibility for all of the clients it serves and all DDD eligible clients must now have an employment goal embedded within each individualized support plan. Accordingly, DDD is now mandating that all DDD clients come through the DVRS prior to receiving any funding or services from them. This policy eliminates consumer choice embedded in the Rehabilitation Act and effectively negates the current MOU between the DVRS and the DDD. Consequently the DVRS is currently in negotiation with the CBVI and the DDD to rewrite a new MOU that will specify the protocols for serving our mutual clients. The DDD has also transferred all of the children it serves to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF); the DDD services now begin at age 21. The DVRS will be reaching out to the DCF to develop and MOU with them for the purpose of supporting students in transition who will need DVRS services in order to access employment.

- The Commission on Higher Education

In order to define the most appropriate resource to cover expenses such as interpreter services, personal care attendants and other accessibility areas while an individual with a disability participates in a school program, the division has agreements with all four-year state colleges and all county colleges in New Jersey. These MOUs have been in place for many years and will be revisited in program year 2015.

- The Division of Wage and Hour Compliance

In conjunction with community-based rehabilitation programs, the DVRS maintains an MOU with the CBVI, the DDD, and the Division of Wage and Hour, which outlines the criteria for an employment relationship under New Jersey Wage and Hour Law in such a way that vocational rehabilitation activities may take place in community settings without undue restriction. Consequently, situational assessments and similar "on-the-job" work experience may take place without violating employment law.

- Agrability

The southern part of New Jersey works with Agrability to ensure that farmers who have become disabled have the opportunity for rehabilitation services. There is currently no formal agreement with the US Department of Agriculture.

- Coordination with Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and Centers for Independent Living

In New Jersey, the DVRS has a positive relationship with the SILC and has supported its growth throughout the years. The DVRS uses Title I innovation and expansion funds to support the operation of the SILC and includes them in all agency activities. A SILC member has a seat on the SRC and the DVRS supports the SILC through its active participation at their meetings and in the preparation of the state plan for independent living (SPIL) and the RSA Section 704 Report.

The state currently has eight federally-funded centers for independent living (CILs). The DVRS expanded the network through the RSA Part B grant and a line item in the state budget to add five CILs to the group. The DVRS has dedicated a program specialist to offer the CILs consultation and technical assistance. The DVRS feels that these centers offer a dynamic that is necessary for individuals with disabilities before, during, and after their employment experience.

The DVRS will continue to value the partnership that exists between the DVRS and the community of CILs

by doing the following:

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- Supporting the efforts by the centers to apply for grants from the various foundations and agencies to enhance their base of funding and thus improve operation;
- Implementing appropriate opportunities with the DVRS under a fee-for-service model; and
- Encouraging the growth of the centers by offering technical assistance on the development of social enterprise programs.

This screen was last updated on Jun 18 2014 4:20PM by Alice Hunnicutt

## **Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials**

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
  - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
  - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
  - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
  - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) understands the critical relationship that exists among education and employment that in turn affects independence and quality of life. Transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities is a top priority for the DVRS. The Division has had a long-standing formal interagency agreement for transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities. This agreement is with the DVRS, the Office of Special Education Programs and the Office of Career and Technical Education in the New Jersey Department of Education, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) in the New Jersey Department of Human Services. Since the Governor has declared through Executive Order, that New Jersey become the 14th Employment First state, it is critical that the DVRS reexamine this agreement to ensure policy aligns with the intent of Employment First. The DVRS will identify policy alignment with the SEA to ensure that employment is the first and presumed outcome for individuals with disabilities. All students can and should have the opportunity to access services from the DVRS if eligible.

The DVRS does not have formal agreements with local school districts. The 605 school districts in the state of New Jersey are autonomous. Accordingly, districts provide special education to students with disabilities in unique ways. Some rely on the DVRS counselors to provide consultation when students turn 14; others ensure that students are connected with the DVRS within two years of a student graduating from public education entitlement. However, there remain a number of districts that identify credit requirements for graduation rather than transition services; these districts make no effort to comply with the IDEA requirements to link students prior to graduation. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to pursue LEA agreements with every district. However, the language in the proposed reauthorization of the WIA significantly increases the expectation of the DVRS in the transition process. There are 21 counties in New Jersey; the New Jersey Department of Education employs a county superintendent to supervise the LEAs in each county. Upon reauthorization the DVRS will pursue county-based MOUs with each county superintendent for the purposes of clarifying the DVRS role in the transition process for students with

disabilities.

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The DVRS counselors are assigned to work directly with individual schools. In addition, all offices have a "lead transition counselor" who serves as the liaison to the DVRS central office on transitioning issues and provides guidance and consultation to the DVRS counselors in their respective offices.

Through the efforts of the lead transition counselors and the published agency guidelines, the DVRS has clarified roles and responsibilities for financial services in a most concise manner. The agency offers referral and consultation to school districts that are in need of cost services but has clearly indicated that the school is financially responsible for the evaluation, pre-employment activities, supported employment and programming for students through their educational entitlement.

The DVRS makes outreach efforts to schools and local communities in order to identify students with disabilities who may be in need of transition services. In addition to outreach made to specific schools, DVRS participates in annual student conferences sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs. The DVRS transition coordinator and other designated DVRS personnel also participate in inter-agency county-based transition committees and forums as a means to increase awareness of the DVRS services and provide information about the agency.

In addition, the DVRS has made a "Director's Letter" highlighting the DVRS collaboration with the schools in relation to transitioning activities available for use with school personnel, students and other entities involved with the transition process. Information about the DVRS guidelines, policies and services in relation to transition is highlighted in the DVRS documents:

- Guidelines for School Personnel
- Guidelines for students in transition
- DVRS Myths & Facts

All documents are posted on the DVRS website.

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## **Attachment 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Cooperative agreements (in the broadest sense of the term) with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers are established and maintained in a variety of ways including Notice of Grant Opportunities (NGOs) contracts, program approvals, MOUs, technical assistance workshops and ongoing monitoring.

When funding becomes available for new vocational rehabilitation projects and services, the availability of these funds are posted as an NGO on the Department website and also communicated to providers statewide. The NGO will describe the purpose of the funding, the providers that are eligible to apply for the funding, the necessary programmatic requirements, expected outcomes and time frame for the service provision. A technical assistance workshop is held thereafter to explain and clarify the intent of the NGO. Applications are then reviewed for adherence to the NGO specifications and the funds are awarded accordingly. The awards, in turn, are transitioned into contracts. Each provider is assigned a program planning and development specialist (PPDS) to monitor the expenditures and programmatic results of the contract.

Providers may also have their contract (or cooperative agreement) renewed on an annual basis, depending

upon the type of service, when the service was established, or when the service last underwent the NGO process. As the contract's end date comes to a close, the previous year's results are reviewed and the contractual relationship is re-established. The contract specifications are reiterated and any changes or modifications to the contract are incorporated therein.

The DVRS also receives requests from new providers to vend an existing service and enter into a cooperative agreement by which the DVRS purchases services from them. Existing providers may also request to expand their services or the counties that they serve, and thereby modify their cooperative agreement.

Most frequently, the DVRS is approached by a new provider to vend supported employment services. It is important to note that most of the services that a private, nonprofit organization would provide to the DVRS are subject to New Jersey Administrative Code 12:51, "Rules and Regulations Governing Community-Based Rehabilitation Organizations." The purpose of this code is to "define the criteria for operation of a program which is eligible to vend specific service to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and to ensure the provision of quality services to persons with disabilities." This code was last updated in 2007 and is consistent with good practice and applicable federal regulation. Consequently, the DVRS has a process in place to vet new vendors and enter into cooperative agreements or not based on providers' adherence to the N.J.A.C. 12:51. Providers are required to have standard business documentation and structure, and the credentials, experience, training and organizational capacity necessary to provide the service they wish to vend. They are also required to maintain national accreditation in order to vendor services with the DVRS. Once providers are approved to enter the cooperative relationship with the DVRS as a vendor of services, they receive further information and training from the DVRS' community rehabilitation programs unit, and receive ongoing monitoring and technical assistance from their assigned PPDS. Approved providers that request to vend new services or expand their services to additional counties undergo a similar vetting process, depending on the request, and must demonstrate that they have been providing quality services in the counties in which they are already operating. New Jersey Administrative Code 12:51, "Rules and Regulations Governing Community-Based Rehabilitation Organizations" is scheduled to be revised during FY 2015; all vendors will be required to adhere to these new revisions once promulgated.

There is an agreement with ACCSES New Jersey to have a representative appointed to chair the oversight and review of the state set-aside program to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the right opportunity for industrial competition. The centralized nonprofit agency (CNA) services in New Jersey works directly with the NJ Office of Management and Budget to develop no-bid contracts.

MOUs are another vehicle by which the DVRS enters into cooperative agreements with private non-profit service providers. Most often, these types of MOUs would be with affiliated agencies that provide support services to the DVRS' clients or interface with the DVRS, but are not vendor/providers. For example, a substance abuse treatment center and the DVRS may wish to provide the relationship with additional structure, and delineate the referral process and the various roles and responsibilities when working together. Oftentimes, private nonprofits will request MOUs with the DVRS to fulfill their own accreditation requirements. This type of MOU is distinct from the type of MOU that the DVRS may have with a large public agency.

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## **Attachment 4.8(b)(4) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and

- extended services.

Supported employment services, including extended services, are ubiquitous in New Jersey. The DVRS has cooperative agreements in the form of vendor/provider relationships with over 90 individual supported employment service providers. These providers are entirely community-based, or associated with community rehabilitation facilities such as workshops or cognitive rehabilitation programs. All programs receive funding based upon the fee-for-service, billable job coaching hour model.

As noted in Attachment 4.8(b)(3), the DVRS is frequently approached by new providers to vend supported employment services and there is a vetting process in place to ensure that these potential new providers are qualified to provide this service. In New Jersey, approval to vend supported employment services requires strict compliance with N.J.A.C. 12:51, and CARF or equivalent accreditation within three years of initial approval. In addition, there must be an identified need for supported employment services in the county or counties in which the new vendor intends to operate. The manager of the local county field office takes part in the vetting process. At the present time, approximately six new providers are interested in vending supported employment services to the DVRS and are in the vetting process.

For the past three years the DVRS has had SE provided to DVRS consumers with significant psychiatric disabilities by 22 vendors through a contractual agreement with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). This agreement is formally ending October 1, 2014; vendors currently providing services through DMHAS have been notified and encouraged to apply to the DVRS to become SE vendors through our fee-for-service model.

New Jersey is fortunate to have state-appropriated funding for post-employment services which is referred to as the long-term follow-along (LTFA) program. The LTFA funding of approximately \$5.4 million went out under an NGO for the second time in FY 2013, and 62 supported employment programs were given contracts to provide extended services.

Since individual LTFA program budgets are limited, a "restabilization fund" was also approved to handle the service needs of clients in need of additional post-employment supports that exceed individual program budgets. Of course, clients may also apply for Title I post-employment services should their support needs exceed the intent of the restabilization fund.

In regard to extended SE services, the DVRS has an MOU with the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) specific to SE services in which the DDD has agreed to fund the SE of their consumers when warranted. The DVRS is currently in negotiation with the DDD to modify the MOU based on New Jersey's Employment First Initiative.

The DVRS encourages continuing education and training in regard to the provision of supported employment services. The DVRS works closely with the following supported employment training providers to train the DVRS and supported employment program staff: 1) Region 2 TACE Center for general supported employment training and the trainings leading to the "supported employment certificate," 2) the Boggs Center for Developmental Disabilities and related training, and the 3) the integrated employment institute at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) for supported employment training for staff that work with people diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities.

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## **Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

### **Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The DVRS maintains a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) that establishes and supports a highly qualified staff dedicated to offering vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities.

In keeping with the mission of the agency the CSPD focuses on the following areas:

- Pre-service training;
- Recruitment of qualified personnel;
- Staff development and training needs of current employees;
- Continuing education and lifelong learning; and
- Retention of qualified DVRS personnel.

Guidelines have been provided by the Workforce Investment Act, Title IV; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) hiring policies and terms of employment.

The DVRS works in collaboration with the DSA's training unit to maintain files on the in-service training records and changes in the credentials of all agency employees. The agency's staff development and training coordinator also maintains records of the TACE training and offers the CRC credit approval for all of the training programs created and/or sponsored by the agency.

### Qualified Personnel Needs

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) routinely publishes an employee roster, which is reviewed against budget information to determine the most up-to-date number of employees actively serving the agency. A recent analysis of the agency's HR needs has revealed that it can function with a total of 298 staff members which will ensure that there is a minimum requirement to maintain 140 counselors and adequate supervisory, management and administrative support. After a multi-year hiring freeze which left the agency with many vacancies, the state has agreed to restore the leadership structure and fill front line positions.

The agency currently serves approximately 33,000 individuals with an average caseload level of slightly more than 235. Caseloads that become "vacant" due to a staff member leaving are being maintained by a supervising rehabilitation counselor who is providing services to ensure case success. Presently, DVRS has 17 supervising rehabilitation counselors that maintain a "vacant" caseload of 150 on average. Some offices have multiple vacant caseloads, which the supervising rehabilitation counselor covers. The anticipated level set at 140 counselor positions would result in reduced caseload size.

Each DVRS counselor is evaluated annually and the achievement of the graduate credential is monitored. All DVRS counselors meet or are in an approved plan to meet the CSPD standards. Most DVRS counselors have a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related field. All staff members are made aware of trainings, online degree programs and continuing education courses that will enable them to reach the CSPD standard. Counselors who do not have a Master's Degree are not eligible for promotion.

The agency has been experiencing a 4 percent increase in the number of people that come for services on

an annual basis. The number of position allocations is not expected to rise at the same pace of people applying for services.

Senior executive staff – 85 percent over 55

Management/Supervision – 45 percent over 55

Counseling staff – 27 percent over 55

Factoring the anticipated succession of the lower levels into higher positions leaves the DVRS with the task of replacing well over half the counseling staff within the next five years.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Director	1	0	1
2	Assistant Director	2	0	2
3	Chief	4	0	3
4	Manager	14	1	5
5	Administrative Analyst 1	1	0	0
6	Program Planning & Development Specialist 1	12	5	5
7	Supervising Rehabilitation Counselor	20	4	8
8	Administrative analyst 2	2	1	1
9	Counselors	140	2	38
10		0	0	0

2. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

In New Jersey, there is one graduate program devoted to training rehabilitation counselors. It was formerly housed in the School of Health Related Programs of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) and offered a part-time 51 credit program that is CORE approved. It is now under Rutgers University and in addition to being CORE approved it is CACREP accredited. The most recent graduating class produced 12 graduates. Due to the nature of the course offerings and the fact that most of the students are employed, the graduating classes have averaged about 18 per year since the program began. All of the Rutgers graduates are eligible for national certification upon graduation. It must be noted that the DVRS sponsored over 55 students in the program from 1999 to 2006 in order to comply with the CSPD requirements defining qualified rehabilitation personnel.

Guidelines have been provided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the CSC hiring policies and terms of employment. Projections were made based on the current number of employees in regard to their age, length of service, education and availability of training resources.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	Rutgers University	24	1	18	12
2		0	0	0	0
3		0	0	0	0
4		0	0	0	0
5		0	0	0	0

### Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

#### Internships

DVRS maintains a collaborative relationship with Rutgers and continues to place students in Practicums and Internships throughout the agency. This last year, 10 interns were CRC supervised in the DVRS offices statewide.

#### Pre-service Training

As previously stated, Rutgers University is the one graduate level program that prepares students in vocational rehabilitation counseling in New Jersey through its Master of Arts in Rehabilitation program.

Additionally, The George Washington University offers a 45 credit CORE approved CSPD online Masters of Arts in education and human development in rehabilitation counseling. One staff member has recently graduated. Currently DVRS has several employees enrolled in online rehabilitation counseling programs.

#### Recruitment of Qualified Personnel

The CSC is the established hiring authority in state service and recruits potential employees with a Master's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling or a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). At the request of the DLWD, Office of Human Resources & Labor Relations (HR&LR), the CSC revised the education and experience sections of the job specifications for the DVRS Counselor I and II titles along with those of the Supervising Rehabilitation Counselor title to ensure that the recruitment practices are compatible with federal requirements and that the standards or qualifications are based on the highest requirements in the state for the vocational rehabilitation counseling profession. As defined in the Code of Federal Regulations [34 CFR 361.18(c)(2)(i)], highest requirements in the state applicable to that profession or discipline means the highest entry-level academic degree needed for any national or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to that profession or discipline. In the state of New Jersey, the Professional Counselor Licensure Law identifies a combination of education and experience as standards for the designation of licensed rehabilitation counselor (LRC). Recognizing a possible shortage of potential candidates to fill entry-level vocational rehabilitation counselor positions, the DVRS also recognizes a CRC as a qualifying standard.

The minimum education criterion to be considered for employment had been a Master's Degree in

rehabilitation counseling or a CRC. With RSA technical assistance, the DVRS has been granted the modification that expands the educational criteria to include a Master's Degree in a closely-related field such as social work, psychology, counseling, education and special education, along with successful completion of one (1) graduate course in Theories and Techniques of Counseling. Recruitment remains an ongoing effort.

Due to the downsizing of certain state agencies, the CSC maintains lists of employees who have been affected by a reduction in force (RIF) and prior to filling new positions, these lists must be certified for potential candidates.

In-house training for new employees is implemented to ensure that new staff members are familiar with current data systems, employee policies and procedures, etc.

DVRS is grateful to be extended the hiring freeze exemption; however, data indicates staff shortages will continue in the local offices. DVRS will continue to work with the LWD executive management to fill vacancies stemming from retirements and/or terminations of staff. Because data indicates ongoing hiring needs, the DVRS will continue to target potential applicants using the following action steps:

- Maintain relationships with CORE accredited schools throughout Region II;
- The CSAVR regional education forums;
- Expand intern program with the DVRS;
- Support the efforts of Rutgers University to ensure that the rehabilitation counseling program maintains CORE and CACREP accreditation;
- Establish a paid internship to fill positions with students who are in the final year of their Master's Degree program;
- Explore testing and recruitment options within the structure of the CSC and graduate programs;
- Continue to work with the CSC to maintain the automatic hiring cycle that evaluates education and experience and establishes a pool of candidates for open positions by area;
- Work with the CSC recruitment staff to feature careers in vocational rehabilitation and to participate in college recruitment days;
- Encourage staff to participate in career days, and other similar events in high schools;
- Target school districts and community colleges in urban enterprise zones for career development;
- Identify potential students for the vocational rehabilitation counseling programs from the DVRS consumers;
- Identify individuals within the state with the CRC credential and mail a state of NJ employment application; and
- Provide information to the DVRS clients on becoming a VR professional, if appropriate.

One of the strategies that DVRS intends to employ includes participating in career days and in the NJ Department of Education Dare to Dream series where we will feature information about making vocational rehabilitation a career. This will be done in the exhibit area with the DVRS counselors staffing the booth and making themselves available to address students in their schools.

## **Personnel Standards**

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

Each DVRS counselor is evaluated annually and the achievement of the graduate credential is monitored. DVRS counselors are required to meet the CSPD standards. Currently all but two DVRS counselors without the Master's Degree are participating in an approved training plan. The two counselors no longer perform the nondelegable functions of a rehabilitation counselor. Counselors who do not meet the CSPD standards are not eligible for promotion. The agency anticipates that those who are not presently in a program will be of retirement age by 2016. All counselors are made aware of trainings, online degree programs and continuing education courses.

The minimum qualification for a DVRS Counselor I position requires a Master's Degree in vocational rehabilitation or a closely related field as outlined by CSC. There are no exceptions or substitutions.

The DVRS has been trying to get a paid internship program in place for Master's level students interested in working at a DVRS office. To date, this has not happened but negotiations continue.

## Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
  2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.
1. Enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of the DVRS employees.

The Rehabilitation Act recognizes the need for an ongoing and progressive in-service training program to upgrade the skills, increase the knowledge and maximize the performance of personnel employed by the DVRS who provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

The DVRS takes pride in the high quality of staff development at all levels that is maintained in the in-service training program. Each year the program unit performs a training needs assessment that reflects a number of areas, such as:

- Priorities outlined in the current state plan;
- Staff development issues culled from individual development plans as a part of the performance evaluation system;
- Polling managers and supervisors; and
- Scanning the environment for issues related to current legislation, trends and advances in the practice of vocational rehabilitation.

The program unit staff members reach out to a number of areas to meet the needs for training programs that will be pertinent to the staff, useful to the practice of vocational rehabilitation and offer opportunities to enhance lifelong learning. The following entities are employed in the execution of the in-service training program:

- Region 2 Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center located at the State University of New York at Buffalo;
- The New Jersey Civil Service Commission Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI);
- The LWD Office of Training and Staff Development (OTSD);
- The Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE);
- The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA);
- The Council of State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR);
- Rutgers University;
- The Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA);
- The NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

2. Ensure that qualified rehabilitation personnel serve the individuals with disabilities who participate in the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Action Steps:

- Continue to collaborate with the Rutgers University in support of the certificate of advanced graduate studies (CAGS) programs to enhance the ability for individuals with Master's Degrees in affiliated areas to become certified;
- Continue to supplement the funding of the tuition refund program with resources from the in-service training grant;
- Continue the DVRS' involvement with a distance learning programs with schools throughout the country.
- Encourage involvement with Thomas Edison College under the DLWD tuition refund program; and

- Maintain training offerings that grant continuing education units (CEUs).

Since the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 was implemented, the DVRS has upgraded the skills and education of the majority of the counseling staff. Of the current 138 positions that are filled, 96 percent of the counseling staff members have earned a Master's Degree. Four individuals who do not possess the desired educational credential are enrolled in programs through an RSA grant or LWD tuition refund. The remaining two employees have an improvement plan spelled out in their performance evaluation system (PES) as part of their individual development plan (IDP). Information regarding career development, continuing education and Master's Degree in VR programs is sent to management and staff throughout the year. Those that choose not to earn their Master's Degree are not afforded independent status and cases will be subject to supervisory review and approval. The agency expects full implementation of the RSA regulation will be completed by 2015.

3. Enable the DVRS counselors to obtain and maintain the CRC and/or the New Jersey License for Rehabilitation Counselor (LRC) through In-Service Training.

#### Action Steps:

- Continue to offer credits for all DVRS sponsored programs;
- Offer opportunities to attend approved programs through the in-service training grant resources;
- Offer a study guide for eligible candidates to take the CRC exam;
- Establish a match between CRC supervisors and candidates for mentoring; and
- Offer up-to-date information on application procedures for LRC.

Fifty percent of the agency's professional staff holds a CRC or state licensure while 90 percent are eligible.

- Expand outreach to individuals with disabilities who are from traditionally underserved minority backgrounds as identified in the Act by offering opportunities to employees of similar backgrounds;
- Expand promotional opportunities for paraprofessional and support staff;
- Emphasize career track in collaboration with the DLWD career development counselor;
- Promote the tuition refund program in collaboration with Thomas Edison State College;
- Collaborate with TACE to increase awareness of cultural diversity;
- Recruit through an information program to clients attending college;
- Continue a relationship with the nation's network of historical Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in order to expand the agency's recruitment efforts;
- Provide information on career opportunities to community college liaisons;
- Expand outreach efforts to target diverse community/faith-based organizations; and
- Provide information on the field of rehabilitation counseling as a career at the state's Hispanic/Latino outreach center.

Currently, 52 percent of those employees participating in in-service training programs were either from minority backgrounds or disclosed that they were individuals with disabilities.

#### Retention of Qualified VR Personnel

An analysis of the DVRS personnel records reveals that there are a significant number of employees with over 20 years' experience. In addition, these staff members are nearing an age where they will be considering retirement within the next five years. Therefore, plans must be made to maintain a management structure as well as the staffing patterns to operate a full service DVRS agency. In all likelihood, there will not be an expansion of the positions dedicated to the program so projections will be based on the current levels.

1. Prepare staff to assume new roles as a part of the succession plan.

Action Steps:

- Continue to offer training opportunities for advanced degrees at all levels;
- Offer a mentoring program to groom new management and counseling staff; and,
- Expand support of the certified public management program.

Operating within the CSC guidelines, the DLWD continues to develop staff to expand their knowledge base to assume increased responsibility on the job. The DVRS has partnered with the RSA and the TACE in an initiative to promote succession planning.

2. Evaluate the progress of these training efforts to ensure improved services to individuals with disabilities.

Action Steps:

- Staff will meet established standards for qualified vocational rehabilitation personnel;
- Future SRC consumer satisfaction surveys will reflect improved level of counselor competency;
- Internal DVRS practices, such as the performance assessment review (PAR), will address educational achievement in the developmental plans; and
- A recognition program will be continued for those achieving the Master's Degree in rehabilitation counseling.

In addition to the need to employ qualified personnel, the agency recognizes the need for service providers with whom it does business to employ qualified vocational rehabilitation personnel. Through collaborative efforts, we hope to assure that appropriate graduate-level training programs will be available within the state of New Jersey to community rehabilitation program personnel, as well as to the DVRS staff. The grant received by the Rutgers from the USDOE will enable the Rutgers to offer stipends to students from community rehabilitation programs.

An analysis of the collected evaluations reveals that all agency-sponsored training sessions were well received, averaging a rating of average or better. This indicates that the program selection and content met state agency needs and participant interest.

## **Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

Communication and Collaboration

The DVRS has been consistent with the Act in meeting the requirements of offering appropriate

communication solutions to those individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing. All of the current rehabilitation counselors for the Deaf are certified through a test known as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI). In the event that they may wish to enhance or improve their skills in American Sign Language (ASL), the DVRS will utilize funds from the in-service training grant to fund further classes in ASL. The agency also invites counselors and rehabilitation aides to participate in ASL training programs, which are typically offered at the community college level.

The DVRS usually draws the bi-lingual counselor from a pool of individuals of Latino heritage who also possess the necessary credentials in addition to speaking fluent Spanish. Once again, the in-service training grant can offer opportunities for other staff members to take courses that will facilitate their communication in conversational Spanish to expand the agency's ability to serve this population of people with disabilities. DVRS recently hired many counselors with multi language ability such as Slavic languages including Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian to be employed in an office where clients need this communication.

The DVRS makes every effort to serve individuals from underserved minority populations; the DVRS assessed the demographics of the state and deployed staff where there is the greatest need. Whenever possible the person's language will be accommodated by an informal interpreter or the AT&T Language Line and their coordinated community-based or faith-based organization that can best serve them.

### **Coordination of Personnel Development Under the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act**

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

Coordination with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The DVRS maintains an ongoing relationship with the NJ Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in an effort to share information and ensure that the staff of the DVRS is aware of the IDEA.

The staff development activities include:

1. Four training sessions per year for the DVRS lead transition counselors. All of the DVRS counselors are responsible for maintaining a relationship to the school districts within their local area; however, these lead counselors are responsible for acting as a resource to school personnel. The approximately 600 public school districts are diverse throughout the state, so these training sessions are essential to maintain a roster of promising practices for the agency.
2. The DVRS has a seat on the State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC) and OSEP has one on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The information gathered at the meetings is shared when appropriate.
3. In their ongoing relationship the DVRS relies on the independent living community to establish and maintain linkages with students in transition by helping them to seek strategies for self-advocacy and empowerment. The DVRS supports the Transition Times that is published by the SILC to promote IL as a part of the transition process.

This screen was last updated on Sep 24 2014 9:14AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## **Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment**

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

In FFY 2014 the DVRS embarked on a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) in partnership with the SRC.

Data was collected from the following:

- NJDLWD Labor Market and Demographic Research;
- American Community Survey –
  - o Work experience by disability status;
  - o Employment status by disability status;
  - o Median earnings by disability status;
  - o Poverty status by disability status;
  - o Receipt of food stamps/SNAP by disability status;
  - o Sex by disability status;
  - o Sex by age by cognitive difficulty;
  - o Sex by hearing difficulty;
- Cornell University Disability Status Report for New Jersey;
- DVRS staff survey;
- DVRS consumer satisfaction survey;
- NJDOE Office of Special Education Programs graduation data;
- Public forums held March 5, March 12, March 19, and March 26;
- Stakeholder meeting with families in Special Olympics March 8;
- Stakeholder meetings with ACCSES NJ members held January 2014;
- Stakeholder meetings with APSE members held November 2013;
- Stakeholder meeting with the New Jersey designated parent training information center (Statewide Parent Advocacy Network) held April 1;
- Stakeholder meetings/listening tours of the One-Stop Career Center staff members in May 2014; and
- Stakeholder meetings with the Deaf community held September 28, 2013 and October 12, 2013.

Highlights of the survey results indicated a need to improve services/access to:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in particular individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), aligning the New Jersey Employment First Initiative;
- Individuals with hearing loss; and
- Individuals currently being served in sheltered workshops who, through informed choice, would like to access competitive integrated employment.

Based on the CSNA the DVRS identified the following: Employment services will be easily obtainable for individuals with the most significant disabilities, individuals who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations, and individuals who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, and community rehabilitation programs will support competitive, integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The DVRS identified key issues pertaining to meeting the intent of Employment First:

- Role of DVRS vs. DDD (Division of Developmental Disabilities) - Who should do what in providing "employment-related services" to DD consumers. Currently, there is no defined or mutually agreed upon process.
- How should DCF (Division of Children & Families, DOE (Dept. of Education) and other state entities be aligned as partners in serving this consumer base?
- State partners may have their own vision of Employment First which may or not be in alignment with DVRS.
- Data Collection is difficult due to federal code restrictions and DVRS's current case management system (WORCS).
- Need for Stakeholder analysis to identify and utilize internal and external partners.
- Identify and engage "the Voice of the Customer."

Strategic objectives to meet the DVRS Employment First initiative include the following:

- More individuals with significant developmental disabilities (DD) and ASD will have greater access to become DVRS consumers.
- DVRS staff members, vendors, and state partners will have the expectation that employment is the first and preferred option for adult activity for those with DD.
- DD consumers including transition students and persons in workshops will have increased opportunities for a smooth transition into employment via a defined process established by DVRS and state partners.
- DD consumers will be provided with programs and services that offer job targeted skill development, education and training.
- DD individuals will have increased opportunities to become DVRS consumers, obtain job skills, and obtain competitive employment that matches their interests, skills & capabilities.
- Through a leverage of services with DDD, DVRS will serve an increased amount of individuals with DD, including individuals with ASD.

Likewise, the DVRS identified key issues pertaining to improving services to individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing:

- Role of DVRS vs. vendors-Who should do what in assuring highly qualified employment-related services to

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D/HH consumers. Currently, there is no defined or mutually agreed upon process.

- How should DD/HH (Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), Interpreter programs at Community Colleges be involved in strategic planning.
- Ensuring knowledge of Deaf culture with counselors.
- Ensuring knowledge of issues for Hard of Hearing with counselors.
- Continue to engage "the Voice of the Customer."
- Role of DVRS Deaf Language Specialists.
- Role of Regional Deaf Centers.
- Need for Communication Specialists.
- Ensuring Video phones work in every local office.

Strategic objectives to improve DVRS access to consumers with hearing loss include the following:

- Every local DVRS office will have a Video Phone system that works well.
- DVRS staff will have the training in Deaf Culture, needs of HH, and cochlear implants and be able to appropriately provide services.
- D/HH consumers will have VR services, including Client Assistance Program, explained in ASL when appropriate.
- All job coaches will be vetted in ASL prior to working with D/HH consumers.
- D/HH individuals will have increased opportunities to become DVRS consumers, obtain job skills, and obtain competitive employment that matches their interests, skills & capabilities.
- Qualified interpreters will accompany D/HH consumers at job interviews rather than job coaches.

The DVRS identified key issues regarding the need to improve community rehabilitation programs within New Jersey:

- Ensuring that DVRS consumers in supported employment have access to qualified employment specialists.
- Defining the role of New Jersey's set-aside programs that employ individuals with DD.
- Transforming the current system of sheltered programs to a system that expects movement into competitive employment for individuals with DD/ASD.
- Fear of family members to allow family members with DD/ASD to become competitively employed.
- Families need information from qualified SSI/SSDI benefits counselors.

Strategic objectives to improve community rehabilitation programs within the state include the following:

- Increased oversight from DVRS program development specialists will identify individuals currently in extended employment who should have DVRS cases opened;
- Supported employment training resulting in a nationally recognized credential will be required for employment specialists working with DVRS consumers.

- Benefits counseling will be provided to DVRS consumers and families.
- Increased collaboration with local education agencies will increase expectation of families that result in transition students identifying competitive integrated employment as an expectation within the individualized education program (IEP).

Measurable Goals derived from the CSNA are identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities.

This screen was last updated on Jun 19 2014 9:35AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
  - Part B of Title I;
  - Part B of Title VI;
  - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Of the 5,789,239 individuals of working age (18-64) in New Jersey, 396,635 reported having a disability in 2012. It is estimated that approximately 35,740 individuals will be involved with the DVRS in Program Year 2015 based on a 2% increase. This number represents:

- New applications;
- Active cases in plan status from prior years;
- New cases in plan status; and
- Closures (successful outcomes and those that did not achieve employment).

Of the 41,275 individuals, it is estimated that 29,236 will receive services provided under Part A of Title I of the Act and/or under Part B of Title VI of the Act. Estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order of selection for services are as follows:

1. Clients classified as individuals with a most significant disability who meet the following criteria:

- Have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit two or more functional capacities in terms of employment outcome; and
- Require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Program Year 2015

- Service Goal Title I: 12,537
- Outcome Goal Title I: 1,810
- Service Goal Title VI: 7,051
- Outcome Goal: Title VI: 1,024

Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to November 30, 2014

Supported employment is reserved for those individuals with the most significant disabilities. Time-limited job coaching is available for those individuals in the other categories and priority areas. The DVRS utilizes

Title I funding for supported employment services but has only identified 798 as specific to Title VI.

2. Clients classified as individuals with a significant disability who meet the following criteria:

- Have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit at least one functional capacity in terms of employment outcome; and
- Require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Program Year 2015

- Service Goal: 5,554
- Outcome Goal: 1,052
- Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

3. All other eligible clients who qualify for the DVRS meet the following criteria:

- Individuals with a disability who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity;
- Those who have a record of such impairment, or
- Those who are regarded as having such impairment.

Program Year 2015

- Service Goal: 4,094
- Outcome Goal: 142
- Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014

In 2013, the DVRS paid the following amounts to 34,344 clients (some clients received multiple services):

- Diagnostic evaluation \$6,465,182
- Higher education \$5,124,868
- Job readiness \$325,520
- Maintenance \$1,434,307
- Other training \$2,114,914
- Personal assistance \$29,301
- Transportation \$577,685
- Vocational training \$2,797,763
- All other \$5,591,841

Total Paid: \$24,461,381

The DVRS typically budgets \$24,000,000 for case services and has averaged between \$22 million and \$24 million over the past several years. Due to the low rate of case service expenditures, the DVRS has been

accumulating a carry forward reserve amount. The DVRS intends to review current fee schedule policies, upgrade its current case management system, and develop new innovation and expansion grant opportunities to reduce the reserve amount.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
MSD Title I Priority 1	Title I	\$18,650,000	22,648	\$823
MSD Title VI Priority 1	Title VI	\$550,000	798	\$689
SD Priority 2	Title I	\$3,600,000	4664	\$771
All Other Eligible Clients Title 1 Priority 3	Title I	\$1,200,000	1752	\$684
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Totals		\$24,000,000	29,862	\$803

This screen was last updated on Jun 19 2014 3:36PM by Alice Hunnicutt

## Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
  - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
  - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
  - other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The 2015 NJDVRS State Plan goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the DVRS and the New Jersey SRC. These goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following:

- The FFY 2014 comprehensive statewide needs assessment;
- The public forums held in March 2014;
- The performance of New Jersey DVRS standards and indicators; and
- Recommendations from the FY 2010 monitoring report on the vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs in the state of New Jersey.

Goal 1: By September 30, 2017, the number of individuals with DD, including ASD applying for DVRS services will increase by 50%. Strategic objectives to meet this goal include the following:

- Provide education and communication – All identified stakeholders will know about the DVRS Employment First (EF) initiative by the end of year one. Surveys will be used to determine initial training needs for DVRS staff members and CRPs.
- Collaborate with interagency partners – Identify key state partners and research how other states are collaborating on EF initiatives. Design the process, roles and responsibilities for partners.
- Improve DVRS access for individuals with significant disabilities – Explore funding re-alignment to the sheltered workshops as a means to move individuals out of the workshops into integrated employment. Develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD are served by the DVRS. Create a plan to prioritize students with DD to be linked to DVRS two years prior to exiting the school.
- Develop innovative and expanded services that offer increased employment opportunities – Verify successful Innovation and Expansion grantees for possible expansion. Determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH Pilot.
- Engage employers – Take advantage of the new 503 regulations. Engage NJLWD talent networks. Find options for work trials through internships. Replicate the Schedule A targeted hiring events throughout the state.

Goal 2: By September 30, 2017, there will be an increase in the number of Deaf/HH consumers seeking DVRS services and communication access and services for Deaf/HH will be consistent, reliable, and result in employment. Strategic objectives to meet this goal include the following:

- Provide education and communication – Identify stakeholders from the Deaf/HH community. Encourage participation from the Deaf/HH with the SRC. Develop marketing materials in ASL.
- Collaborate with interagency and community partners – Identify key state partners needed to support the DVRS D/HH goals. Design the process, roles and responsibilities for partners. Determine the skills needed for ASL SE staff. Identify interpreter vs. SE needs for D/HH consumers.
- Improve access to DVRS for D/HH consumers – Install video phones in every office. Develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of the number of D/HH served by DVRS. Create a plan to allow D/HH transition students to be referred to the regional Deaf Centers two years prior to exiting school. Use the model state plan for the Deaf consistently throughout New Jersey.
- Develop innovative and expanded services that offer increased employment opportunities – Expand services of the regional Deaf Centers. Assess DVRS projects to consider how they could serve D/HH consumers. Determine required training for counselors working with D/HH.
- Engage employers – Take advantage of the new 503 regulations. Engage the NJLWD talent networks.

Goal 3: By September 30, 2015, the DVRS will provide training and technical assistance to counselors on SE and SE services, as follows:

- Provide training to staff related to the definition of SE and SE services to include appropriate identification of SE goals on the IPE, coding of SE services on the IPE and the case closure page in the case management system;
- Analyze the decline in the number of individuals who have SE goals on their IPEs and achieve SE to determine the reasons underlying the decline in these respective performance measures and develop strategies to address the reasons identified; and
- Review and analyze the case management settings utilized to identify SE goals and SE services on an IPE and the case closure page and develop a systematic process to ensure accurate coding and reporting.

Goal 4: By September 30, 2016, the DVRS will implement quality assurance (QA) processes and conduct the following:

- Training on existing and revised policies and procedures for all staff involved in their implementation;
- Review of service records by staff not functioning as VR counselor supervisors;
- Develop fiscal controls and evaluation methods to ensure that providers are not billing DVRS through multiple contracts;
- Review and refine instrumentation for conducting service record reviews;
- Conduct surveys of transition-age youths who exit the VR program after eligibility is determined, but before their IPEs are developed, to determine the reasons why these individuals are withdrawing from the program; and
- Develop mechanisms to collect and aggregate the results of the preview process and provide results to the training function to inform the design and evaluation of training.

Goal 5: By September 30, 2015, the DVRS will partner with two additional NJ Talent Networks to identify strategies that will increase access for individuals with disabilities in the targeted industry sectors, increase wage levels for individuals served, and expand relationships with employers throughout the state.

This screen was last updated on Jun 19 2014 9:29AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## **Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection**

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

### **Justification for order of selection**

The DVRS entered into an order of selection in 2001 but quickly recovered and was able to serve all categories within several months. Since that time the agency opted to remain in the order of selection in the event that the significant staff shortages imposed by the inability to hire new staff due to a statewide hiring freeze would impede the agency's ability to adequately serve clients. The DVRS remains under a hiring freeze and the number of counselors is capped at 140. Due to recent changes in the DDD, every individual served by them is now required to have an employment goal in their support plan. The DDD now requires every consumer to come to the DVRS for services prior to their plan development. This change impacts youth with significant disabilities as well as their adult population. The DDD currently serves 29,000 individuals and estimates an additional 1200 youth coming in yearly, and the local offices are starting to receive the influx of consumers with significant developmental disabilities.

As a result, the DVRS has determined that it is necessary to continue operating under an order of selection for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. With careful fiscal and case management, the agency has been able to provide services to every client found eligible for services so far in program year 2014. The DVRS projects that an order of selection (OS) will be necessary during FFY 2015.

## Description of Priority categories

The DVRS is currently serving all categories in FFY 2014 but projects that an OS will be necessary in FFY 2015. Continuation of the OS is considered to be crucial to this human resource and fiscal management system, but even with diligent application of prudent and reasonable cost containment and intensive counselor recruitment measures, the DVRS may not be able to serve every new client meeting basic eligibility criteria in FFY 2054. The DVRS may again have to limit serving new consumers according to the OS for services, but proportionately serve more in priority one.

The DVRS does not rely solely on a diagnosis as a determination of significant disability, but considers every disability or combination of disabilities evaluated during the assessment, to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs. If the disability, or combination of disabilities, presents impairments that seriously limit at least one functional capacity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, inter-personal skills, work tolerance, or work skills), in terms of an employment outcome, and if vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple services over an extended period of time; the person will be considered to be significantly disabled.

## Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

### Order of Selection Categories

Priority 1: Clients classified as individuals with a most significant disability who meet the following criteria:

- Have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit two or more functional capacities in terms of employment outcome; and
- Require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

### Program Year 2015

- Service Goal: 25,326 (Combined Titles I & VI)
- Outcome Goal: 2,860
- Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to November 30, 2015
- Average case life 26 months

Priority 2: Clients classified as individuals with a significant disability who meet the following criteria:

- Have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit at least one functional capacity in terms of employment outcome; and
- Require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

### Program Year 2015

- Service Goal: 8,760
- Outcome Goal: 1,016

- Timeframe: October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

- Average case life 18 months

Priority 3: All other eligible individuals, who do not meet the criteria for Priority Category 1 or Priority Category 2.

- Has at least one limitation in terms of employment in any functional capacity area; and,
- Is not expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Program Year 2015

- Service Goal: 1,752
- Outcome Goal: 182
- Timeframe: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015
- Average case life 12 months

The Order of Selection shall not preclude:

- Diagnostic services necessary to establish a client's eligibility;
- Post-employment services; and
- Information and referral services.

The DVRS will first serve in the order of selection Priority 1 followed by Priority 2 then Priority 3.

### **Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved**

Program Year 2015 for Priority 1

- Service Goal: 25,326 (Combined Titles I & VI)
- Outcome Goal: 2,860
- Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to November 30, 2015
- Average case life 26 months

Program Year 2015 for Priority 2

- Service Goal: 8,760
- Outcome Goal: 1,016
- Timeframe: October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2015
- Average case life 18 months

Program Year 2015 for priority 3

- Service Goal: 1,752

- Outcome Goal: 182
- Timeframe: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015
- Average case life 12 months

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services	Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1	25,326	2,860	2,392	26 months	\$19,200,000
2	8,760	1,016	560	18 Months	\$3,600,000
3	1,752	182	35	12 Months	\$1,200,000

This screen was last updated on Sep 25 2014 1:00PM by Alice Hunnicutt

## Attachment 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

The goal of the DVRS is to create an effective, coordinated system of SE work opportunities throughout New Jersey to meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities. SE funds are tracked separately to ensure reporting for individuals with the most significant disabilities that are served under the SE program. New Jersey became the 14th state to embrace the concept of Employment First (EF). This initiative identifies that every person, including persons with the most significant disabilities have the right, through informed choice, to have equal access to employment services.

For FFY 2013, the DVRS provided SE services to 4,138 individuals with the most significant disabilities. This is a combination of approximately \$514,323 Title VI-B funds and approximately \$2.4 million of Title I funds (federal/state) to augment the Title VI-B funds. The provision of these services, which include pre-placement, intensive job coaching and time-limited job coaching, is expected to remain the same for the coming program year. The Title VI B funding is used for only those with the most significant disabilities who require ongoing support services. Approximately 778 individuals were served via the Title VI-B funds. New Jersey anticipates serving over 800 Title VI-B cases during federal fiscal year 2014. The extended services known as long-term follow-along (LTFA) are only available to individuals with the most significant disabilities, whether they are Title I or Title VI.

Of individuals with a SE outcome, the DVRS will increase the number of outcomes each year. The agency utilizes supported employment funds through a fee schedule based authorization process. That fee schedule ensures that the DVRS funds are spent on specific designated services.

Targeted disability groups include the following:

- Individuals with significant intellectual disabilities;
- Individuals with ASD;

- Individuals with serious psychiatric illness, and
- Individuals with traumatic brain injury.

The DVRS has organized the provision of SE through the use of community rehabilitation programs on a fee-for-service basis generally requiring up to 100 hours of intensive job coaching. The DVRS is currently reviewing the provision of SE services to determine that it is being offered to those in the most need and that there is a true collaboration among the three parties; the consumer, the DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselor and the vendor.

In order to support the work that is being done in these cases, the agency has secured state funds to provide long-term follow-along (LTFA) to ensure job retention during any changes related to disability or environment. One reality to consider is that the number of people in LTFA increases every year as individuals secure employment in competitive settings. The DVRS state funds have not been able to keep up with the need. The DVRS is revising its MOU with DDD to reflect DDD's commitment to provide the LTFA once a consumer has been rehabilitated through the DVRS. The division also plans to create an MOU with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to be able to transfer LTFA for individuals with serious psychiatric illness to them.

This screen was last updated on Jun 25 2014 9:40AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## **Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies**

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)).

Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

In order to achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c) (1) the DVRS submits the following strategies:

- Establish appropriate management teams in all local offices; this will provide oversight to the day-to-day services provided to the DVRS customers;
- Determine staffing positions that reflect collaboration with businesses in New Jersey, in conjunction with the LWD talent networks.
- Ensure that all counselors have the opportunity for continuing education as appropriate;
- Send information about the DVRS services to the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, New Jersey's parent training information center to be included in all transition workshops throughout New Jersey;
- Partner with other state agencies (i.e. the DDD, the CBVI) to make sure the DVRS services information is distributed as warranted;
- Identify and provide targeted hiring events throughout the state; and
- Analyze client data via dashboard approach for assessment purposes on a monthly basis.

In order to increase the number of DVRS consumers with DD/ASD, the DVRS will apply the following strategies:

- DVRS will identify stakeholders and develop an education and communication plan that promotes Employment First (EF);

- DVRS will research how other states' agency partners are collaborating on EF strategies;
- DVRS will develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD/ASD are served by DVRS;
- DVRS will create a plan to allow transition students with DD/ASD to have open cases two years prior to exiting school; and
- DVRS will determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH pilot.

Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process; and describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

The DVRS posted a Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) July 15, 2012 for its funding from the RSA for Technology. Disability Rights NJ continues as the entity that manages these funds. Another NGO is projected for July 2015 in order to maintain transparency for these funds. A broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process using the following:

- Information and demonstration;
- Community outreach;
- Equipment recycling; and
- Technical consultation.

Assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis through a renewed and expanded contract with Advancing Opportunities using the following methods:

- Allowing the DVRS clients to try out equipment before purchase to determine best match for their specific needs;
- Continuing a pilot program with local offices to focus on organization and project management strategies among professional staff;
- Training staff in the latest equipment and technology;
- Partnering with all One-Stop Career Centers to offer technical assistance on current equipment and future purchases to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities;
- Equipping each local DVRS office with a counselor tool kit for assistive listening devices to encourage people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, and cochlear implanted to utilize necessary aides; and
- Ensuring that the three regional centers for the Deaf house state-of-the-art technology demonstration areas.

Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities; and what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program are as follows:

- Offering universal access for all agency services and programs;
- Maintaining a level of cultural competence among staff;
- Offering all publications in Spanish;
- Placing bi-lingual counseling staff at local offices demonstrating the most need;
- Utilizing the AT & T language line when needed;
- Providing Deaf language specialists that cover all local offices;
- Providing counselors who work with HH customers with additional training specific to this population;
- Partnering with community-based organizations, including faith-based entities, to facilitate communication with individuals who speak other languages;
- Developing information about DVRS in ASL; and
- Partnering with the NJDOE to include information about the DVRS in its Parents Rights in Special Education (PRISE) document that is published in 12 languages.

If applicable, identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.

- DVRS will explore funding realignment to the sheltered workshops as a means to move individuals out into competitive employment;
- DVRS will develop partnerships with schools to provide technical assistance to students with DD/ASD that will identify community-based integrated work opportunities prior to exiting school; and
- DVRS will encourage and provide TA to CRPs who wish to become an employment network.

Describe strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.

Agency strategies used to achieve the goals and priorities resulting from 2010 RSA monitoring:

Goal 1: By October 1, 2014, the DVRS will have resolved all the compliance findings and corrective actions stemming from the Fiscal Year 2010 monitoring report on the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs in the State of New Jersey so that Federal funding is not withheld.

The DVRS has successfully resolved ten findings and is on target to resolve the last finding by October 1, 2014.

Goal 2: By October 1, 2015, the DVRS will have made progress on all the recommendations stemming from the 2010 RSA monitoring report.

The 2010 RSA monitoring report included the following recommendations:

## Recommendation 1: RSA recommends that DVRS:

- 1.1 develop measurable goals and strategies to improve the agency's employment rate;
- 1.2 develop strategies to increase wage levels for the individuals served; and
- 1.3 explore relevant training and education to increase wages, and expand relationships with employers throughout the state.

DVRS update: The DVRS received Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (RTAC) funding that enabled the division to develop a process with New Jersey Talent Networks that identified the specific skills and knowledge required for employment in the Financial Services Industry. The Financial Services Industry is one of New Jersey's industry sectors identified by the LWD. The DVRS plans to replicate the process developed through the RTAC grant with two other industries in FFY 2015.

## Recommendation 2: RSA recommends that DVRS:

- 2.1 evaluate whether it is more effective and efficient to complete the necessary modifications to the existing system or to purchase a new case management system that meets the agency's needs, produces the desired reports and is accessible to all staff members. This evaluation should include the effect of both options on the agency's staff and fiscal resources; and
- 2.2 take the actions necessary to complete the modifications to the existing system or purchase a new system based on the results of the evaluation conducted pursuant to Recommendation 2.1.

DVRS update: The DVRS agreed with this recommendation and over the past 18 months began the process of upgrading the current system to a fully compliant AWARE case management system. The upgraded system is scheduled to go live beginning October 1, 2014.

## Recommendation 3: RSA recommends that DVRS:

- 3.1 analyze the decline in the number of individuals who have SE goals on their IPEs and achieve SE to determine the reasons underlying the decline in these respective performance measures and develop strategies to address the reasons identified;
- 3.2 review and analyze the case management settings utilized to identify SE goals and SE services on an IPE and the case closure page and develop a systematic process to ensure accurate coding and reporting;
- 3.3 provide training to staff related to the definition of SE and SE services to include appropriate identification of SE goals on the IPE, coding of SE services on the IPE and the case closure page in the case management system;
- 3.4 review data and other information related to the DVRS' current contracting methods to determine which method (fee-for-service or DMHS contracting) promotes greater performance and accountability of SE providers; and
- 3.5 develop fiscal controls and evaluation methods to ensure that providers are not billing DVRS through multiple contracts.

DVRS update: The DVRS has included these recommendations in its goals for FFY 2015.

## Recommendation 4: RSA recommends that DVRS:

- 4.1 conduct surveys of transition-age youths who exit the VR program after eligibility is determined, but before their IPEs are developed, to determine the reasons why these individuals are withdrawing from the program; and
- 4.2 based on the information obtained through this survey, develop goals with measurable targets to

decrease the number of transition-age youths exiting the VR program at this stage of the process, and strategies to achieve these goals.

DVRS update: The DVRS recognizes the dilemma of transition-age youth who exit the VR program prior to receiving services. During FFY 2014 the division worked with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to create a fee-for-service program that encourages transition-age youth to connect with the DVRS prior to graduation and develop the IPE prior to graduation.

Recommendation 5: RSA recommends that DVRS develop a plan for training on existing and revised policies and procedures for all staff involved in their implementation.

DVRS update: The DVRS concurs with this recommendation and has implemented training during FFY 2014.

Recommendation 6: RSA recommends that DVRS:

6.1 resume the QA process for the review of service records by staff not functioning as VR counselor supervisors;

6.2 review and refine instrumentation for conducting service record reviews; and

6.3 develop mechanisms to collect and aggregate the results of the review process and provide the results to the training function to inform the design and evaluation of training.

DVRS update: The DVRS established a program development specialist (PDS) position for QA in January 2014. These recommendations are identified in the goals for the FFY 2015 state plan.

Recommendation 7: RSA recommends that DVRS:

7.1 identify goals that incorporate the needs of its stakeholders and the individuals served by DVRS; and

7.2 establish measurements and performance targets for each goal that enable the agency and its stakeholders to accurately assess progress.

DVRS update: The DVRS has achieved this recommendation and establishes measurements and performance targets that incorporate the needs of DVRS consumers, businesses, and accurately assesses progress of the division.

Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The DVRS is housed in the DLWD. In August 2010 the DLWD reorganized its structure to include the DVRS within the workforce development system. This provides a solid foundation to work with the state's workforce investment system. The DVRS is a core participant in the One-Stop Career Center system and maintains an active presence in the eighteen local WIBs as well as the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), New Jersey's State WIB. The SETC sponsors a state disability issues committee that provides oversight to the Medicaid infrastructure grant (MIG) from the Department of Human Services. Local WIBs sponsor local disability issues committees and the DVRS local managers have a designated seat on them. Additional strategies include the following:

- Participation in all of the DLWD efforts to coordinate services to all customers;
- Participation with the DLWD Labor Planning and Analysis committees that identify 7 key industry sectors. They include:

1. Transportation, Logistics and Distribution;

2. Life Sciences (Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Medical Devices);

3. Technology/Entrepreneurship;

4. Financial Services;

5. Advanced Manufacturing;

6. Health Care; and

7. Hospitality.

The first four industries have been identified as priority industries for economic development efforts in New Jersey. These seven industries account for more than half of all private sector jobs in New Jersey and nearly two-thirds of all private sector wages paid in the state. The DVRS participation in these efforts will ensure the DLWD support for an inclusive, diverse workforce, including individuals with significant disabilities who qualify for Title VI funds.

The DVRS is housed in LWD as part of workforce development. This provides a solid foundation to work with the state's workforce investment system. The DVRS is a core participant in the One-Stop Career Center system and maintains an active presence in the eighteen local WIBs as well as the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), New Jersey's State WIB. The DVRS local offices are now located within the OSCCs in 16 catchment areas throughout the state.

The LWD has established four priorities for the next three years:

1. Reemployment – What steps can LWD take to decrease the amount of time that people receive UI?

2. Opportunity – How can LWD assist more people to move from government benefits (SSI, SSDI, GA, and TANF) to work?

3. Alignment – How can LWD increase the number of people who have an industry recognized, post-secondary credential?

4. Accountability – What data and information about program performance would help us to improve services?

The DVRS, as part of workforce development, provided input to these priorities to ensure that other components of the statewide workforce investment system can appropriately assist individuals with disabilities who access general services.

Additionally, the DVRS continues to partner with the Talent Networks established by LWD that provide linkages to the seven key industries sectors that account for more than half of all private sector jobs in New Jersey and nearly two-thirds of all private sector wages paid in the state. The DVRS participation in these efforts ensures the DLWD support for an inclusive, diverse workforce, including individuals with significant disabilities who qualify for Title VI funds.

Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:

- achieve goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
- support innovation and expansion activities; and
- overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.

The DVRS identified these strategies in conjunction with Attachment 4.11(c)(1) in order to reach the goals

These strategies support innovation and expansion activities. The latest notice of grant opportunity (NGO) identified EF as a priority. As a result, the following CRPs were identified to provide innovation activities pursuant to the requirements under the law.

- JVS Metro west NJ – vocational placement services to DVRS consumers with ASD;
- Employment Horizons – AT support and placement services to DVRS consumers with ASD;
- Spectrum Works – employment services to DVRS consumers with ASD;
- Arc of Camden – pre-vocational/ trial work experience services to DVRS consumers with the most significant disabilities;
- JEVS-hireability – employment services to DVRS consumers with the most significant disabilities;
- America Works – employment services and training to DVRS consumers;
- CEA – transition employment services to DVRS transition consumers with ASD;
- New Jersey Friendship House – employment services to DVRS consumers with ASD who are interested in hospitality and tourism;
- Rutgers/Small & Associates – online courses and employment services to DVRS consumers;
- Jewish Family Services – employment services to DVRS consumers with ASD; and
- Progressive Center for Independent Living (PCIL) – transition services to DVRS transition consumers with ASD.

Innovation and expansion funds are also used to provide AT and employment services to DVRS consumers who are Deaf/HH. These centers employ staff members fluent in ASL to ensure effective communication with Deaf consumers who use sign language as their native language.

Strategies to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program include the following:

- Standardizing vendor reporting forms;
- Monitoring required vendor accreditation and staff development;
- Meeting with the APSE board;
- Continuing the liaison meetings with ACCSES-NJ;
- Outreaching to the DDD to provide employment services to individuals affected by deinstitutionalization;
- Encouraging CRPs to become employment networks; and
- Participating as a lead member to implement the Employment First initiative in the state.

The DVRS plans to work with the CRPs to develop integrated employment strategies for individuals with disabilities who currently attend sheltered workshop programs who, through informed choice, choose to access competitive employment.

This screen was last updated on Sep 25 2014 8:05AM by Alice Hunnicutt

## Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

### Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

1. Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the FY 2013 Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) goals and priorities of FY 2013 were a continuation of goals identified in FFY 2012. Progress toward their achievement is as follows:

Goal 1: Accuracy of Data. Goal 1: By October 31, 2012, data reported by the DVRS will be valid. The DVRS will develop a baseline to determine the validity of information given.

The DVRS is in the midst of a complete upgrade to its case management data based system. The upgrade is targeted for completion and implementation by October 1, 2014. This upgrade will establish the case management system to a full AWARE system. The DVRS has been working with Alliance Enterprises for over a year to provide a fully aligned system. Counselor training has been scheduled beginning in August 2014. Central office staff will be trained in October. This upgrade will resolve the data inefficiencies identified in the RSA 2010 monitoring report and complete the recommendation to improve the DVRS database case management system. This upgrade will complete goal 1.

Goal 2: Performance Indicator 1.1. The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the 2011-2012 federal year will increase compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during 2010-2011 performance period.

The DVRS met goal 2 for FFY 2013. The number of clients successfully rehabilitated exceeded 4,000; this is the first time since 2008 that DVRS has done this. Dashboards continue to track client employment outcomes on a monthly basis.

Goal 3: Performance Indicator 1.5. The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive, self or blind enterprise program (BEP) employment during the 2011-2012 federal year will increase compared to the average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment during the 2010-2011 performance period.

The DVRS did not meet this goal for FFY 2013. In New Jersey the average wage is one of the highest in the nation. Many highly paid and wealthy residents of NJ earn their wages out of state (in NYC and Philadelphia) so the wage base in NJ, is actually lower than statistics would indicate.

The DVRS embraced the President's emphasis on federal hiring of persons with disabilities. For the fourth year, a specific "Schedule A" hiring event took place in southern New Jersey. The DVRS plans to expand this activity to northern New Jersey in the spring of 2015. The DVRS has also engaged in industry sector strategies identified by the LWD that involve working with targeted private industries that hire the most workers in New Jersey. To date the DVRS has worked with the financial services industry and the transportation, logistics and distribution industry. Many of these industries have federal contracts and are subject to the Section 503 regulations promulgated in March 2014. The DVRS will continue to identify strategies that will improve indicator 1.5.

Goal 4: By October 1, 2014, the DVRS will have resolved all the compliance findings and corrective actions stemming from the Fiscal Year 2010 monitoring report on the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs in the State of New Jersey so that Federal funding is not withheld.

The DVRS has resolved ten of the findings and is on track to resolve the last finding by the targeted date. The strategies to resolve the findings varied according to the finding. Major emphasis was given in developing a process to ensure that trial work experiences (TWE) are given when appropriate. The last finding, ensuring that the DVRS retain its non-delegable functions, should be resolved by August 1, 2014. This will complete goal 4.

2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The DVRS goal for SE was to serve a greater number of individuals. Targeted disability groups in FFY 2013 state plan included the following:

- Individuals with serious psychiatric illness;
- Individuals with developmental disabilities;
- Individuals who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing;
- Individuals on the autism spectrum; and
- Individuals with traumatic brain injury.

To achieve this goal, the DVRS did the following:

- Worked with the DSA fiscal and the Division of Information Technology (DIT) to ensure separate tracking was established to differentiate individuals served with Title VI funds;
- Offered SE training opportunities and strategies for staff members of providers;
- Provided technical assistance to the SE providers in regard to work flow, referrals and staffing; and
- Continued expanding the list of qualified providers, as appropriate.

The DVRS was successful in achieving all goals set forth for SE.

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2013.

#### Federal Program Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators

##### Evaluation Standard 1: Employment Outcomes

##### Indicator 1.1: Difference in the Number of Individuals with Employment Outcomes

Number of Employment Outcomes for FY 2012: 3757

Number of Employment Outcomes for FY 2013: 4,031

Increased by 274 Employment Outcomes

The DVRS passed this indicator for 2013. [You Are Viewing an Archived Report from the New Jersey State Library](#)

Indicator 1.2: Percentage of Individuals Receiving Services Who Had Employment Outcomes (required performance level is 55.8 percent)

Number with Employment Outcomes: 4031

Number Who Received Services: 7074

Performance level: 56.98%

The DVRS passed this indicator for 2013

Indicator 1.3: Percentage of Individuals with Employment Outcomes Who Were Competitively Employed with Earnings Equivalent to At Least the Minimum Wage of \$7.15 (required performance level is 72.6 percent)

Number with Employment Outcomes: 4,031

Number of Competitive Employment Outcomes: 4,026

Performance Level: 99.88%

The DVRS passed this indicator in 2013.

Indicator 1.4: Percentage of Individuals with Competitive Employment Outcomes Who Had Significant Disabilities (required performance is 62.4 percent)

Number with Competitive Employment Outcomes: 4026

Number of Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with

Significant Disabilities: 3913

Performance Level: 97.07%

The DVRS passed this indicator in 2013.

Indicator 1.5: Ratio of Average VR Hourly Wage to Average State Hourly Wage (required performance is 0.52)

Average Hourly Wage for Individuals with Competitive Employment

Outcomes: \$11.77

Average Hourly Wage for State: \$25.92

Performance level: .045

The DVRS did not pass this indicator in 2013.

Explanation for not meeting RSA standard:

The DVRS joins many of its counterparts in the Northeast section of the Nation in failing this measure based upon the high income of the state's residents. New Jersey's proximity to New York City, the financial capital of the world and its position in the middle of the northeast corridor between Boston and Washington make it a prime residential choice for many high earners. NJ has reported to be among the top five highest per capital income states in the nation, which raises the bar in a significant way when the program is measured

against the other states.

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#### Plan for Improvement:

The average hourly wage of those individuals achieving a successful outcome was \$378 per week. While those earnings are significantly over the national minimum wage the agency has directed the counseling staff to strive for employment opportunities that have longevity and a career ladder. The agency is encouraging employment by the federal government and has stepped up their training on the various hiring initiatives for people with disabilities such as the Schedule A hiring program and the recent Social Security opportunities. The DVRS is working with the talent networks identified in LWD and will provide targeted hiring events for qualified DVRS consumers in these designated industries.

Indicator 1.6: Difference in Percentage of Individuals Achieving Competitive Employment Who Report Own Income as Primary Source of Support at Closure and Application (required performance is 53.0 percent)

Competitive employment Outcomes: 4026

Primary Support as Own Income at Application – 680

Percent Self-Support at application: 16.89 percent

Primary Support as Own Income at Closure: 3,690

Performance level: 74.76

The DVRS passed this indicator in 2013.

#### Evaluation Standard 2: Equal Access to Services

Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (required performance is .80)

Non-Minorities Exiting the DVRS Program: 5,945

Non-Minorities Who Received Services: 3,724

Non-Minority Service rate: 62.64 percent

Minorities Exiting the DVRS Program: 6,279

Minorities Who Received Services: 3,484

Minority Service Rate: 55.49 percent

Performance level: .89

The DVRS passed this indicator in 2013.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2013.

I&E funds were provided via an NGO to the following CRPs:

1. Employment Horizons – video-based employment supports for DVRS consumers with ASD.
2. Friendship House – In depth training to DVRS consumers with ASD in the hospitality industry.

3. Center for Educational Advancement – Concentrated occupational readiness enhancement and placement for DVRS consumers with ASD.
4. Jewish Vocational Services – Vocational assistance to the DVRS clients of minority status who have ASD. JVS will work with urban minority DVRS clients who have Autism spectrum disorders and provide autism specific vocational assessments/evaluations, and job placement support.
5. Jewish Family Service – in-depth vocational assessment, job readiness, and job sampling to DVRS transition students with ASD.
6. Spectrum Works – Job training for DVRS transition students with ASD.
7. Progressive Center for Independent Living, Inc. – Job readiness and placement for DVRS transition students with ASD and other complex disabilities.
8. Rutgers – Online courses specific to the DVRS clients. Rutgers has partnered with a CRP to provide courses regarding career specific information to the DVRS clients who want to take classes online. The CRP will provide job placement support to them once the courses are completed.
9. JEVS Hirability – Business outreach and employment support to DVRS consumers with significant disabilities.
10. America Works – Employment support to the DVRS clients utilizing a milestone payment approach to provide job placement services for the DVRS clients residing in our most urban settings.
11. Arc of Camden County – TWE, Job placement for DVRS transition students with complex disabilities.
12. The Family Resource Network – Benefits counseling for DVRS consumers.

I & E funds were also used to provide services in three regional Deaf centers. These centers provide employment services to individuals who use ASL as their native language. The centers also house assistive technology for individuals with any degree of hearing loss.

Funding will continue to be used for the SRC and the SILC activities for FY 2015.

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## **Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services**

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

Supported employment means competitive work in integrated work settings in which individuals are working and earning at least minimum wage. Individuals with the most significant disabilities can benefit from these services when:

- Competitive employment has not traditionally occurred;
- Competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
- As a result of the nature and severity of their disability need intensive supported employment services in order to perform such work.

New Jersey became the 14th state to embrace the concept of Employment First (EF) in April of 2012. EF is

a framework that is centered on the premise that all citizens are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. This initiative identified that competitive employment in an integrated setting is the preferred first choice for every individual seeking employment in New Jersey. This effort shifts assumptions about whether individuals with certain categories of disabilities can to work to one of determining the supports and services necessary so that these individuals will be successful in competitive employment. The DVRS adheres to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. An individual with a disability must want and qualify for the services.

Counselors in all the offices received training on trial work experiences (TWE) in the spring of 2014. CRPs were also given access to the same training. TWE will be utilized when the DVRS counselor needs clear and convincing evidence regarding whether an individual with a disability will benefit from VR services.

The DVRS has consistently encouraged the development of programs that meet the needs of a wide variety of individuals with the most significant disabilities based on either geographic and/or disability driven needs. Traditional community rehabilitation programs and programs for SE without traditional facility-based operations are available throughout the state.

All of the vendors are required to follow the same criteria in their service delivery:

- Referral;
- Assessment;
- Job development;
- Job Placement;
- Intensive coaching; and
- Follow-along.

Supported employment continues to be a valuable service and has opened doors to individuals with disabilities who are now expected to work in a competitive setting. The DVRS is currently assessing the need for more intense post-employment services for individuals with the most complex disabilities; training will commence in the fall to instruct counselors on the proper way to identify DVRS consumers in need of this service.

LTFA is provided to consumers through the use of state funds to provide less intense ongoing support. It is estimated that the DVRS, through its provision of LTFA, is helping to maintain 3,388 individuals with disabilities on the job. This does not only have a significant social impact on their lives, but it demonstrates that people with disabilities can be contributors to their community. The DVRS provides extensive on-the-job services or job coaching for individuals for up to 18 months but evaluates each case and the person's need on an individual basis. In the pre-IPE meeting that includes the counselor, the CRP vendor and the client, a determination is made whether extended services will be required. As the case progresses the counselor makes sure that the CRP vendor will be available to provide long-term follow-along services.

Under the DVRS EF strategy, long-term SE services will be provided by the DDD and the DMHAS for consumers who qualify for these services after a DVRS consumer is successfully placed in employment. This braiding of funding provides supports to a higher number of consumers. The DVRS continues to partner with the DDD and the DMHAS in order to do this.

DDD – the DVRS is currently negotiating a new MOU with the DDD. The DDD recently changed its policy and now requires all individuals who receive DDD services to apply for services with the DVRS as a condition to receiving DDD funding. While the DVRS is very willing to provide services to individuals who qualify and want services, the division will adhere to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

DMHAS – for many years the DVRS and the DMHAS combined resources to fund 22 county-based SE

[How We View our Archived Data from the New Jersey State Office](#)  
programs specific for individuals with pervasive mental illness. This partnership will conclude September 30, 2014. The SE vendors have been notified and have been given the opportunity to apply to the DVRS to become a vendor with the division. Local office counselors will work with consumers with pervasive mental illness to identify SE providers that meet their needs and will provide the SE on a fee-for-service basis.

The DVRS recognizes that the census of those needing LTFA will grow incrementally as those consumers achieve employment. With that reality in mind and the shortage of state funds, the DVRS has organized several efforts to remedy the situation. These include:

- Identifying DDD and DMHAS consumers in the DVRS case management system to ensure that these consumers are transferred to the appropriate funding stream
- Ensuring that the state-funded program will be monitored to provide the most effective services to this cohort; and
- An examination of cases that may have evolved toward independence and are no longer in need of the service.

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## System Information

System information

The following information is captured by the MIS.

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