

## State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

### Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division - Agency of Human Services State Plan for Fiscal Year 2013 (submitted FY 2012)

#### Preprint - Section 1: State Certifications

- 1.1 The Vermont Agency of Human Services is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended [1] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act [2].
- 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 Vermont Agency of Human Services [3] agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan [4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations [5], 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 [6], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations [7], 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)  
Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services Yes
- ... 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  
Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services
- ... 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 Douglas A. Racine

Title of Signatory Secretary, Agency of Human Services

Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) 06/25/2012

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 2013 No

Comments:

Signed?

Name of Signatory

Title of Signatory

Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)

\* The signatory of the assurance with the authority to execute and submit the State Plan will maintain a signed copy of the assurance(s) with the signed State Plan.

Section 1 Footnotes

- [1] 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.
- [2] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- [3] All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
- [4] 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.
- [5] 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.
- [6] 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.
- [7] 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 A was not selected/Option B was selected)
3. In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

#### (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  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

### 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. (Option A was not selected/Option B was selected)
- (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 and the designated state unit.

1. jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to and reviews annually state goals and priorities and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.29 and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;
2. regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
3. includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the council and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
4. transmits to the council:
  - A. all plans, reports and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be submitted to the commissioner;
  - B. all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
  - C. copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(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.

#### **4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.21)**

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. Yes

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 system;

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.**

- 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;
    - 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.

(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))**

- (a) Funds made available under 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.

### 4.2(c) Summary of Input and Activities

#### Cooperation and Coordination with the State Rehabilitation Council

The SRC and DVR continue to enjoy a collaborative working relationship. SRC members are invited to participate on various DVR planning and implementation committees. The DVR Director provides quarterly written and oral updates on programs, activities, and outcomes. In addition, DVR Program Managers, Regional Managers and field staff frequently make presentations to the full SRC and gather feedback and suggestions to improve services.

In September 2011, the SRC's longstanding administrative coordinator Jim Rader decided to retire. Mr. Rader was instrumental in reorganizing and revitalizing the SRC. He will be greatly missed. The SRC interviewed multiple candidates for a replacement and selected Rebekah Stephens from Rutland, Vermont.

The following is a summary of the SRC's activities taken directly the FFY 2011 SRC annual report. This report is available on request. For more information on the Vermont SRC go to <http://vtsrc.org/>

#### Neal Meier SRC Chair

One of the significant innovations by the SRC in the past year was the production of the VocRehab Vermont needs assessment (a Federally-required process) by the Council's Performance Review Committee rather than by an outside contractor. The committee worked hard to pull together indicators of customer need from a wide range of data sources, and the result was generally regarded as superior to past needs assessments.

A major focus of the Council's work this year has been support of VocRehab's efforts to combat "bureaucratic creep" and achieve world-class customer service. As a follow-up to the Council's "Not-So-Secret Shopper" initiative last year, SRC members have actively participated in the ongoing effort to eliminate unnecessary paperwork.

As an outgrowth of last December's 3rd Annual Retreat - which focused on Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), the key innovation by VocRehab Vermont in how vocational rehabilitation is done - the Council has followed up with specific recommendations for strengthening CWS. Gatherings with State legislators - initiated by the Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee to try to educate the lawmakers and the public about vocational rehabilitation - were not as productive as hoped, but the lessons learned should provide a good basis for such efforts in the future.

The Policy and Procedures Committee, in addition to its diligent, ongoing work to revise the VocRehab Vermont policy manual, proposed amendments to the SRC bylaws that were adopted in June. One of these amendments created the office of Vice-Chair (replacing one of the Co-Chair positions) and Jennifer Whitmore was elected.

As the year drew to a close, Jim Rader resigned after 4½ productive years as SRC Coordinator. He has been succeeded by Rebekah Stephens, who has hit the ground running.

P. Neal Meier, Ph.D., Chair Vermont State Rehabilitation

Council Policy and Procedures Committee

Don Parrish, Chair

The mandate of this committee is straightforward: to systematically review and comment on all the policies, procedures, and spending guidelines that direct the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) personnel in their work; and to periodically review the SRC By-Laws for relevancy and best practice.

#### By-Laws

In our last annual report, we discussed our review of the SRC By-Laws and the relevant changes that the Committee thought should be adopted for the purposes of efficiency and clarity. The amendments were presented to the full Council this past year at a regular meeting and were ratified by consensus.

#### Policy and Procedure Manual Review

Over a three year period, this Committee reviews the Policy and Procedures Manual, including all spending guidelines, in order to make suggestions to DVR for changes that would reflect current best practices, while maintaining compliance with federal and state regulations. We are currently in the second year of that process and have had some exceptional discussions which have led to a better understanding among the members of how the rehabilitation process works. These discussions have also prompted questions that have been passed onto the other SRC committees for further action.

Some of the more lengthy discussions during this review period have been around the issues of referral and application, eligibility, and the appeals process:

#### Referral and Application

- The timeframe for scheduling a client meeting with a counselor after receiving a referral
- The choice of a group or individual orientation
- The different treatment, relative to referral, of some specific disabilities, i.e., deaf and hard of hearing, HIV-positive

#### Eligibility

- The purpose of including a large section on individuals with substance abuse issues under prohibited factors
- Clarification of the presumption of eligibility for SSDI and SSI recipients

#### The Appeals Process

- The clarification of specific times an individual should be apprised of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and its purpose
- The use by DVR of a hybrid system for Fair Hearings, which has been supported by the Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Appeals for supported employment clients through the designated agencies that have a different process than that provided by federal regulations

#### Other Actions

Two unanswered questions that committee discussion prompted were:

- Is DVR living up to the intent of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) regarding the mandate to provide adequate services to people with the most severe disabilities?
- Is there a better way to provide education and outreach to the public, and especially prospective employers, about the needs of people with severe disabilities?

o Barriers to employment

o Costs associated with providing accommodations

These two issues were passed on to the Performance Review Committee and the Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee, respectively, for further action.

#### New Chapters

The Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) recognizes that employment is the only practical way to reduce dependency on services and benefits provided by the State. Recent reductions in AHS services have increased the need for return-to-work services which are currently dispersed across several departments and divisions. In response to this, AHS started a new initiative last year, called Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), in an

attempt to develop a consolidated and coordinated approach to employment services. DVR has facilitated the development of CWS and provided the framework for all the departments and divisions participating in CWS. The SRC has been watching CWS unfold and actually devoted a full-day retreat to this initiative to better understand how it is changing the way DVR does business and the implications for the SRC in its role as monitor and advisor.

In order to provide services that have the potential to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individual plan for employment of any one individual, DVR must develop and maintain written policies covering the nature and scope of the vocational rehabilitation services provided. The implementation of CWS created the need for policies governing the role of the Business Account Managers, thus a new chapter in the Policy and Procedures manual, entitled "Services to Groups", was drafted and reviewed by this committee, as required by federal regulations. Also included in this chapter was the provision of gas and phone cards to potential clients for services related to assessment and evaluation. Public hearings on this chapter, required when adopting (or amending) any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, are slated to be held in the beginning of the next fiscal year.

The new chapter on casework standards mentioned in last year's report has once again taken a back seat to more important and pressing issues. We hope to tackle this significant subject in the forthcoming year.

#### Conclusion

Finally, I feel it is necessary, once again, to praise this committee for their dedication and commitment to this on-going effort to ensure that all individuals with disabilities seeking services through DVR receive the highest quality services using the best practices available. In my opinion, the discussions by committee members, prompted by review of the Policy and Procedures Manual, and the recommendations for changes based on those discussions, have helped DVR maintain its position of high regard in the eyes of the public.

#### Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee

Sam Liss, Chair

Fiscal year 2011 proved to be a productive one in terms of the goals of the AOE Committee, although it was not without its disappointments and frustrations. As Chair, I must express pride in the dedication and hard work of its members and commend those who regularly attend meetings and volunteer for relevant projects.

#### Expanding Outreach and Continuing Partnerships

The AOE Committee has been following the progress of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) initiatives and lending support to these efforts. Examples include expanded outreach to Veterans' groups with an ultimate goal of successful employment placement, as well as the linking of VocRehab with the VT General Assistance (GA) program to encourage employment and discourage chronic and inappropriate receipt of entitlements among this group of beneficiaries.

The general SRC, in partnership with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the DBVI SRC, has made significant progress in its cooperative strategy to enhance work incentives within the Medicaid for Working Persons with Disabilities (MWPDP) program. The Administration (including DVR), using MIG Supplemental grant funding and the hiring of a private contractor, is in the process of planning "next steps" toward this goal. The Federal Councils, in concert with the VT Center for Independent Living (VCIL) and the VT Coalition of Disability Rights (VCDR), are prepared to pursue legislation, depending upon the results of the administrative deliberations.

#### Examining Ways to Support Employment

The AOE Committee has also held productive discussions on various topics critically related to employment for persons with disabilities. For example, viable transportation options and opportunities, the Committee realizes, are an integral aspect of finding and maintaining employment and establishing a productive living environment. In addition, the Committee has focused upon the availability of appropriate personal attendant care services which would allow many people with severe disabilities to be employed and productive. The Committee has indeed been actively following health care reform efforts statewide as they relate to productive employment for persons with disabilities and as they conform to the SRC's formally adopted resolution of accessible, affordable and appropriate health care for all Vermonters.

#### Legislative Advocacy

Various other legislative initiatives, both within Vermont and nationally, were discussed on a proactive basis. The Committee is prepared to act, as it can, to further the cause of employment for persons with disabilities.

On the national front, reauthorization of the Rehab Act has been a regular focus of discussion as events have frustratingly unfolded. The Committee has also been closely monitoring the rollout of the BOND (Benefits Offset National Demonstration), particularly considering that Vermont is, once again, a partner in this ongoing effort to eliminate inherent work disincentives within the SSDI program.

As relates to the "outreach and education" aspect of its charge, the Committee rolled out, with the assistance of DVR and VABIR staff, its inaugural round of "legislative gatherings," the first one focused upon Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS). Although much disappointment ensued due to timing and logistical issues, the Committee feels it has learned much from the venture and is prepared to modify its approach and continue to plan such events with a goal of fulfilling their great potential. Additionally, the AOE Committee has been assigned the task of preparing a coherent strategy to plan for and implement education of employers with regard to persons with profound disabilities. The ultimate objective is to dispel misconceptions about this population and thus remove barriers to successful employment.

#### Outlook for the Future

The AOE Committee looks forward to another year of difficult, though important, work with its devoted members and with the support of a talented new Coordinator.

#### Performance Review Committee

Ellie Marshall, Chair

During our 2011 year the Performance Review Committee developed the Needs Assessment in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). This was the first time that the PR Committee directed this work internally rather than hiring an outside contractor. As a result, work teams on this project had the chance to develop high-functioning, productive group norms that positively influenced the SRC as a whole. The "Not So Secret Shopper" visits were especially fruitful in identifying paperwork streamlining needs.

#### Debriefing the Needs Assessment Process

Lessons learned from conducting the Needs Assessment involve the structuring of questions and format so that teams reviewing the various data sources will have something to go on, creating a common document around which to shape the report. The budget and policy manager, James Smith, felt that it would be best to have staff from DVR Planning and Evaluation Unit meet with the group prior to starting the assessment in order to help match questions and expectations.

#### SWOT Memo

The PR Committee directed a revision of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of the Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) initiative created during the 2010 SRC Board Retreat. The resulting memo was presented to the full SRC in December, with the intention that it be an action-oriented guide to monitoring CWS in the coming years. This report was created for the DVR central office staff to use to monitor both internal strengths and weaknesses along with external threats and opportunities.

#### Paperwork Reduction

One recommendation of the 2010 Needs Assessment was to streamline the amount of paperwork required to follow a case from beginning to closure. A paperwork reduction work group was convened to examine the forms used by all the regional DVR offices and eliminate redundancy, capture the relevant information for electronic case management, and discontinue forms that had been used locally but did not reflect the mission of DVR. This work group consisted of two members of this committee and representatives from the regional offices. Because of this broad outreach we were able to create buy-in for the revised forms and processes.

#### Employee Supervision and Evaluation

An Employee Satisfaction Survey indicated that some staff felt the evaluation process was de-motivating and sometimes an unfair description of their actual performance. Over three meetings the PR committee reviewed this data and came to the following conclusions: That the performance appraisal system be examined to enhance employee desire to do well and decrease de-motivators. That the performance rating process be made transparent in order to enhance the following:

- Quantity of work produced
- Quality of work produced
- Timeliness of meeting deadlines

- Teamwork
- Customer service
- Additional projects

And finally, that the general process of dealing with poor performers be disclosed in order that employees feel the system is fair and rewards good performance.

#### Outlook for the Future

2012 looks to be an exciting year as DVR continues to monitor CWS by way of the SWOT Memo recommendations. We look forward to reviewing progress on the State Plan and looking at trend data for comparison. With a full council we welcome several dynamic new members to the PR Committee.

#### SRC Comments on the State Plan and DVR Responses

The SRC Performance Review Sub-Committee reviews DVR's progress in meeting and achieving the State Plan Goals and Priorities. From January 2012 to May 2012 the Sub-Committee provided substantial input into the development of the plan. The main areas of focus were as follows:

The SRC Performance Review Sub-Committee was concerned that the performance targets laid out in the goals and priorities were realistic. Members requested a five year look back at the measures to assess the trends and determine if the targets are reasonable. DVR has provided this data to the SRC. The SRC noted that for Goal 10: DVR will work to improve the outcomes of community providers serving individuals with severe mental illness that outcome trend has been consistently downwards and the state plan targets not achieved. This is an area of major concern for the SRC.

DVR Response: DVR agrees with the SRC regarding their concern regarding the decline in outcomes for individuals with mental illness served through the community mental health system. As noted in the State Plan DVR with our partners at the Department of Mental Health and the Agency of Human Services have instituted performance measures that require agencies to increase their employment rate and outcomes. If they do not achieve the targets they face financial holdbacks. If the agencies exceed the targets they are eligible for financial incentives. Also the DVR-led CWS initiative has helped increase employer outreach through local employment teams. The mental health agency staff and leadership have reported that CWS has helped them develop new employer relationships and job opportunities for their consumers. In addition DVR and the SRC are working together to engage the mental health disability advocates around this issue.

The SRC has been concerned about the rehabilitation rate and the 40% of DVR consumers who are closed in status 28. The SRC would like to understand more about the consumers who are closed in status 28. The SRC and DVR have been having an ongoing discussion about this issue in the SRC Performance Review sub-committee. The SRC and VR are reviewing data on 28 closures to develop a deeper understanding of the issue.

DVR Response: DVR shares the SRC's interest in developing a deeper understanding of why individuals are closed in status 28. We are happy to take a deeper look at the data to determine if there are any particular trends or issues that we might want to address. We do know that VR consumers with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues and participants in the VR Reach Up program are much more likely to be closed in status 28. We also know that we lose contact with some DVR consumers after they become employed and are unable to verify their employment status. So it is possible that the rehab rate underestimates the actual employment outcomes. Clearly we need to do more research.

Regardless, of the outcome of our research we want to be cautious about implementing dramatic policy change around this issue. In particular we want to avoid any change in policy that might push counselors towards "creaming" of the case loads in order to increase the rehab rate. Currently we encourage staff to take risks with consumers who have significant barriers and not to be overly concerned if the case ultimately results in a 28 closure. We would be wary of implementing any new initiative that would discourage counselors from taking risks with the most challenging consumers.

#### Feedback from Public Hearing Held on June 13, 2012

##### Comments submitted by a consumer and DVR Responses

"This is what I believe is needed in the state plan:

1. A new and comprehensive way to obtain accurate information from all clients regarding their satisfaction. The present random phone calls are not working. Neither I nor another VR client I recently met has ever received one of these calls, and we each have been involved with VR for eight to twelve years.

DVR response: DVR feels that a random survey is an accurate way of obtaining consumer satisfaction information. Because we serve 10,000 individuals each year, it would be unrealistic to survey with a method other than random. Because of this, it would be possible for a consumer of DVR not to ever be surveyed. However, each DVR office has a "suggestion box" for comments and individuals are always welcome to submit comments regarding satisfaction with services to a Regional Manager or to the Director.

2. Case notes should be accurate and professional. I suggest VR follow the medical model and do "SOAP" notes (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan). I found numerous inaccuracies in my file and it lacked any clear plan to help me obtain employment.

DVR response: DVR is in the process of developing a new electronic case management system that has the potential of standardizing case notes. This suggestion will be forwarded to the case management design team. In addition, the I-Team, a representation of all staff positions and district offices, is in the process of standardizing various aspects of the rehabilitation process. This suggestion also will be forwarded to that team.

3. VR clients need to be listened to and treated with respect by VR counselors, VABIR staff and their supervisors.

DVR response: Client satisfaction rates are continuously in the 90+% range, indicating DVR's commitment to customer-first practices. It is an expectation that DVR customers will be listened to and treated with respect by all DVR staff.

4. An effective internal grievance process must be developed to deal with problems arising between counselor and client as well as any other problems. The CAP person should be used only when this does not work.

DVR response: DVR does have an internal grievance process delineated in the Policy and Procedures Manual that is posted on the DVR website. The Administrative Review process is an informal review conducted by a DVR Supervisory Counselor or Manager designated by the DVR Director. As indicated in policy, the CAP representative may be called in by the client at any point in the appeals/grievance process.

5. A strong emphasis on ethics, professionalism, accuracy and non-discrimination when dealing with clients in any training updates VR does with counselors, VABIR staff as well as supervisors."

DVR response: All DVR employees are required to attend ethics training every two year. VABIR staff members are invited to this training.

This screen was last updated on Jul 24 2012 2:26PM by Susan Wells

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

Identify the types of services to be provided by the program for which the waiver of statewideness is requested.

The waiver request should also include:

- a written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-federal share of funds;
- a written assurance that designated state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect;
- a written assurance that all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

This screen was last updated on Jun 30 2009 9:26AM by James Smith .

## 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.

### 4.8(b) Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

#### 1. Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and Other Entities

The Vermont TANF agency, the Vermont Economic Services Division (ESD), has engaged in a variety of initiatives designed to meet federal requirements for work participation rates. One initiative is an ongoing contractual relationship with Vermont DVR to provide VR services for TANF participants with disabilities. A VR counselor is designated in each DVR office to work with a caseload of individuals presenting with multiple barriers to employment. In addition, each VR counselor in the Reach Up program works with a part-time Employment and Training Specialist who provides work readiness and follow-along services. The DVR Reach Up program utilizes an individualized service model that focuses on graduated steps to employment including job try-outs, supported volunteer placements, job shadowing and job coaches combined with incentives for completion. Several counselors facilitate or engage a facilitator to run groups such as job clubs, skills groups and self-empowerment groups. The varying approaches support participants in gradually increasing their work participation while learning how to overcome functional barriers.

Through a collaborative effort with DVR, ESD and Vermont Adult Learning staff, a progressive assessment system was developed to provide an individualized approach to assessment. Depending upon roles, all staff working in the broader Reach Up program have assessments available to screen for psychosocial barriers, work readiness, learning styles, achievement levels, substance abuse, etc.

DVR has engaged in a partnership with ESD to serve Vermonters receiving ongoing General Assistance benefits. A DVR counselor is designated in each DVR region to serve GA customers with disabilities. In addition to counseling staff, each region has a dedicated Employment and Training Specialist to process ongoing GA benefits and provide assistance in work search, job placement and follow along activities.

Vermont DVR has been assisting individuals to apply for Social Security disability benefits for the past decade. Assistance has focused on individuals with very severe disabilities, often undiagnosed and untreated, that prevent them from being successful in employment. The goal is to assist those with severe disabilities to receive a more stable source of support that allows them to pursue treatment options that may lead to reengagement with DVR to work on employment goals. Populations being served are those receiving TANF benefits, those on DVR caseloads, offenders exiting prison, and individuals receiving General Assistance, an emergency benefit program for individuals with medical and other barriers to employment.

In FFY 11, 311 individuals across all four population groups were successful applicants for Social Security disability benefits. The Department for Children and Families recently awarded VR funding for two additional positions to support this work on behalf of persons receiving General Assistance due to the success of this program and the high number of chronic recipients of General Assistance who have severe disabilities but because of homelessness and lack of treatment have been unable to work. Disability benefits will allow these people the stability they need to engage in rehabilitation and employment.

In addition to Social Security assistance, DVR serves offenders with disabilities to achieve employment. Employment is a critical component to prevent recidivism and to assist offenders released from prison to successfully reenter their communities. DVR has designated DVR Counselors in each district office to serve as a single point of contact for the Department of Corrections.

Currently there is one Offender Reentry Employment Specialist based in Burlington who is dedicated to

employment assistance to offenders with disabilities. Jointly funded by VR and the Department of Corrections, this specialist runs employment groups and does one-on-one job placement for individuals exiting jail or who are on probation. In partnership with the VT Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR), five additional employment specialists have been hired who will replicate this work in Barre, St. Johnsbury, Rutland, Bennington, and Springfield. Procedures for referral and service provision are in place and individualized for each community and include partners such the Community High School of VT, which will provide pre-vocational and job readiness services; Probation and Parole; Community Justice Centers; Reach Up; VR; and other organizations such as housing programs that are funded to assist offenders. Individuals with disabilities and individuals with correctional histories intersect in the VR population as well as Reach Up, General Assistance, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. The new Offender Reentry Employment Specialists provide job placement and support services and sit on their local Creative Workforce Solutions teams to coordinate employer outreach.

This screen was last updated on Jun 15 2012 2:14PM by Susan Wells

## 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.

### 2. Coordination with Education Officials to Facilitate the Transition of Students with Disabilities from School to the Receipt of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

a. DVR continues to have sixteen designated School Transition Counselors and a Senior Transition Counselor operating out of all twelve DVR District Offices. These counselors work directly with all of Vermont high schools plus a variety of technical centers, and alternative and independent schools. Since 1999, the number of transition-aged youth served by DVR has increased by almost 85%. Transition Counselors have dedicated caseloads and they meet with students in their local high schools, sometimes beginning as early as their freshman year, and focus on both short and long-term goals. Counselors also serve as a community resource to the schools, they collaborate with interagency partnerships, and they work as catalysts for change to improve the transition process for youth with disabilities.

Youth age 14 - 24 served\* and achieved a successful employment outcome since 2002:

Youth Percent of Youth Percent of  
FFY Served All Served Rehabs All Rehabs

2002	1,224	25%	285	23%
2003	1,405	26%	307	23%
2004	1,534	28%	349	26%
2005	1,633	29%	371	26%
2006	1,672	30%	399	27%
2007	1,687	31%	394	27%
2008	1,895	34%	461	30%
2009	2,121	34%	451	30%
2010	2,338	34%	454	30%
2011	2,489	34%	479	30%

\*"Served" is defined as having an open case with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) during the year (this does not include individuals in referral or application status).

b. Core Transition Teams, composed of both education staff and adult agency/community representatives, work at the local level to develop, provide, and manage an effective transition process for students with disabilities who are at least 14 years old and may need "transition services" involving interagency partners. These Teams identify available resources and supports pertaining to individual student needs and desires for life after high school. They attempt to resolve individual and systems issues that prevent effective transitions. There are presently active Core Transition Teams in every region. These Teams are generally convened by the DVR Transition Counselors. A third annual Core Transition Team statewide conference took place in May, 2009.

c. The DVR Director and staff meet quarterly with the Special Education Director (Vermont Department of Education - DOE) and staff to coordinate the annual Core Transition Team event stated above, to discuss support and collaboration regarding improvement for Indicators 13 and 14, and to stay coordinated on other transition issues. DOE Transition staff provide technical assistance to the DVR Transition Counselors, and the DVR Transition Counselors coordinate information and education with schools in their local service areas.

d. Both DVR and DOE staff are members of the ongoing Youth in Transition (YIT) State Team that is sponsored by the Agency of Human Services (AHS) to coordinate transition services between AHS, DOE and the Vermont Department of Labor (DOL). This group has been meeting for about two years and is providing input to the policy makers in each agency. Additionally, DVR staff is assisting in implementation of a 5-year SAMHSA grant awarded to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to focus on creating a system of care for transition-aged youth with emotional and behavioral disturbances (EBD).

e. Financial responsibilities for services provided to students with disabilities are addressed in the Interagency Agreement between the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education as signed in June 2005. That agreement states that, "For eligible students, DVR will pay for services to the extent that funds are available at the time the services are needed, including assistive technology services and devices, that are identified in an approved IPE in keeping with DVR's order of selection for services that:

i. are consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implementing regulations including but not limited to 34 C.F.R. §361.53; the IDEA, including but not limited to 34 C.F.R. §§300.5, 300.6, 300.347(b), and 300.348; the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, PL 108-364; and Vermont State Plan; and

ii. promote or facilitate the accomplishment of vocational rehabilitation goals and any intermediate rehabilitation objectives identified in the student's IPE to ensure the student's successful transition to employment, post-secondary education, or training within 12 months of the student's exit from school."

The Department of Education remains responsible for ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities. The Agreement goes on to state: "The IDEA does not limit the responsibility of non-educational agencies from providing or paying for some or all of the costs of FAPE to children with disabilities. However, this shall not be construed to expand or otherwise alter state and/or federal law requirements imposed on any non-education agency."

f. A new initiative that was begun this year in 4 VR offices is called "Beyond Nothing But the Best" and it is an attempt to take our practice to the next step regarding special education involvement. Each of the sites has identified one high school in their area to pilot the following:

- Introducing the Guide to Secondary Transition services: Helping Students with Disabilities Move From School to Work for use by special education staff.
- Using the Transition Counselor Role and Responsibilities guidance.
- Doing a Fall "meet and greet" with special educators, identifying specific needs/issues/obstacles with their school and create a plan between VR and school to address those using the Worksheet for the Transition Discussion.
- Instituting a Student Group Orientation meetings for students as described in the Guide; they are also using a Student Orientation Form to verify student interest in taking the next steps to enroll with VR.

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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.

### **3. Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers**

DVR maintains Social Security Administration, Ticket to Work cooperative agreements with most of the private non-profit employment service providers in the state. Agreements exist with all the community mental health and developmental services agencies. In the spring of 2008 DVR negotiated a new Ticket to Work cooperative agreement with the agencies in anticipation of the new regulations anticipated to be published later that year. The new agreement has been in place since July 1, 2008 and has generated a lot of interest from providers. We anticipate the Ticket will generate significant new revenue for supported employment services.

This screen was last updated on Jun 30 2009 9:26AM by James Smith

## 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.

### 4. Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

In FY 2013 DVR will fund 36 programs serving people with developmental disabilities, people with significant mental illness, youth with emotional/behavioral disabilities, and people with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Title VI-B funds account for about \$300,000 and about \$2 million a year is provided by Section 110 funding. Supported Employment Projects fund direct on-site and off-site supports for people with significant disabilities engaged in real, competitive work. The employment rate for customers who receive both DVR and mental health services is more than twice the rate of those who receive only mental health services. According to RSA data, Vermont's rate of placements in supported employment is almost five times the national mean.

DVR has a well established agreement with the Vermont Division of Disability and Aging Services (DDAS) to provide extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities. The primary source of funding for extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities is Home and Community-based Medicaid Waiver funds. In addition, DVR also has a well established agreement with the Department of Mental Health to provide extended services for adults with significant mental illness. The primary source of funding for individuals with severe mental illness is the Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) Case Rate funding.

For individuals with other disabilities, no state funding for extended services exists in Vermont. As a result there are limited options for providing extended services for individuals with brain injuries, sensory disabilities, severe learning disabilities and other disabilities. There are some limited options to use Social Security Administration, Impairment Related Work Expenses or Plans to Achieve Self Support. However, these options are only feasible in a small minority of cases.

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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.

#### 4.10: Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

DVR anticipates serving 10,721 consumers in FFY 2012, or 81 consumers for each FTE.

DVR believes we have adequate DVR counselor capacity to meet the current need. The primary area of need for additional staff is for case aides and administrative support in the district offices. The expansion of new programs and the increase in consumers served has placed increased pressure on these positions. Some districts have a single case aide, which can result in a bottleneck around administrative functions. In addition, VR counseling staff sometimes have to perform administrative functions to cover for limited case aide capacity. We hope to add case aide capacity in the coming year.

DVR has a total of 126 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff positions. The Division operates using a matrix management structure headed by the Division Director.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Division Director	1	0	1
2	Senior Managers	6	0	1
3	VR Counselors	72	1	10
4	Benefits Counselors	7	0	1
5	Case Aides and Administrative Support	18	1	2
6	EAP Manager and Staff	6	0	1
7	Special Project Coordinators	6	1	1
8	Program Evaluation and Operations Staff	2	0	0
9	Business Account Managers	3	0	0
10	Assistive Technology Manager and Staff	4	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.

(2) Vermont has no accredited graduate school offering a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. To meet the Comprehensive System for Professional Development (CSPD) standards, a counselor needs either a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a master's degree in a related field plus completion of four additional core rehabilitation courses.

The percentage of our current counselors having completed the CSPD has increased 5% from last year to 74 %. We have seen significant staff turn over this year for a variety of reasons and were able to hire qualified graduates from out-of-state Rehabilitation Counseling programs. Also, several of our internal staff completed the four additional rehabilitation courses to meet the CSPD requirements.

Assumption College typically has a range of 35-45 students who graduate with a master's or CAG degree in Rehabilitation Counseling per year. These graduates would be qualified to fill counseling vacancies without additional coursework. Vermont has attempted to recruit students who received a master's or CAG degree in a related field such as Social Work, Special Education, School Guidance, Mental Health Counseling, or Community Mental Health Services from New England colleges. All of these graduates could be candidates for counseling vacancies if they are willing to complete the four core courses.

Fifteen counselors have a master's degree in a related field and they are in the process of enrolling or taking the four core courses. Two counselors are in the lowest priority category due to disability, having been granted ADA accommodations for graduate study allowing them to audit the four core courses rather than to take them for graduate credit. Currently two (2) staff are enrolled in Assumption

The following is a breakdown of the educational plans for DVR staff. These plans fall into a four-category system, based on the availability of existing financial resources.

Category one: Current staff who meet the highest standards for education and/or certification.

Fifty-six (56) counselors have either obtained their CRC, a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, or a master's degree in Counseling or a closely related field, and have met requirements for their core courses.

Category two: Staff who do not yet meet the highest standards and are currently enrolled in an approved graduate or undergraduate program.

Five (5) counselors are enrolled in graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling or related fields. One additional counselor will be enrolling in the Fall of 2012. Those who finish their graduate programs in related fields will also have to take the four core courses if they are not included in their current curriculum.

Category three: Staff who have graduate degrees in counseling or a related field are required to take four core courses in order to comply with the CSPD requirements. These courses are based on the course areas suggested by the CRC Commission. Since Vermont does not have a graduate program in Rehabilitation Counseling, it has been necessary to develop these courses via distance learning or through collaboration with Vermont colleges and Assumption College. The four course areas are: Medical or Psychological Aspects of Disability; Job Placement or Career Counseling; Vocational Assessment; and Foundations of Rehabilitation.

Fourteen (14) counselors have master's degrees in counseling or a related field and need to take the four core courses. Staff continues to use San Diego State University (SDSU) as the university has an RSA long-term training grant, and they are open to non-matriculated students who only need to complete the 4 core courses. While staff members, who have completed SDSU courses, often report a high degree of satisfaction, others looking for alternative programs are considering Stout University, Assumption College, and Southern University out of Virginia. Additionally, several staff are requesting in-person classes as an accommodation to meet the CSPD requirements, so local state colleges, private colleges and Assumption College will be

contacted to arrange a series of in-person core classes beginning in the Summer or Fall of 2012. This would result in all 14 staff meeting the CSPD requirement no later than December of 2013. Staff choosing to take multiple classes exclusively on-line or in addition to the in-person classes will be able to complete the CSPD requirement prior to December of 2013.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	Assumption College	2	2	2	0
2	Johnson State College	2	2	1	1
3	Springfield College	1	1	0	0
4	San Diego State University	0	0	6	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.

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

DVR has been able to fill counselor vacancies as they occur. State personnel policies require DVR to consider qualified applicants on the Reduction in Force list before other applicants. DVR advertises openings through the State recruitment system, through local newspapers, on-line on CareerBuilder.com and by listing openings through college placement services. Assumption College advertises counselor openings on their website <http://www.rcep1.org/rehabjobs/index.php>. Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf have been recruited by contacting specialized training organizations such as Gallaudet University.

DVR continues to work with Assumption College, Johnson State College and Springfield College to provide educational programs to prepare people to become DVR counselors and to provide on-going education. These training opportunities are available and accessible to all counselors including those from minority backgrounds and those with disabilities. Vermont has a small but growing minority population. Consequently, DVR recruits regionally and nationally for counselors through the website run at Assumption College. This has led to an increase in our out-of-state applications.

To assist in recruiting candidates with disabilities, DVR has advertised openings through disability-related organizations such as the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, and the State Independent Living Council. We also encourage people we serve as VR consumers to apply for positions.

### 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.

#### (c) Personnel Standards

The Division follows standards set forth in the Comprehensive System for Professional Development (CSPD). This prescribes a national standard for vocational rehabilitation counselor qualifications. This standard gives highest priority to counselors with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The second level of priority is for counselors with related degrees in social work, psychology, mental health counseling or special education. This group must complete four additional courses to meet the standard: Foundations of Rehabilitation, Career Counseling, Vocational Assessment, and Physical and Psychological Aspects of Disability. When unable to recruit qualified candidates that meet the two highest levels we hire counselors with Bachelor's degrees and support their graduate training through our RSA training grant. Though not required by the Division nor by RSA, many of our counselors continue to become Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

In order to recruit counselors who meet the highest standard we advertise in the state's two largest newspapers: the Burlington Free Press and the Rutland Herald/Barre Montpelier Times Argus. We also post openings in CareerBuilder.com. Positions are also posted in the TACE New England website. We have been able to receive inquiries about openings from around the country. In order to attract candidates from the graduate programs in counseling, social work and special education we regularly contact the graduate program directors of Vermont and neighboring state programs.

In order to provide graduate training for counselors with master's degrees in related fields to meet the CSPD requirements we have been encouraging counselors to take advantage of on-line courses funded by RSA long-term training grants. The timelines for meeting graduate training are written into the job specifications that all candidates have access to in the State of Vermont Department of Human Resources. Counselors are required to meet the standard within three years. All staff training information is stored on an Access database maintained by the Division's Human Resource Administrative Assistant. Supervisors are given quarterly updates to monitor progress.

New counselors are also required to attend a six-day training program taught by the Human Resource Manager that reviews Vermont's Policies and Procedures Manual. All staff are expected to attend training seminars produced by the Division and by TACE Center - New England. No specific requirement exists for the number of hours of training; however, supervisors address training expectations through employees' annual performance evaluations.

In addition to counselors, there are other groups of employees that share similar expectations for on-going

training: Human Services Case Aides and Employment Consultants. These employees often work closely with our consumers and are expected to provide a high level of customer service. Their work is guided by a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, VR Senior Counselor, or VR Regional Manager. The Employment Consultants also receive training through the local TACE Center - New England based out of the University of Massachusetts and Assumption College.

The DVR Benefits Counselors receive ongoing training and support provided by a Project Coordinator. The local Social Security Administration (SSA) Area Work Incentives Coordinator provides quarterly trainings to the Benefits Counselors on a variety of SSA Work Incentives issues. He is also available to provide consultation as needed around challenging cases or specific issues. SSA also provides training and technical assistance for benefits counselors through contracts with Cornell and Virginia Commonwealth University. DVR is the SSA Work Incentives Planning and Assistance grantee for the State of Vermont. The six Benefits Counselors working under that project are certified by SSA as Certified Work Incentive Counselors (CWIC). To achieve certification, Benefits Counselors must attend a week-long training and complete a comprehensive "take home" assignment that is evaluated by Virginia Commonwealth University staff.

## 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.

### (d) Staff development

Due to a lengthy vacancy of the Training Coordinator, few staff development opportunities were provided by the Division. Staff were able to continue to engage in external training in the areas of substance abuse and co-occurring disorders, serving refugee populations, counseling practices, and other areas that inform their work as rehabilitation counselors. Following the replacement of the Training Coordinator, Tropical Storm Irene hit Vermont and devastated the buildings which housed the Training Coordinator and all of Central Office. Management staff were scattered across four locations which did not allow for much more than maintenance of initiatives and programs and responses to emergent needs from the field. Training is getting back on track and in December a series of New Counselor Training was initiated and one training in November regarding the use and availability of Assistive Technology was offered. A new training plan has been developed with TACE-New England and trainings are being scheduled throughout 2012 based on that plan and an extensive staff survey which scaled staff interest in various content areas.

DVR's effort to implement video conferencing in all twelve districts and the VR central office was successful for six districts and VR central office prior to the Tropical Storm Irene event. Because the VR central office was the bridge site, we lost all functional use of the video conferencing equipment after the storm. While this was a major setback, planning is in place to restore the six district offices which have the equipment and purchase the same equipment for the remaining 6 district offices. A major barrier to training continues to be the time and expense involved in staff travel to a central location. For example, a counselor from the VR Bennington office would spend six hours of travel time to attend training at the VR Central Office. Videoconferencing will make training much more accessible to staff and allow them to make better use of their time.

## 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.

(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs

The Agency of Human Services has a contract with the Association of Africans Living in VT for on-site interpretation and translation services. If an appropriate interpreter is not available, the VT Refugee Resettlement Program has a contract with Language Learning Enterprise Inc. in Washington D.C., which provides telephonic interpretation.

### **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.

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

The DVR Director and other senior managers meet quarterly with the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Education and the Special Education Director to coordinate activities and trainings, especially around transition issues.

This screen was last updated on Jun 19 2012 5:14PM by Susan Wells

## 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.

### 4.11 (a) Statewide Assessment

Historically DVR and the SRC worked with an external contractor to conduct the Needs Assessment. The advantage of this approach was that DVR and the SRC got an external view of the organization. However, this approach had two primary disadvantages: first, available contractors often lacked a deep understanding of the DVR program. As a result, the findings were often superficial and general. The second disadvantage of this approach was that SRC members lacked involvement in the process. SRC members wanted the opportunity to review data directly and ask deeper questions.

For the 2011 Needs Assessment, DVR and the SRC decided to take a more “hands on” approach to the process. DVR collects data from a variety of sources on an ongoing basis and it was determined that DVR and the SRC could conduct a deeper assessment over time using these multiple sources. Rather than conducting a one-time assessment, DVR and the SRC used the data sources it routinely reviews as the basis for the needs assessment. This has allowed for a more comprehensive review of need in the state.

#### METHODOLOGY

In late fall 2009 the SRC Performance Review Committee in partnership with James Smith, the DVR Budget and Policy Manager, developed a work plan for the Needs Assessment. As a first step the group identified the available sources of process and outcome data they wanted to review over a year period.

The following outlines the data sources reviewed:

#### Consumer Satisfaction Survey

- Phone Survey of 700 DVR consumers.
- Collected every two years to allow DVR to measure trends.
- Provides direct customer feedback from a large sample.
- Individual comments as well as ranked responses.
- Includes supported employment consumers.
- Speaks directly to “rehabilitation needs” of persons with disabilities.

#### Employer Satisfaction Survey

- Phone survey of 300 employers.
- To be collected every two years to allow DVR to measure trends.
- Provides direct employer feedback from a large sample.
- Individual comments as well as ranked responses.
- Speaks to employer perspective of DVR and VABIR services.

#### DVR Employee Satisfaction Survey

- Survey of all VR staff. Focused on staff morale, communication, working conditions, etc.
- Provides information on challenges and opportunities faced by DVR staff in providing services.
- Will provide data on operational issues such as resources, caseload size, etc.

#### RSA Standards and Indicators

- VR consumer outcome data measured against six federal standards.
- Basic measures of VR outcomes according to the federal standards.
- If VR is not meeting or marginal with any of the standards, it should be addressed in the needs assessment.

#### DVR Program Evaluation Team

- Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) has the capability to run data queries for the SRC on a range a questions not covered by the RSA Standards and Indicators.
- PEU can collect data on longer-term employment outcomes, population estimates (not served by VR), numbers served across programs (VR, DOL, corrections, etc.).
- \* Comparison of services and outcomes across populations served by the program.
- Long-term employment outcomes, post-VR closure.
- Assess eligible population and potential unmet need (e.g. proportion of SSA disability beneficiaries served by VR).
- General population estimates using census and other data.

The SRC Performance Review Subcommittee then assigned review of the data from each of the above categories to a smaller task group. Each task group consisted of SRC members and DVR staff. The task groups reviewed the data and developed a task group report they then submitted to the larger Performance Review Committee. This work was completed between January 2010 and October 2010.

In June 2010 the Performance Review Committee developed a list of additional research questions/areas of interest to be submitted to the DVR Program Evaluation Unit. The Program Evaluation Unit researched these questions/areas of interest through the summer and fall of 2010. These questions/areas of interest included the following:

- DVR services for individuals who are minorities including:
  - o Access to the program
  - o Outcomes
- DVR services for veterans:
  - o Access to the program
  - o Outcomes
- Outcome comparisons across different disability groups:
  - o Individuals with psychiatric disabilities
  - o Individuals with developmental disabilities
  - o Individuals with physical disabilities
  - o Individuals with traumatic brain injuries
- Access to services and outcomes for individuals with Alcohol/Substance Abuse/Dependence disorders.
- Employment outcomes for DVR consumers with post-secondary degrees.
- Supported Employment Services:
  - o Supported Employment Services for Adults with Mental Illness

- o Supported Employment Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities
- o Unmet need for supported employment services for individuals who do not meet MH and DD eligibility criteria for services.
- Overall impact of the DVR program on the total estimated population of eligible Vermonters:
  - o Access to services
  - o Outcomes
    - Current and projected needs for services given the aging population in Vermont.
  - o Will DVR have more or fewer applicants?
  - o What will the impact be on the order of selection?

In addition to the above research, the SRC conducted “Not-so-secret shopper” visits to each of the twelve DVR District Offices. SRC members came as VR customers to experience the process a new customer would go through applying for services. The process data from those visits is also included in the findings.

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The SRC Performance Review Subcommittee and the DVR Implementation Team (I Team), consisting of a mix of DVR field staff, managers and central office staff, reviewed all the findings from the Needs Assessment. It is important to note both groups agreed the Needs Assessment demonstrated that the Vermont DVR program is a remarkably effective program with exceptional outcomes. The fact alone that Vermont DVR increased employment outcomes in 2010 during the worst recession since the 1930’s is one indicator of that fact. However, it is also important for continuous improvement that any program look at and attempt to address areas of need.

The two groups went through a process of assessing and prioritizing the needs for the purpose of strategic planning. We felt it important that we prioritize findings to help guide DVR management and the strategic planning process. The two teams identified the following areas as the major findings of the needs assessment:

The numbering of the following items do not reflect any particular ranking.

#### [1] The Need to Improve Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Mental Illness

The assessment revealed that individuals with mental illness have a lower rate of employment than other disability groups. Two major factors were identified as contributing to this finding:

- The significant decline in employment outcomes and rate in the community mental health, Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) supported employment programs. The employment rate in this system has dropped from 26% in 2006 to 16% in 2010.
- The lack of ongoing case management supports for adults with mental illness who do not qualify for adult mental health services. Many individuals with mental illness are unable to retain employment because of lack of case management support in the community. DVR counselors identify between 200 and 400 applicants with mental illness per year who fall into this category.

#### [2] The Need to Evaluate “Unsuccessful” (status 28) Closures

Both the SRC and the I Team felt that DVR should conduct an evaluation of status 28 closures. Both groups had lots of questions about the implication of 40% of the post-plan closures being status 28 closures. Among the questions were:

- What percentage of the status 28 closures is the result of factors unrelated to the effectiveness of the DVR program? For example, the individual becomes employed and feels no need to stay in contact with their DVR counselor.
- For those individuals who do not become employed, are there specific barriers or needs that DVR should attempt to address?
- How much does DVR spend on individuals closed in a status 28 compared to status 26?

#### [3] The Need to Engage Veterans with Disabilities, Especially Those Not Eligible for the VA VR Program

Data from the needs assessment suggests veterans are less likely to access the DVR program than eligible non-veterans. This is consistent with anecdotal reports from field staff that eligible veterans are reluctant to

access the DVR program. This data suggests DVR should continue and intensify its efforts to engage veterans including outreach to veterans organizations, partnering with the VA VR programming, and partnering with the Department of Labor veterans staff.

#### [4] The Need to Expand Employer Outreach and Marketing Efforts

The employer satisfaction survey indicated that a substantial portion of employers were unfamiliar with DVR or VABIR, our primary community rehabilitation partner. Even for employers with whom DVR does have a relationship, it appeared that program engagement was often inconsistent. Based on the survey it appears that DVR and VABIR need to:

- Have more consistent routine contact with employers with whom we have a relationship.
- Conduct more outreach to employers who are not current clients of VABIR and DVR.

It is important to note that this data was collected before DVR implemented a major initiative, Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), to improve and expand employer outreach. CWS includes the creation of:

- Eleven (11) Business Account Managers focused on employer outreach.
- The formation of inter-agency employer outreach teams at the local level to coordinate job development efforts across programs.
- The implementation of Salesforce, an account management software system designed to track employer outreach.

It will be interesting to see the impact of these efforts on future survey results. Regardless, we expect employer outreach to be a major focus of DVR efforts for the next three years.

#### [5] The Need to Improve Outcomes for DVR Consumers with Alcohol/Substance Abuse Dependence/Abuse Disorders

Data from the VR 911 clearly illustrated that VR consumers with alcohol or substance abuse/dependence disorders are increasingly less likely to get to plan status and when they do, they are increasingly less like to achieve their employment goal. Field experience mirrors the data findings for this population. VR counseling staff consistently report that alcohol and substance abuse/dependence disorders present the most significant barriers to employment. This clearly needs to be an area of focus for DVR in the coming three years.

#### [6] The Need to Assess the Impact of DVR Support of Post-Secondary Education Services

DVR data revealed that individuals served by the program with post-secondary degrees are more likely to achieve an employment outcome and earn more money than individuals with high school diplomas or less. However, what is less clear is the impact of DVR investment in post-secondary education. A high proportion of case service funds are invested in this service but DVR has never conducted a formal evaluation of the impact this service.

#### [7] The Need to Communicate Clearly to VR Applicants Regarding their Expectations of DVR Services and Continue to Work on Improving Communication Between DVR and DVR Consumers

Feedback from the 2008 DVR consumer satisfaction survey was overwhelmingly positive. For consumers who did have complaints about the DVR program two themes emerged from the 2008 and prior surveys. These themes appeared to relate to the consumer's expectations about what the DVR program can and cannot provide and to ongoing communication between the DVR counselor and the consumer.

DVR has made a number of efforts to help give consumers a clear picture of what DVR can provide and what are the limitations of the program. This has included efforts to provide improved and more consistent orientation to the program. In addition, in response to the 2008 survey DVR established some expectations for staff around communication between staff and consumers, for example minimum expectations for the time it takes to return phone calls.

DVR is presently conducting the 2011 survey. It will be very interesting to see any movement in the above areas. It is important to note that in 2009 DVR lost 15% of its staff. This may have an impact on consumer satisfaction, especially on responsiveness of staff given the loss of capacity.

#### [8] The Need to Establish Case Management Supports for DVR Consumers Who Are Not Eligible for Community Mental Health or Developmental Services

Based on the reporting from VR counselors, about 700 individuals per year who are found eligible for the VR

program need some kind of ongoing case management support. The DVR 2007 Needs Assessment identified this as a major area of need. Despite substantial efforts since the 2007 Needs Assessment DVR has not been able to put in place case management supports for non-CRT or non-DDAS consumers. In 2008 a pilot project to put these services in place in six sites was shelved because of the fiscal crisis. As a result this gap in the service system remains an ongoing challenge for the VR program.

Populations identified as needing these supports are:

- Adults with mental illness who are not eligible for community mental health services
- Adults with developmental disabilities who are not eligible for developmental services
- Adults on the autism spectrum who are not eligible for developmental services
- Adults with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Adults with physical disabilities

#### [9] The Need to Increase Consumer Earnings

Even though the DVR data on the RSA Performance Indicator 1.5 was well above the federal standard, the I Team felt DVR should always endeavor to increase consumer earnings. The average hourly earnings at closure in 2009 were \$11.24 per hour, which compares to the Vermont "Livable Wage" of \$16.75 for a single person.

The I Team was interested in looking at the impact of funding short-term training leading to certification in specific fields (e.g. LNA, CDL). DVR used ARRA funds to support a significant expansion in these training options. This presents an ideal opportunity to assess whether investment in these types of training will result in higher wage employment.

#### [10] The Need to Outreach to Eligible Individuals Who are Non-English Speakers

While the numbers are relatively small, the census data clearly indicated DVR is under-serving this population. DVR should explore strategies to engage eligible non-English speakers and community organizations representing this population.

#### [11] The Need to Streamline and Automate Case Work and Financial Processes for DVR Staff and Consumers

The results of the staff satisfaction survey suggest staff are struggling with managing the paperwork and administrative processes associated with providing services. Given that the Division is operating with reduced staff and increasing numbers of customers, it is important DVR examine how to streamline processes.

In addition, SRC members, as a result of their "not-so-secret shopper" visits, reported that they felt DVR paperwork requirements were burdensome for consumers. They suggested DVR review all required paperwork processes and eliminate or streamline redundant processes.

The Vermont Needs Assessment also included an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation service needs of individuals who are unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program. Among the individuals identified in the needs assessment as unserved or underserved are:

- \* Adults with mental illness who are not eligible for community mental health services
- Adults with developmental disabilities who are not eligible for developmental services
- Adults on the autism spectrum who are not eligible for developmental services
- Adults with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Adults with physical disabilities
- \* Veterans with disabilities
- \* Adults with alcohol and substance abuse/dependence disorders
- \* Adults with disabilities for who are non-English speakers.

As a result of the Needs Assessment DVR is planning a number of strategies to outreach and/or improve services to these groups. These strategies are laid out in Attachment 4.11 (D).

The Needs Assessment did not generate any significant findings regarding about individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system (primarily the Department of Labor in Vermont). However, DVR and the Vermont Department of Labor signed a Memorandum

of Agreement in the Spring of 2010 committing the two agencies to develop operational guidelines for serving joint consumers. This operational agreement will include implementation of coordinated employer outreach and implementation of a continuum of progressive employment options with VR and WIA funds. We believe that strong engagement with DOL will result in more individuals with disabilities being served through that system.

The Needs Assessment also looked at the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in the state of Vermont. In the Vermont context the community rehabilitation programs consist of the following:

- \* Fourteen community mental health and developmental disability agencies that provide supported employment services.
- \* One community rehabilitation program, the Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR).

The Needs Assessment clearly found that the supported employment programs serving individuals with severe mental illness had experienced a significant decline in employment outcomes. This is clearly a priority area for improvement. DVR in partnership with the Department of Mental Health has committed to some significant improvement initiatives outlined in 4.11 (D).

VABIR is responsible for the bulk of employer outreach for DVR and for the Creative Workforce Solutions initiative. As noted earlier, the employer satisfaction survey indicated that a substantial portion of employers were unfamiliar with DVR or VABIR. It is important to note these results pre-dated the Creative Workforce Solutions initiative which has invested significant new VR and VABIR resources in employer outreach. However, this is clearly an area for improvement that VR and VABIR have identified and developed strategies to address as outlined in 4.11 (D).

This screen was last updated on Aug 19 2011 4:06PM by James Smith

## 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.

### 4.11(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services

1. Based on 2009 Census Bureau information, DVR estimates that there are 45,725 Vermonters between the ages of 16 and 64 with a disability. All of these people are potentially eligible for services under this Plan.

2. An estimated 10,721 individuals will receive services in FFY 2012 with funds provided under either Part B of Title I of the Act or under Part B of Title VI. Since DVR operates under an Order of Selection for Services, it is anticipated that 9,879 Priority Category 1 customers will be served; 838 Priority Category 2 customers; and 6 Priority Category 3 customers.

3. Total costs to serve individuals in all three categories will be approximately \$18,503,449. Estimated costs of services for each category are:

The following table shows the number of individuals served in the past two years and the number DVR anticipates serving during the current and next fiscal years:

FFY 10 FFY 11 FFY 12 Proj FFY 13

Category 1:

Served: 9,024 9,438 9,879 10,213

Rehabs: 1,349 1,449 1,437 1,506

Category 2:

Served: 805 848 838 853

Rehabs: 173 169 187 189

Category 3:

Served: 23 19 6 2

Rehabs: 6 4 1 1

Total Served: 9,852 10,305 10,721 11,057

Total Rehabs: 1,528 1,622 1,625 1,696

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Priority Category I	Title I	\$17,047,056	9,696	\$1,758
Priority Category I	Title VI	\$300,000	181	\$1,657
Priority Category II	Title I	\$1,446,040	838	\$1,725



## 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.

### 4.11 (c) Goals and Priorities

#### (1) State's Goals and Priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs.

Based on the 2011 VR/SRC Needs Assessment findings, DVR and the SRC determined that the Goals and Priorities established in the FFY 2010 State Plan were still the appropriate strategic goals for the agency. We felt that broad goals like "Consumer satisfaction with DVR services will increase" are unlikely ever to change. However, upon review DVR and the SRC have made changes as follows:

- The targets for the FFY 2013 Goals and Priorities have been adjusted based on data collected in FFY 2011.
- We have changed Goal 7 to reflect the agency's new branding to employers as Creative Workforce Solutions.
- We have added populations identified in the Needs Assessment as being underserved to Goal 7. Increase capacity to serve un-served or underserved populations.

#### FFY 2013 Goals and Priorities

Goal 1. Consumer satisfaction with DVR services will increase.

Measure: Biennial consumer satisfaction survey.

Target: DVR will maintain overall consumer satisfaction at or above the 91% level in 2011 survey in the 2013 survey.

Goal 2. Consumer earnings will increase beyond the rate of inflation.

Measures: RSA Performance Indicator 1.5 (DVR wages compared to state average) and 1.6 (own income as primary source of support).

Targets: 1.5: DVR consumer wages will increase from 62% in 2010 of state average to 64% of state average in 2012. 1.6: DVR will increase the percentage of consumers achieving self support from 43.9% in 2010 to 46% in 2012.

Goal 3. More consumers will be employed and the rate that consumers maintain employment will increase.

Measures: RSA Performance Indicator 1.2 (percentage of DVR consumers achieving an employment outcome). Vermont Unemployment Insurance data to track employment retention post-DVR closure.

Targets: 1.2: DVR consumers achieving an employment outcome will increase from 60% in 2010 to 65% in 2012. Percentage of DVR consumers who retain employment two years post closure will increase from 70% to 72%.

Goal 4. Vermont employers will increase their use of DVR as an employment agency.

Measure: In December 2010 DVR deployed a comprehensive employer tracking tool using Salesforce, a well-established commercial customer relations software. DVR plans to use Salesforce as its primary tool for tracking employer outreach.

Employer survey data collected through an independent survey tool.

Target: (a) By the end of FFY 2012 DVR will have recorded 1,000 employer contacts in Salesforce

(b) In an FFY 2010 survey of employers in the community, only 12% indicated they had met a Creative Workforce Solutions representative and only 31% indicated any familiarity with DVR. By FFY 2013 these measures will increase as follows: 30% of employers will report they had met with a Creative Workforce Solution representative and 50% will report some familiarity with DVR.

Goal 5. DVR employees will be satisfied with their jobs.

Measure: Results from biennial DVR staff satisfaction survey.

Target: DVR staff satisfaction will be maintained at 92% (2010 rating) or higher.

Goal 6. All DVR staff will have the skills and competencies to do their jobs.

Measures: Feedback from staff on biennial DVR staff satisfaction survey.

Targets: In 2011, 93% of staff said they had enough information to do their jobs. This will increase to 95% by 2013.

Goal 7. Increase capacity to serve un-served or underserved populations; specifically:

- Individuals with measured IQs between 70 and 80
- Individuals with TBI
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities
- Individuals with other significant disabilities who require case management services
- Individuals in the Autism Spectrum range of disorders
- Individuals exiting the correctional system.
- Individuals with alcohol/substance abuse dependence/abuse disorders (AODA)
- Individuals with disabilities who are veterans
- Individuals with disabilities who are not primary English speakers.

Measure: Implementation of services targeted at underserved populations.

Targets:

Though Creative Workforce Solutions, partner with Department of Corrections to replicate VABIR/VR Pilot designed to provide job placement for individuals with disabilities who are exiting the correctional system.

Implement the Youth Employment Specialist model to serve youth with cross-disabilities statewide.

Increase the % of AODA consumers who achieve plan status from 57% (FFY 2009) to 62% by FFY 2013. Increase the rehabilitation rate of AODA consumers from 47% (FFY 2009) to 55% by FFY 2013.

Increase the post plan closures for eligible veterans from 137 in FFY 2010 to 200 by FFY 2012

Increase the post plan closures for individuals with disabilities who are not primary English speakers from 42 in FFY 2010 to 80 by FFY 2013.

Goal 8. DVR will work in collaboration with the DOL to ensure people with disabilities have access to services through the state workforce investment system.

Measures: Implementation of coordinated employer outreach. Implementation of a continuum of progressive

employment options with VR and WIA funds

Targets: By the end of FFY 2012 all VDOL staff conducting employer outreach on behalf of the Vermont Agency of Human Services consumers will use Salesforce to track employer outreach.

By the end of FFY 2012 DVR and DOL will have an operational agreement around the blending of VR and WIA funds for progressive employment.

Goal 9. DVR will work to improve the outcomes of community supported employment providers serving individuals with developmental disabilities and cross disabilities.

Measures: Number of 26 closures achieved through the supported employment programs. Total number of people with developmental disabilities employed with supports.

Targets: Total 26 closures in State Fiscal Year 2011: 137

26 closure goal for State Fiscal Year 2012: 200

In State Fiscal Year 2011 a total of 973 people were working in supported employment programs. The goal for State Fiscal Year 2012 is to increase to 1,000 and for State Fiscal Year 2013 is 1,030.

Goal 10. DVR will work to improve the outcomes of community providers serving individuals with severe mental illness.

Measures: Number of 26 closures achieved through supported employment programs for adults with psychiatric disabilities.

Total number of people with psychiatric disabilities employed with supports

Targets: Total 26 closures in State Fiscal Year 2011: 78

26 closure goal for State Fiscal Year 2012: 150

In State Fiscal Year 2011 a total of 592 people were working in supported employment programs. This will increase to 700 by State Fiscal Year 2013 and 900 by State Fiscal Year 2014.

Goal 11: DVR will assist individuals with disabilities access to a broad array of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services throughout the rehabilitation process.

Goal 12: DVR will effectively outreach and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities including those with the most significant disabilities.

This screen was last updated on Jun 15 2012 3:29PM by Susan Wells

## 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

DVR does not have enough funds to offer paid services to Priority Category 3 customers at the time they are determined eligible. At the end of every quarter, DVR and the SRC reviews the number of Priority Category 3 customers who have been determined eligible in each quarter since services were last provided to customers in this category. Based on resources available, a determination is made on whether or not to serve Category 3 customers. If the decision is made to provide paid services to Category 3 customers, all in the group who were determined eligible in the same quarter are eligible for services regardless of their service needs. In FFY 2011, nineteen individuals received paid services.

DVR does a good job of getting the maximum services for consumers out of the available resources. DVR increased the number of employment outcomes from 443 in 1991 to 1,622 in 2011, an increase of over 350 percent. This was achieved without any significant increase in funding. As an agency we understand how to provide services efficiently and economically. We also have aggressively pursued funding from other sources, in particular through grants and SSA Reimbursement and Ticket to Work payments. With recent reallocation and ARRA funding, VR has been able to increase its capacity to serve more Vermonters. However, VR continues to seek additional funds to sustain current initiatives.

### Description of Priority categories

Vermont continues to operate under the order of selection established in FFY 1999. With the approval of the State Rehabilitation Council, the Category definitions have been rewritten to clarify the intent of the Rehabilitation Act to serve those most in need of services:

Priority Category 1: Individuals who have been determined by DVR to have the most significant disabilities are those who have two or more areas of functional loss requiring multiple services over a period of 6 months or more, either for the provision of a required service, or for the duration of the use of a provided good.

Priority Category 2: Individuals who have been determined by DVR to have significant disabilities are those who have one area of functional loss requiring multiple services over a period of 6 months or more, either for the provision of a required service, or for the duration of the use of a provided good.

Priority Category 3: Individuals who have been determined by DVR to have non-significant disabilities are those who have one or more areas of functional loss not requiring multiple services over a period of 6 months or more.

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

Priority Category 1 and Priority Category 2.

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

Individuals found eligible under Priority Category 1 and 2 will receive the full range of services available under vocational rehabilitation program.

As noted earlier, DVR does not have enough funds to offer paid services to Priority Category 3 customers at the time they are determined eligible. At the end of every quarter, DVR and the SRC reviews the number of Priority Category 3 customers who have been determined eligible in each quarter since services were last provided to customers in this category. Based on resources available, a determination is made on whether or not to serve Category 3 customers.

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	10,213	1,506	1,004	FFY 13	\$17,800,000
2	853	189	126	FFY 13	\$1,600,000
3	2	1	1	FFY 13	\$10,500

This screen was last updated on Jun 26 2012 1:48PM by Susan Wells

**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.

**4.11 (c) (4) Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**

Four (4) programs or services were funded by DVR in FFY 2011 using Title VI-B funds to serve approximately 181 individuals with developmental disabilities. Total funding obligated for FFY 2011 was \$291,246.

\$2,222,534 in Title I funds were used in FY 2010 to supplement Title VI- B funds for supported employment programs. These funds supported an additional 1,282 consumers, for a total of 1,472 consumers in 36 programs. The largest groups of customers served were people with mental illness (441), individuals with significant developmental disabilities (453), youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD) (435), and individuals with TBI or cross disabilities (143).

For FFY 2013 it is expected that approximately \$300,000 in Title VI-B will be available to fund supported employment programs. DVR does not anticipate any substantial change in its overall funding commitment to supported employment through Title I, Title VI-B and other legislative appropriations for FFY 2013.

This screen was last updated on Jun 26 2012 11:55AM by Susan Wells

## 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.

### 4.11 (d) Strategies to Achieve the Goals and Priorities

Strategy 1: DVR will implement a coordinated approach to employment services across the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) under Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS)

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 4

#### Planned Activities

CWS is a legislatively-mandated initiative to be led by DVR to coordinate employer outreach across AHS Departments and Divisions. A consolidated and coordinated approach to employment services under a single entity will provide equal access to meaningful work at a livable wage for all AHS program participants. It will also provide employers with a single point of contact for coordinated job development and placement services and post-placement supports to ensure job retention.

DVR has seen very positive initial results on this redesign. Local employment teams have indicated a positive impact on employment outcomes for AHS consumers across populations including individuals in the Reach Up program, community mental health services, corrections, and developmental services. CWS will continue to improve employment outcomes of people with disabilities in Vermont in the following ways:

- It will improve access to VR services for eligible individuals within other systems, in particular the Vermont Reach Up program and the correctional system.
- Performance based contracting for supported employment services will help promote a focus on increasing employment outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.
- Coordinated employment outreach and the addition of Business Account Managers will increase the number of employment opportunities for VR and supported employment consumers.

As part of CWS DVR has accomplished the following:

- In partnership with VABIR, DVR has hired and manages thirteen Business Account Managers (BAM) serving all twelve AHS districts. The BAM staff is dedicated to generic employer outreach and job development on behalf of all AHS populations.
- The BAM staff coordinates local CWS employment teams statewide made up of supported employment program staff and vocational staff serving all AHS populations.
- DVR has created a CWS Governance Group representing four departments and seven divisions providing employment services for AHS consumers.
- In partnership with VABIR, DVR developed data systems for CWS including employer tracking through Salesforce and a consumer tracking system.

In FFY 13, DVR will continue to develop CWS by:

- Development of a systematic training program for employment specialists including all CWS partners. Training will be delivered through a state institution and will lead to a CWS certification.
- Implementation of an employer survey in 2012 to evaluate the impact of CWS, the BAMs, progressive employment and other innovations on the employer's perspective.
- Continue to support the local employment teams to develop cohesive local strategies for employer outreach and provide for training and personal development to the Business Account Managers.
- Continue to educate Agency Commissioners about the value of CWS.
- Evaluate initial baseline data from the CWS tracking tool and Salesforce.

Strategy 2: DVR will support field staff to manage and prioritize activities and workload.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 1, 3, 5 and 6

Planned Activities:

- DVR will continue the following ongoing processes:
  - Streamline administrative processes and reduce or redesign redundant paperwork.
  - DVR will acknowledge projects and committees that field staff are involved in, and ensure this is taken into account in DVR planning and management.
  - Complete work started by DVR transition counselors to develop strategies to manage expanding caseloads.

Strategy 3: DVR will improve communication with consumers regarding expectations for DVR services.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 1, 3, 5 and 6

Planned Activities

- DVR has developed a consistent statewide orientation to VR services and has been implemented in all twelve districts. The DVR Implementation Team will monitor the roll-out of this orientation and modify the material as needed.
- DVR will develop and train counselors on a consistent set of vocational assessment tools, including functional assessments, to better assist consumers in determining appropriate vocational goals.
- DVR has begun implementation of its training grant initiative to train DVR counselors about the effective use of labor market information to inform consumers on viable vocational goals. Dr. Harrington has visited two DVR offices to evaluate the current knowledge level of staff and will keynote the Employment Institute III in FFY 12. He will continue his work through FFY 13.

Strategy 4: Through the implementation of performance-based contracting, DVR will improve employment outcomes of CRT, DS and JOBS supported employment programs.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 9 and 10

Planned Activities

- DVR will monitor the results of the first year of performance-based grants with the supported employment programs including financial incentives and penalties and refine as needed. The performance standards include rehabilitation targets, employment rate targets and consumer earnings targets. The grants include a corrective action and earn-back provision, allowing programs to recoup penalties if they demonstrate significant improvement.

Strategy 5: DVR will increase vertical and horizontal communication within VR through implementation of videoconferencing in all twelve districts and central office.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 5 and 6

Planned Activities

- DVR implemented videoconferencing technology in all six DVR district offices and central office. This technology will be used for staff training, cross-district team meetings (transition counselors, benefits counselors, etc.), regional manager meetings, and for statewide all-staff meetings. It will also allow district offices to meet with each other for medical consults, peer review and sharing of best practices. The system had to be put on hold due to Hurricane Irene and the flooding of the State Office Complex in Waterbury where the DVR Central Office is located. DVR is working to restore the capacity for the six sites in addition to central office and plans to expand to all twelve district offices.

Strategy 6: DVR will increase capacity to serve underserved populations through the implementation of special projects.

Goal and Priority Area: 7

Planned Activities

- DVR has implemented the General Assistance (GA) Project statewide with six GA VR counselors and eight VABIR employment specialists. The Vermont General Assistance program provides emergency assistance for

individuals with no other source of support. DVR and the Vermont Division of Economic Services (ESD) have determined that up to 90% of chronic GA participants are persons with disabilities and thus are VR-eligible. For VR-eligible individuals, the GA project will provide general VR services plus intensive job placement supports through designated employment specialists. Initial results are very positive. DVR will evaluate first year results in FFY 12 and make adjustments to the program as needed.

- DVR recently implemented Youth Employment Specialists in four sites paired with transition counselors. Since 2000, DVR has substantially increased the number of specialized DVR rehabilitation counselors serving youth in transition. This has resulted in a major expansion in the number of youth in transition served by DVR from 828 in 2000 to 2,338 in 2010. To respond to this need, DVR is piloting a Youth Employment Specialist position in four sites. DVR has contracted with TransCen to evaluate this pilot.
- DVR has been approached by the Office of Child Support (OCS) to join the CWS efforts. OCS has indicated that judges have no recourse for unemployed individuals owing child support. DVR believes this is another population of individuals with significant barriers to employment. DVR will pilot a statewide model of assessment through Invest EAP and referral to DVR for those individuals with disabilities. DVR will work with OCS to evaluate the EAP assessment results to determine future service needs.

Strategy 7: DVR will continue to become a data-driven organization.

Goal and Priority Areas: All

Planned Activities

- DVR will complete the development of a flexible and user-friendly electronic case management system. DVR signed a contract for the development of an electronic case management system with S3 Incorporated on May 2, 2011. The project was kicked off in May, 2011. Development of the case management system is taking longer than anticipated due to the complexity of the process and DVR's commitment to ensure a quality product that will be effectively used by DVR staff. DVR anticipates roll-out of the system in FFY 2013.
- DVR will develop and implement a "dashboard" to track case service expenditures and Ticket to Work payments by region, district and counselor.

Strategy 8: DVR will systematically recognize exemplary staff performance throughout DVR, and will recognize the roles of all team members in supporting the customer.

Goal and Priority Areas: 5 & 6

Planned Activities

- The DVR Training Coordinator will seek staff input through the Implementation Team and the staff satisfaction survey to help define high performance and identify meaningful methods of recognition.
- The DVR management team will increase use of the merit bonus system.
- DVR will develop a systematic mechanism to collect local success stories and best practices and share what works within the organization.

Strategy 9: DVR will explore strategies to diversify the DVR caseload.

Goal and Priority Areas: 1, 2, 3 and 4

Planned Activities

- With increased employer outreach through CWS, DVR is finding more and more job opportunities that the agency cannot provide consumers to fill. Anecdotal reports suggest VR-eligible individuals with higher levels of training and education are not accessing the VR program, even though they could benefit from it. DVR will pilot increased outreach to the medical provider community in two districts and will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach to expand DVR services.

Strategy 10: DVR will implement strategies designed to enable VR consumers to access higher wage employment through short-term training and better use of labor market data.

Goal and Priority Areas: 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6

- Since FFY 2009, DVR has set aside ARRA funds to support short-term training opportunities such as CDL and LNA programs. Also DVR has increased funding dedicated to post-secondary college programs. While there is anecdotal information suggesting these strategies are improving consumer outcomes, DVR has not studied the data. Therefore, in FFY 2012 DVR will evaluate the impact of funding short-term training and post-secondary

education on employment outcomes.

- In FFY 2012, DVR plans to train staff to better use labor market information to help consumers make the best possible decisions regarding their career choices. DVR will be contracting with nationally-recognized expert Paul Harrington to help us with this project. DVR received a training grant to fund Paul Harrington's participation.

Strategy 11: DVR will implement activities designed to reduce the number of individuals who are closed in a status 28 (not employed).

Goal and Priority Areas: 1, 3, 6 & 7

Planned Activities

- DVR will conduct comprehensive evaluation of status 28 closures to identify any specific trends or issues that DVR might need to address.
- It was identified in the Needs Assessment that individuals with alcohol and substance abuse disorders have significantly worse outcomes than other populations. Through the DVR training grant, DVR will provide training options for DVR staff around providing effective services for this population.

Strategy 12: DVR will partner with the Vermont Department of Labor around employer outreach and providing employment training options for dual VR/DOL customers.

Goal and Priority Areas: 4 & 8

- DVR and DOL will, where appropriate, implement coordinated approach to employer outreach through CWS.
- DVR and DOL will implement of a continuum of progressive employment options (job shadows, training placements and OJT arrangements) with VR and WIA funding.

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 VT Assistive Technology Program is housed withing DVR and provides assessment for individuals with disabilities to determine appropriate AT for home and the workplace. The AT Program also operates two try-out centers that provide statewide coverage. VR Counselors are able to refer individuals for assessment and equipment loans/try-outs.

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.

Most of the minorities living in VT reside within Chittenden County, served by the Burlington district office. There are several organizations within Burlington that serve individuals who are minorities, and their employment staff are members of the local CWS team. As members, they are able to assist their consumers to find employment and benefit from the team outreach to local employers.

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

DVR has a close working relationship with the VT Association for Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR), with their employment staff co-located within DVR district offices. The VABIR Director attends monthly meetings of the DVR Management Team. Vermont has a system of Designated Agencies that provide supported employment services to individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with severe and persistent

mental illness. DVR provides annual grants to these agencies to provide supported employment services to DVR customers. DVR has recently initiated performance-based grants to VABIR and the Designated Agencies that seek to improve outcomes for the individuals they serve.

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

One of the strategies described above is to analyze data on those individuals closed unsuccessfully in status 28. In collaboration with the SRC, DVR will look for any trends that might inform a change in procedures or services and increase the percentage of individuals closing with successful employment outcomes.

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

DVR has reached out to the VR Dept. of Labor to coordinate employer outreach and braid progressive employment options. Currently, DVR holds the grant to VDOL to provide services to the Reach Up population, and these staff sit on the Creative Workforce Solutions employment teams. DVR and VDOL managers at the local level continue to collaborate wherever possible to serve the employer customer.

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.

See the first section of this attachment above. Strategies described include:

- \* Efforts to achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1)
- \* Continued efforts to solidify Creative Workforce Solutions, an innovation and expansion activity
- \* Efforts to increase the employment outcomes of individuals served in the supported employment programs

This screen was last updated on Jun 26 2012 12:02PM by Susan Wells

## 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 2011 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.

4.11 (e) (2) Evaluation and reports of progress: Evaluation of the extent to which goals in 4.11 (c) (1) identified in the FFY 2010 State Plan were achieved.

The following summary provides an update on Vermont DVR's progress toward achieving the goals and priorities identified in the FFY 2010 State Plan. Last year updates were made to the goals and priorities, and in most cases the targets identified call for data in FFY 12. Where 2011 data is available, that has been indicated.

Goal and Priority 1: Consumer satisfaction with DVR services will increase

Measure: Biennial consumer satisfaction survey.

Target: DVR will maintain overall consumer satisfaction at or above the 2008 level of 89% in the 2010/11 survey.

Actual Data for 2011: Overall consumer satisfaction was measured at 91% in the 2010/2011 consumer satisfaction survey.

Next Data Point: This survey will be repeated in the fall of 2012 and results will be published in early 2013.

Goal and Priority 2: Consumer earnings will increase beyond the rate of inflation

Measures: RSA Performance Indicator 1.5: DVR wages compared to state average, and 1.6: own income as primary source of support.

Targets:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.5: DVR consumer wages will increase from 60% of state average to 65% of state average.

RSA Performance Indicator 1.6: DVR will increase the percentage of consumers achieving self-support from 43.1% to 53%.

Actual Data for FFY 2011:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.5 for FFY 2011: 61%, a drop from 62% in FFY 2010.

DVR did not achieve the 65% goal and actually saw a one percentage point drop. We believe this is not a significant change and is due to the economic downturn. DVR exceeds the federal standard.

RSA Performance Indicator 1.6 for FFY 2011: 45%, an increase from 44% in FFY 2010.

As stated in last year's State Plan, DVR has not been able to meet the federal standard. We have analyzed this issue over the years and found that two Vermont VR practices impact this measure:

- The high proportion of consumers served through supported employment. Many of the individuals served through supported employment programs have very significant developmental or mental health disabilities. A high proportion work very part-time to supplement their benefits.
- DVR serves a significant proportion of consumers who are already working and who are already self-supporting. These individuals cannot be included in the calculation.

To meet this standard DVR would have to reduce the number of individuals served in these two categories. We do not believe this would be the right thing to do.

Goal and Priority 3: More consumers will be employed and the rate at which consumers maintain employment will increase

Measures:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.2: Percentage of DVR consumers achieving an employment outcome.

Vermont Unemployment Insurance data to track employment retention post-DVR closure.

Targets:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.2: DVR consumers achieving an employment outcome will increase from 65% to 67%.

Percentage of DVR consumers who retain employment two years post-closure will increase from 69% to 80% as measured by Vermont Department of Labor Wage Data.

Actual Data for FFY 2011:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.2: DVR consumers achieving an employment outcome for FFY 2011 was 60%.

Regarding Performance Indicator 1.2, DVR noted the percentage of consumers declined from 66.77% in FFY 2008 to 61% in FFY 2009 to 60% in FFY 2010. This percentage stayed the same in FFY 2011. We have no doubt the economic downturn contributed to this decline. Regardless, DVR and the SRC have committed in the FFY 2012 State Plan to take a deeper look at consumers closed without an employment outcome and to implement strategies to address the issue.

In this context it is also important to note the total number of employment outcomes DVR has achieved has remained steady or actually increased over the past five years as follows:

1,452 in FFY 2006

1,456 in FFY 2007

1,523 in FFY 2008

1,480 in FFY 2009

1,528 in FFY 2010

1,622 in FFY 2011

Job retention for VR consumers two years post-closure increased slightly to 70% in 2010. We know that this retention statistic is an underestimate because it is based on Vermont Department of Labor Wage Data, which does not include out-of-state employment, federal employment and self employment.

Goal and Priority 4: Vermont employers will increase their use of DVR as an employment agency through Creative Workforce Solutions.

Measure: DVR tracking of employer contacts and employers hiring DVR consumers statewide.

Targets: DVR established in FFY 2010 a data system for tracking employer contacts. This system will be used by employment consultants statewide to track employer contacts.

After establishing baselines DVR intends to:

- (a) Increase the aggregate number of employers engaged with DVR by 10%
- (b) Increase the number of employers who initiate contact with DVR by 10%

Actual Data for FFY 2011:

As noted in other sections of the State Plan Amendment, DVR selected a commercial solution for tracking employer outreach. Salesforce is a commercial customer relations tool that is used extensively for sales and marketing in the private sector. During FFY 2010 DVR hired a programmer to modify Salesforce specifically for the Creative Workforce Solutions initiative. The tool was introduced to users in December 2010 and broadly implemented in the spring of 2011. User feedback has been very positive.

In FFY 2012 we expect to be able to collect baseline data on employer contacts across Agency of Human Services programs including VR, supported employment for individuals with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, TANF programs, and Corrections employment programs. Data for the calendar year 2011 indicate

there were over 3,000 unique employer contacts entered into Salesforce.

Goal and Priority 5: DVR employees will be satisfied with their jobs

Measures: Results from biennial DVR staff satisfaction survey.

Targets: DVR staff satisfaction will be maintained at 95% (2007 rating) or higher.

Actual Data for FFY 2011:

Staff are surveyed every two years, with the next survey scheduled for the fall of 2012. The findings below are from the 2010 staff satisfaction survey as reported in last year's State Plan.

- 92% indicated they were satisfied with their jobs.
- 86% agreed they got enough information to do their jobs properly.
- 94% had a clear understanding of how their work contributed to the mission of the agency.
- 93% felt supported by co-workers.
- 82% had trust and confidence in the organization.
- 97% felt that customer service was a priority for the organization.

Goal and Priority 6: All DVR staff will have the skills and competencies to do their jobs

Measures:

Feedback from staff on biennial DVR staff satisfaction survey

Feedback from consumers on biennial consumer satisfaction survey

Targets: In 2007 93% of staff said they had enough information to do their jobs. This will increase to 95% by 2010.

Actual Data for FFY 2011:

As indicated above, DVR will not complete another staff survey until the fall of 2012. In 2010 the percentage of staff who said they had enough information to do their jobs decreased to 86%. This may be related to the 14% reduction in staff during 2009, including the elimination of the vocational evaluation unit.

Goal and Priority 7: Increase capacity to serve un-served or underserved populations, specifically:

- Individuals with measured IQs between 70 and 80
- Individuals with TBI
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities
- Individuals in the Autism Spectrum range of disorders
- Individuals with other significant disabilities who require case management services
- Individuals exiting the correctional system
- Individuals with alcohol/substance dependence/abuse disorders (AODA)
- Individuals with disabilities who are veterans
- Individuals with disabilities who are not primary English speakers

Measures:

Increase in access to case management services for non-categorical populations.

Decrease in status 8, 28, and 30 closures for these populations.

Targets:

Implementation of Pilot with Developmental Disabilities Council and VABIR to serve youth with Autism Spectrum disorders in Burlington.

Partner with Department of Corrections to replicate VABIR/VR Pilot designed to provide job placement for

individuals with disabilities who are exiting the correctional system.

Implement the Youth Employment Specialist model to serve youth with cross disabilities through the Institute of Educational Sciences grant and/or Congressional Earmarks

Actual Outcomes:

With funding from the Developmental Disabilities Council and DVR's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, DVR implemented the pilot to serve youth with Autism Spectrum disorders in both White River Jct. and Burlington. These pilots were very successful and included a train-the-trainer model. Groups were run in these two districts and a curriculum developed. A resource library was also developed. Both the curriculum and the resources were distributed to special education coordinators statewide.

DVR has partnered with VABIR, the Department of Corrections, and Community High School of VT to provide employment services to individuals with a recent history of corrections supervision. This pilot of five additional Offender Reentry Employment Specialists has been very successful, with early data indicating substantial employment outcomes. In July of 2012, DVR will have collected a year's worth of data and will be better able to report successful outcomes.

DVR recently established four pilot sites for Youth Employment Specialists to serve youth with disabilities. These specialists are working with the DVR Transition Counselors and youth participants to develop plans that will include a variety of work-based experiences, possibly post-high school education and/or vocational training, and eventual employment. These youth and young adults have open DVR cases and have expressed interest in employment and/or vocational training to further their career options. DVR will evaluate these new pilots over the coming year through a formal evaluation to be conducted by TransGen, Inc.

Goal and Priority 8: DVR will work in collaboration with the VT Department of Labor (VDOL) to ensure people with disabilities have access to services through the state workforce investment system

Measures:

Tracking of number of people with disabilities who are accessing the DOL system

Tracking of DVR consumers accessing DOL services.

Targets:

DOL provided baseline data for 2007. 750 people with disabilities in total accessed One Stop Services and 277 entered employment. For FFY 2010 this will increase to 800 served and 350 entering employment.

Actual Outcomes: We are no longer able to collect this data from the VT DOL. Subsequent goals and priorities will focus on other aspects of our collaboration to ensure people with disabilities receive quality services.

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.

Goal and Priority 9: DVR will work to improve the outcomes of community-supported employment providers serving individuals with developmental disabilities and cross disabilities.

Measures:

Number of status 26 closures achieved through the supported employment programs

Total number of people with developmental disabilities employed with supports

Targets:

Total status 26 closures in State Fiscal Year 2010: 170

Status 26 closure goal for State Fiscal Year 2012: 200

In State Fiscal Year 2010 a total of 955 people were working in supported employment programs. This will increase to 1,000 by State Fiscal Year 2012.

**Actual Outcomes:**

DVR received mixed data findings regarding the supported employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. The total number of VR consumers achieving an employment outcome (status 26 closures) increased from 163 in SFY 2008 to 178 in SFY 2009, and decreased to 170 in SFY 2010 and again to 137 during SFY 2011. The total number of people with developmental disabilities working in supported employment in Vermont increased from 909 during SFY 2009 to 955 during SFY 2010 to 973 during SFY 2011.

While Vermont did not meet the targets established in the FFY 2010 State Plan, we feel these results are creditable given the economic environment. Given the extent of the economic crisis since 2008, the supported employment programs have done well to maintain the level of employment outcomes (status 26 closures) and the total number of people employed.

In addition, the State Division of Disability and Aging Services (DDAS) has continued to place a strong emphasis on supported employment services despite tight fiscal times. For example, DDAS continues to include employment as a funding priority in the system of care plan for people with developmental disabilities. While recent DDAS budget rescissions of Medicaid dollars have led to reduced supported employment ongoing support services, they have not yet been reduced at the same level as other community support services. Anecdotally, we have heard that it is becoming more difficult for individuals exiting secondary school to obtain funding for employment supports. Every year, there is significant debate in the legislature about the number of newly DS-eligible individuals that the State can afford to provide funding for. Community supports cost less than employment supports which leads to an inclination to allocate funding in a manner that provides for the maximum hours of support with an individual per week. DDAS holds public hearings each spring to review options for changing the system of care and its related funding priorities plan as a response to the current fiscal climate. There continues to be a concern that DDAS may feel forced to restrict access to Medicaid-supported employment services. DDAS and DVR leadership have met meeting regularly to review this issue and to strategize on how the two State agencies can facilitate improved employment outcomes for Vermont Developmental Services participants.

DDAS and DVR jointly sponsored the establishment of a statewide supported employment leadership team during SFY 2009. This team had a purpose of developing an actionable supported employment strategic plan for implementation during SFY 2010. The budget threats during SFY 2010 caused this group to put itself on hiatus and ongoing fiscal threats have caused this group to remain on hiatus. DDAS also maintains a full-time staff person, Jennie Masterson, focused on supported employment. Ms. Masterson works closely with the DVR Supported Employment Coordinator in jointly monitoring supported employment programs.

Vermont VR received 1.58 million dollars of ARRA stimulus funding. We actively engaged with the network of supported employment providers so that they have had meaningful access to the employment initiatives funded by ARRA. Vermont community supported employment providers accessed these resources to augment their efforts to facilitate competitive employment. The ARRA allotment was expended during 2011. DVR felt results were positive and decided to allocate a portion of its 110 budget towards continued support of supported employment providers to support meaningful employment experiences that lead to employment (over and above the pre-ARRA array of employment experiences).

Ticket to Work (TTW) revenue is beginning to become a notable revenue source for Vermont DS employment providers. \$102,518 was collected during calendar year 2011 which will be added to their SFY 2013 grants. \$30,799 of this calendar year 2011 revenue (which is the community provider share according to VT DVR's joint Employment Network agreement) will be disbursed to providers of employment services to persons with developmental disabilities. Vermont VR projects growth in this revenue source over the next few years.

**Goal and Priority 10:** DVR will work to improve the outcomes of community providers serving individuals with severe mental illness

**Measures:**

Number of status 26 closures achieved through supported employment programs for adults with psychiatric disabilities

Total number of people with psychiatric disabilities employed with supports

**Targets:**

Total 26 closures in State Fiscal Year 2010: 74

26 closure goal for State Fiscal Year 2012: 150

Actual Outcomes:

The VR Program Evaluation Unit (PEU) and Jerry Wood, the Supported Employment Coordinator, have been working together to improve the data collection and reporting procedures in order to eliminate the errors reported on in the FFY09 state plan. We believe the increased focus on accurate data collection and reporting is resulting in more accurate information. A current report indicates that during SFY11 VR served 592 individuals with psychiatric disabilities through supported employment programs with 78 resulting rehabilitations. We believe our reporting is more accurate for FFY11 than it was in FFY10. Jerry and the PEU plan on continuing their work for the rest of this fiscal year.

We have good data on the other measure, the total number of people with severe psychiatric disabilities who are employed. The total number of individuals with mental illness supported in employment decreased from 768 in SFY 2008 to 678 in SFY 2009 to 552 in SFY 2010 to 516 in SFY11. It is noteworthy that the overall enrollment of individuals with mental health disorders in Vermont's CRT programs (community mental health programs which house Vermont's supported employment programs for people with mental illness) decreased from 2928 individuals in SFY 2008 to 2,850 individuals in SFY 2009 to 2,736 individuals in SFY 2010 to 2,756 individuals in SFY11. The employment rate reflects a decrease in the percentage of CRT participants supported in employment from 26% in SFY 2008 to 24% in SFY 2009 to 20% in SFY 2010 to 19% in SFY11. DVR believes the overall number of individuals supported in employment is by far the more important measure of progress. The decrease is worrying because it suggests fewer individuals are getting jobs, let alone sustaining them. The Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH) is working closely with VR to facilitate a turnaround in this employment rate trend.

Information from the DVR/SRC Needs Assessment and anecdotal reports from field staff suggest that there are not sufficient numbers of employment staff within the community mental health agencies to provide the necessary supports. In addition, there continues to be significant turnover in some programs which represents a loss of experienced staff. During calendar year 2011 DMH increased the Medicaid unit rate for employment services to begin to address the disproportionate turnover of employment staff versus case management staff. It is too early to tell what impact this has had on provider agency wages or turnover of employment staff. Also it has been reported that some agencies or agency staff do not value employment as a core mental health service.

During the FFY11, DMH has asked VR for help as it applied for and received two grants, each with a focus of improving employment outcomes. DMH is currently implementing the first grant which has been labeled as a Transformation Grant and it aims to engage persons aged 18 - 26 in adult mental health services. The grant recognizes that surveys indicated that young people tend not to want to engage with the adult mental health system and their top priority tends to be becoming employed. The second grant was completed with the intention of facilitating increased engagement of mental health center treatment staff in recognizing that employment is critical to a person's recovery. This grant was known as the Supported Employment Champion Grant. There is evidence this grant succeeded in facilitating increased involvement of mental health treatment staff involved with employment services; developing stronger relationships with VR Work Incentives staff; evidenced by increased referrals to VR Work Incentives staff and supported employment services.

In response to the overall decrease in overall employment of individuals with mental illness along with the noted capacity issues, DVR has implemented a number of overlapping strategies including a DVR/DMH Mental Health and Employment Leadership Committee made up of state and agency staff and consumer representation. With financial assistance from Vermont's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG), the Leadership Group successfully framed and has been guiding a statewide strategic planning process that has led to a rollout of a five-year strategic plan. The MIG is supporting this rollout by providing for incentives and technical assistance for a community mental health provider who volunteers to develop a local strategic plan and/or an employment program action improvement plan which is based upon the results of an IPS (Individual Placement and Support) Fidelity Review. All ten of Vermont's mental health supported employment providers have been participating in this MIG-sponsored statewide routine implementation of IPS Fidelity Reviews to support the consistent implementation of supported employment processes which are based on the SAMHSA evidenced-based practice.

Additional continuous improvement activities are occurring to support the increase of successful supported employment outcomes for people with mental illness. DVR did a SWOT analysis of supported employment efforts specifically focusing on VR processes that lead to good outcomes. As a result, VR affirmed a set of process practices for VR counselors, managers and administrators which were formally implemented on October 1, 2009. At a one year statewide review in October 2010, VR managers and counselors affirmed that

the DVR supported process practices have been implemented statewide. VR and DMH have performed a preliminary review of the results of the State Health Authority Yardstick (SHAY) which is an evaluation of how well the state supports employment related activities within its mental health system. Recommendations received through the SHAY are informing DVR and DMH as they work with community mental health in improvement activities.

Vermont DVR's and DMH's concern about the declining employment participation rate of individuals with mental illness was validated in the recommendations of the SHAY. In partnership with DMH, DVR developed an array of performance incentives which were implemented July 1, 2010. Community mental health CRT programs are able to earn performance incentive payments based upon three measures: the percentage of CRT participants who are employed; the mean earnings of employed participants; and the percentage of employed participants who were unemployed more than six months before starting work. DVR and DMH developed a points system for determining the incentive amount. DMH and DVR evaluated the first year implementation of these performance standards with mixed conclusions. DVR was asked by the Vermont Agency of Human Services to spearhead an initiative to develop meaningful performance expectations for all AHS employment initiatives.

In concert with DMH the previously mentioned performance expectations were modified. The agreed upon measures were: the percentage of CRT participants employed; the average earnings per employed person per quarter; and the number of participants achieving successful employment (using the VR rehabilitation criteria as the standard of success). Both penalty and incentive target levels were set for each supported employment program related to incremental improvement based upon SFY11 results.

In addition, DVR and DMH continue to support training and technical assistance in evidence-based supported employment practices through the New Hampshire/Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center.

Ticket to Work revenue is beginning to provide a boost in resources and an incentive to increase outcomes for agencies. Vermont's supported employment providers received \$102,518 in TTW revenue (which is the community provider share according to VT DVR's joint Employment Network agreement) during SFY 2011 which was collected during calendar year 2011 which will be added to their SFY 2013 grants. \$50,910 of this calendar year 2011 revenue (provider share under DVR joint Employment Network agreement) will be disbursed to providers of employment services to persons with mental illness. While this amount represents a decrease from 2010 revenue, Vermont VR anticipates growth in this revenue source over the next few years as the economy continues to rebound.

### 3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2011.

Performance Indicator 1.1: DVR achieved 1,622 employment outcomes in FFY 11, 94 more than the previous year. DVR is very pleased with this accomplishment.

Performance Indicator 1.2: 60% of DVR consumers achieved an employment outcome, the same as the previous fiscal year. Although this meets the standard, there has been a decline in recent years, most likely due to the downturn of the economy. The SRC and DVR will be doing a study of those individuals closed in status 28 to determine if there are trends and what services might be improved.

Performance Indicator 1.3: DVR has consistently achieved a competitive employment rate of between 97% and 99%. In FFY 2011, the competitive employment rate was 99%. Vermont DVR does not support sheltered or non-competitive employment.

Performance Indicator 1.4: Because DVR has been in an order of selection we serve very few individuals who do not have a significant disability. Since 2003 on average 99% of consumers served have a significant disability. The number in FFY 2011 was 100%.

Performance Indicator 1.5: DVR's percentage dropped by one percentage, with VT still in an economic downturn during FFY 2011. However, DVR's consumer earnings are still well above the standard.

Performance Indicator 1.6: This measure increased from 44% in FFY 2010 to 45% in FFY 2011. Although still below the standard, this is a positive trend from the low of 40% in FFY 2009. DVR has analyzed the reasons for not meeting this federal standard and has found that two VT DVR practices impact this measure:

\* The high proportion of consumers served through supported employment. Many of the individuals served through supported employment programs have very significant developmental or mental health disabilities. A

high proportion work very part-time to supplement their benefits.

\* DVR serves a significant proportion of consumers who are already working and who are already self-supporting. These individuals cannot be included in the calculation.

To meet this standard, DVR would have to reduce the number of individuals served in these two categories. We do not believe this would be the right thing to do.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2011.

Early in 2010 the Division was invited by the Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) to develop a proposal to redesign employment services across departments. Legislature approved this redesign, and it was put into statute in June 2010.

The VR redesign has implemented a consolidated and coordinated approach to employment services under a single entity called Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS). The goal of CWS is to provide equal access to meaningful work in the competitive job market for all AHS program participants. It also offers employers a point of contact for coordinated job development and placement services across AHS programs. All AHS employment services are coordinated through CWS and employer contacts statewide are being managed through a common account management system using Salesforce, a commercial sales tool. At the local level CWS Business Account Managers coordinate employer outreach through local employment teams built on the existing employment coalitions.

DVR has seen a positive impact on employment outcomes for AHS consumers across populations including individuals in the Reach Up program, community mental health services, corrections, and developmental services. Services were established for individuals exiting the Correctional system where previously there was very little in the way of employment support. In addition, individuals served through the General Assistance Program providing emergency benefits to individuals not able to work due to medical conditions are now being assessed, and those with disabilities are receiving DVR services. Performance based contracting for supported employment services has already shown promise and an increase in employment outcomes for individuals within the supported employment system.

Baseline is being collected this year and will be used to determine the effectiveness of CWS in the future. Anecdotal reports indicate that employment staff across the Agency of Human Services find the local employment teams very beneficial in expanding the job opportunities for their consumers, and employers have greatly appreciated the coordinated outreach efforts and the increased access to potential candidates for their job openings.

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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

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

In State Fiscal Year 2011, the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation funded thirty-seven (37) Supported Employment grants serving four distinct disability groups: 1) fourteen (14) programs for individuals with developmental disabilities; 2) ten (10) programs for adults with significant mental illness; 3) fourteen (14) programs for youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities; and 4) three (3) programs for individuals with traumatic brain injury. This funding resulted in 2,540 people with significant disabilities being served in supported employment with close to 500 people becoming employed in the competitive job market.

DVR is able to support individuals with the most significant disabilities to find and keep stable competitive work through its valuable relationship with the Division of Disability and Aging Services (DDAS) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

#### Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

DVR works closely with DDAS to provide supported employment services and DVR funds are viewed, along with Medicaid funds, as an integral part of the overall employment budget for individuals with developmental disabilities. This funding blends DVR funding with individual Medicaid Waiver funds to create a seamless structure of upfront and ongoing support. DVR funds are specifically allocated to provide assessment, training, and placement services until closure, with Medicaid Waiver funds providing the necessary long-term follow-up.

DVR and DDAS no longer support employment workshops and Vermont closed its last workshop for individuals with developmental disabilities in 2002. That same year, Vermont was ranked 1 in the nation in the number of people with developmental disabilities who received supported employment to work per 100,000 of the state population.<sup>1</sup> In the past two years, the numbers of individuals with developmental disabilities employed in competitive jobs have continued to increase.

#### Adults with Significant Mental Illness

DVR has also worked closely with DMH to support the integration of employment into the broad array of clinical mental health services available to individuals with significant mental health issues. Similar to its relationship with DDAS, DVR funding is blended with DMH capitated Medicaid to provide a seamless structure of upfront and ongoing support. DVR funds are specifically allocated to provide assessment, training, and placement services until closure, with the DMH capitated Medicaid funds providing the necessary long-term follow-up.

In 2002, the Vermont Performance Indicator Project noted that the employment rate for individuals who received VR services combined with mental health services (through DMH) was more than twice the rate of individuals who only received mental health services.<sup>2</sup>

DVR and DMH have also worked closely to support evidence based supported employment. Vermont was the first state to pilot a Johnson and Johnson-Dartmouth initiative, now in 13 states, which continues to demonstrate that adherence to the principles of evidence based supported employment are key to increasing employment rates.

#### Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disturbances

The JOBS Program is an innovative supported employment and intensive case management service for youth with emotional and behavioral disturbances (EBD) that uses work as a means to reach this challenging population. As a result of a unique partnership between the Department of Mental Health's Child, Adolescent

and Family Unit (CAFU), the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and contract agencies, the JOBS Program is operational in ten (14) sites across the state.

JOBS involves employers and the business community in meeting the needs of youth through intensive job development, placement, and on and off-site training support. JOBS differs from other traditional employment models by providing intensive case management services to assist in meeting other areas of need in a young person's life, e.g., dealing with legal issues, homelessness, drug/alcohol abuse, and probation and parole.

Within this model, DVR funds are used to provide the employment focus and upfront employment assessment, training, and placement services, while the case management and ongoing support is provided through state general funds (contributed by the different state departments noted above) which are matched to Medicaid through a fee-for-service arrangement with the CAFU in DMH.

This program continues to be very successful. Out of the 544 youth served by JOBS in 2010; 79% had a paid work experience, 35% had competitive paid employment lasting more than 90 Days, 52% got their high school diploma or GED and for those with past Corrections or Juvenile Justice involvement, only 25% re-offended.

#### Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury

DVR also works with the Division of Disability and Aging Services (DDAS) to provide seamless employment support to individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury. Similar to the collaboration that serves individuals with developmental disabilities, the DVR funds are used for the up-front assessment, training, and placement services, while individual Medicaid waiver funds are used to provide the ongoing support.

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1 The State of the States in Developmental Disabilities: 2002 Study Summary, Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities & Department of Psychiatry, University of Colorado, January 2004.

2 Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project, Vocational Rehabilitation and CRT Employment, November, 2002.

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## System Information

### System information

The following information is captured by the MIS.

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