

Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Combined State Plan - DVR Sections (a) through (q)

Dated November 17, 2015

Public comments can be sent to HarrietAnn Litwin at HarrietAnn.Litwin@state.de.us

To be considered, all comments must be received by Monday, December 7, 2015.

DVR Section (a)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Rehabilitation Council maintain open lines of communication. The DVR Director and Deputy Director participate in SRC meetings. The Director reports key activities to the SRC as a regular agenda item at each meeting. The SRC is kept abreast of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as it relates to new performance standards and the combined state plan with the DET and WDB. The SRC frequently designates a representative to participate in the state budget process for DVR, attending the DOL Budget Hearings with the Office of Management and Budget and the Delaware Legislature's budget hearings before the Joint Finance Committee. The State Rehabilitation Council is invited to comment on the state plan as part of the annual plan development process. The SRC recommendations for DVR policy and program improvements to be reflected in the combined state plan are received during the annual Effectiveness Evaluation, and delineated below.

The SRC comments related to the effectiveness of DVR in reference to the goals and priorities identified in FY15 on a scale of 1=low and 5=high are as follows:

1. Provide quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities. 4.79

*Continue current efforts.

*I would like more information about rehabilitation rates?

*I like the connection with industry to share standards and skills needed for employment.

*I like the vision to serve model...it sounds person centered vs. compliance based.

*Increased number of provided services is excellent.

2. Recruit new training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market. 4.5

*Continue efforts to recruit programs statewide to meet client needs, interests and abilities with a focus on programs offering certifications and diplomas.

*Keep recruiting the smaller programs too! Small training programs are able to deliver services as efficiently as the larger programs.

*Wonderful job training and working in the community. I like the diversity in employment training.

*This information needs to be shared with schools when students update career cruising every year.

*Great PETS summer programs. Can the data on students who applied to participate but were turned down due to a lack of sufficient slots be used in future grant applications? Use the data as proof of need?

*VR's interest in exploring the pathways model will significantly improve the effectiveness of the trainings.

*Increased number of services provided is excellent.

3. Provide transition services to more high school students with disabilities. 4.14

*DVR does a great job at transition services and PETS. Continue to look for opportunities to serve students with unique, innovative programs to support students in career pathways.

*Representative or DVR counselor attends the IEP meeting. Expand Project Search to Sussex County.

*Wished Voc Rehab coordinated with Special Educators to host WIOA transition workshops during school day. Youth self-advocates need to be included.

*Please see comment above re: data driving funding allocations. Transition is so very important and more than 7 transition counselors are necessary to allow every student a chance to transition into work/secondary education.

*Transition services are restricted by the DOE's counselors in high school by lack of understanding of career path services for students vs college oriented advisement.

*I wonder how many disabled students in the school systems could benefit from VR services. The identified 1000 is good. Increased numbers of services provided is very good.

*Provide workshop and conference information and materials to counselors, school resource personnel through organizations such as DE NASW (National Association of Social Workers) and the Mental Health Association. Goal: 4 presentations per year.

4. Other comments:

1. SRC Recommendation:

The SRC would like to see VR work with higher education in pre-service teacher training programs on what is transition, skills students with disabilities need for involvement.

Agency Response: DVR agrees with this recommendation.

This comment reflects the need for teachers and VR counselors and VR transition staff to work more closely to support students with disabilities towards career focused employment. Typically school educators and guidance counselors are very adept at supporting students towards college. However, students who are interested in an alternative to a 4-year degree need to be equally supported and validated and encouraged. DVR has recently hired a full time transition specialist (in addition to our statewide Transition Coordinator) to work in schools, in conjunction with counselors and teachers, to educate teachers and diagnosticians around the importance of employment for everyone, including students with special needs.

2. SRC Recommendation:

Transition services are restricted by the DOE counselors in high school due to a lack of understanding of “Career Pathways” services for students vs. college oriented advisement.

Agency Response: DVR agrees with the goal of this recommendation.

DVR agrees with this observation and as described above. We are committed to bringing Career Pathways counseling into the schools via our Transition Specialist and Statewide Transition Coordinator. Fostering independence and self-sufficiency comes with maximizing employment goals. Assisting the student with mapping an individualized Career Pathway is a goal for every student with a disability regardless of whether or not the student is college bound. One of DVR’s initiatives is to increase credential attainment via expanding training programs and by linking students with achievable credentials relevant to individual’s selected Career Pathway.

3. SRC Recommendation:

DVR should be cognizant to not lose focus on serving adults with disabilities-especially adults with physical disabilities. WIOA focuses heavily on transition students & PETS but adults disabled after age 18-24 are equally as important.

Agency Response: DVR agrees with this recommendation.

DVR recognizes that adults with disabilities, including adults with acquired physical disabilities, will continue to require services. The majorities of DVR’s counselors have served and will continue to serve, adults with disabilities. As part of DVR’s initiative to bring Career Pathways focused counseling throughout the agency, DVR counselors will be trained about how to use Career Pathways with adults with acquired disabilities. The concept of multiple entrance and exit points in Career Pathways is particularly relevant as individuals with acquired physical disabilities frequently have transferable skills that will enable them to move elsewhere in the career cluster or to a non-entry-level position on another Career Pathway.

4. SRC Recommendation:

Continue to expand employment-based training for transition students and expand Project Search to Sussex County.

Agency Response: DVR agrees with this recommendation.

DVR recognizes the importance of employment-based training for all transition students. DVR has made the expansion of Project SEARCH, Start On Success, and summer internship programming the focus of its Innovation and Expansion programs. DVR is expanding Project SEARCH into Sussex County in FY 2016 with the Nanticoke Hospital as the employer at which point DVR will have three site locations, one in each county. DVR has also funded 11 eight week summer internship programs statewide that served over 100 students and operated at nearly 100% capacity across programming. DVR intends to continue these internship programs and to expand to accommodate more students.

5. SRC Recommendation:

Increase the number of transition counselors to serve more students.

Agency Response: DVR agrees with this recommendation.

Although DVR is not able to hire additional full time transition counselors due the list of approved personnel, DVR does hire contractual and casual seasonal employees wherever possible to serve students and to assist the seven transition counselors. In addition, some counselors that serve primarily adults also liaison to a school program.

DVR Section (b): Waiver of Statewideness

This section is blank because Delaware DVR does not request this waiver.

DVR Section (c): Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development 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 development system with respect to:

- (1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;
- (2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;
- (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;
- (4) Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and
- (5) State use contracting programs.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) maintains relationships with other agencies, both public and private, that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DVR maintains cooperative agreements with public and private non-profit agencies such as programs that serve individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse disabilities, and community rehabilitation programs. Some of these agreements have been in effect for more than 20 years. The agreements provide for cooperation in key areas such as respective roles related to joint constituents, agency financial responsibilities including terms of reimbursement, liaison relationships to promote information flow, joint referral processes, and dispute resolution.

DVR maintains ongoing relationships with several councils throughout the state that have missions related to individuals with disabilities including the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), the Governor's Commission for Community Alternatives, the University of Delaware Center for Disability Studies, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, and the Governor's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (GCEEO). These councils address issues of common concern to the disability community. DVR's Director participates in the Governors Employment First Taskforce, which is responsible to monitor implementation of Delaware's Employment First Legislation. DVR participates with the SCPD, a coordinating council for all disability-related councils throughout the State. DVR participates on the DDC including its Adult Issues committee. DVR participates in the Governor's Task Force on Community Inclusion, a collaboration of state agencies, organizations and entities involved with issues relating to disabilities. The goal of the task force is to develop strategies to implement the Olmstead

principals, to assist people with disabilities to live more independently in the community, and to align the state's service delivery system with that goal. This task force has supported implementation of Medicaid for People with Disabilities (Medicaid Buy-in) in Delaware, increased public transportation, and has recently supported development of the Pathways Medicaid waiver program for people with disabilities.

As required by the Rehabilitation Act, DVR developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the public institutions of higher education in Delaware, specifically, Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC), Delaware State University, and the University of Delaware. DVR and DTCC have collaborated with a separate Memorandum of Understanding to provide supported education services to DVR clients who are enrolled in remedial education programs at DTCC. The program provides additional training in study skills, time management, study techniques, and accommodations necessary for students to be successful in the school environment.

DVR supports the Delaware Young Adults Advisory Council, a developing program for individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who are experiencing mental illness. The program is young-adult led and provides peer-to-peer interactions. The goal of the program is to empower young adults with mental illness to increase their input into and control over the services they receive.

DVR engages with the Technology Act through its interaction with the statewide system of Assistive Technology Resource Centers. DVR also has an active representative on the Assistive Technology Loan Advisory Board that is coordinated through the Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The AgrAbility Grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been a resource to DVR and rural Delawareans engaged in the State's agriculture labor sector. Although the AgrAbility Grant through USDA was not renewed for Delaware, resources exist with our partners at the University of Delaware, The Cooperative Extension Office, to provide expert advice to DVR and consumers engaged in agriculture employment in the State. Those services assist consumers in concert with contracted service providers of assistive technology to support and enhance employment outcomes.

Since 2011, DVR has had a memorandum of understanding with the Delaware Division of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with minor children under title IV-A of the Social Security Act (TANF) in order to:

- a. Determine the employment needs TANF recipients who have medical waivers through assessment and identifying services that foster employment and self-sufficiency.
- b. Create an unimpeded path of entry for eligible TANF recipients into DVR's programs directly from DSS and from other TANF funded employment and training providers.
- c. Create agreed upon communication pathways between the Divisions that maintains regular communication regarding shared clients.

- d. To provide funding to DVR to provide additional supports to TANF recipients as determined by family circumstances.

In October of 2012 the Division of Social Services, the Delaware Economic Development Office, and DVR entered into a MOU to create the Advancement through Pardon and Expungement (APEX) program to address barriers to employment for consumers with criminal histories. The APEX program assists consumers in the process of expungement and pardon of a criminal history to reduce the barriers of employment to seek high quality high demand employment. Youth who utilize the APEX program may regain access to financial support for postsecondary education. Those consumers who are eligible under the law for expungement and/or pardon are assisted throughout the process by APEX via form completion, filing, payment of finger printing and court documents and representation at court expungement hearings and/or Pardon Board Reviews.

In Delaware, the State Use Law requires that State agencies purchase goods and services from specific organizations that promote the employment and financial self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities. DVR, following the State Use Law, procures goods and services through the Delaware Industries for the Blind and the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

DVR Section (d): Coordination with Education Officials.

Describe:

- (1) 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 VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.
- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:
 - (A) 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;
 - (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;
 - (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - (D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has a strong relationship established with many transition stakeholders throughout the state. DVR collaborates with the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), including the Exceptional Children Resources and Career & Technical Education Work Groups as well as with the Local Education Agencies and Charter

Schools. DVR continues to participate in the State and Regional Transition Councils, the Delaware Community of Practice on Transition and the DOE Cadre meetings.

The School to Work Transition Program at DVR consists of eight Transition Counselors and four Transition Assistants throughout the state. Each counselor is assigned to specific school districts, charters and non-public schools in order to ensure students with disabilities are receiving VR services prior to exiting from high school. VR Counselors work with the students, primarily in the schools, to develop their Individualized Plan for Employment and plan for services related to their post-high school employment goals and to provide students with career exploration and vocational counseling and guidance, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. In addition, VR Transition Counselors attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings to explain services and make recommendations to assist the student, family and school staff with transition planning and career preparation.

For the past two years, DVR has been a regular participant in the monthly DOE Cadre Meetings in which 12 of the 19 school districts send teams ranging from Administrators, Special Education and Transition Coordinators, and middle and high school teachers from within their districts. In May 2015, DOE and DVR held a cadre meeting with the charter schools throughout the state with the purpose of establishing regular meetings in the upcoming year. At a minimum, the DVR Transition Coordinator attends each meeting to provide schools with information and support related to DVR services for students with disabilities. It is an opportunity for all DVR Transition staff to receive training and technical assistance provided by DOE and for Counselors to work with teams from their assigned schools to develop goals for collaboration, allowing VR to be further integrated in the school processes, procedures and resources and enhancing transition services for students with disabilities at the state and local level.

Throughout the school year, DVR works closely with the local schools to develop and participate in student and parent information sessions, career and college fairs and general transition fairs. These events serve to inform current consumers of DVR and transition services as well as to provide outreach to younger students and families who may not know about or be receiving VR services yet.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with the DOE and other organizations on a variety of other initiatives to facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities. Some of these initiatives include the annual Transition Conference, Customized Employment Bootcamp, Project SEARCH and the Start on Success program (SOS).

DVR and DOE, in collaboration with the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) and the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), plan and financially support the statewide Transition Conference which continues to draw over 600 attendees, nearly half of whom are transition students. In the spring of 2015, DVR and DOE held the semi-annual Customized Employment Bootcamp for school personnel, DVR staff, community rehabilitation program (CRP) staff and other state agency personnel. This is a long standing training program focused on employment strategies for working with individuals with disabilities, especially high school students and those requiring supported employment services.

The Start on Success Program (SOS) is collaboration among a variety of partners including DVR, DOE, community businesses, local school districts and Humanim, a community rehabilitation program. The 2014-2015 school-year marked the second year of SOS which is successful employment assistance program targeting three main factors for finding and keeping employment: 1) Career Readiness, 2) Experience, and 3) Job Retention. The major focus is a four-month paid internship in a business where students learn on site experience through various work opportunities. Students are mentored by current employees at the business and supported by SOS staff from Humanim and the VR Counselor. Three school districts participated with a total of 26 students in the program and the businesses were expanded to 3 YMCA locations and the VA Hospital.

Project SEARCH is another example of a strong collaboration with DVR, DOE, local schools, businesses and a CRP. It was expanded beyond New Castle County (Christiana Hospital Site) during the 2014-2015 school year to include Kent County (Bayhealth Hospital Site). In addition, it went from being offered in one school district to being open to all districts within each of the 2 counties, increasing enrollment from 13 total graduates in 2015 to 22 enrolled for the current school year.

In order to reach more transition students at a younger age (summer prior to senior year or younger), DVR worked with many of the CRPs, training vendors, local businesses and a local university to develop summer programs specifically related to Pre-Employment Transition Services activities. Eleven programs were selected including paid or unpaid internships and job shadows, career preparation, skills training and college exploration. Over 100 students participated in the programs, some of whom obtained employment as a result of their experience. DVR worked closely with the local schools to ensure students were informed of the opportunities prior to summer break. Some schools provided students with transportation to and from the programs to ensure they could participate in the opportunity. DVR is anticipating an expansion of the pilot for the 2015-2016 school year and summer.

There is continued collaboration between DVR and Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) in the initiative to provide intensive educational supports for graduating transition students enrolled in remedial programs at DTCC. The supported education project provides workshops in Math, English and Reading to transition youth, along with some additional specialized study skills training. Over the years, the initiative has grown from one campus to all of the four DTCC campuses statewide, and DVR has started a pilot program in New Castle County by identifying a College VR Counselor who works primarily on the Wilmington and Stanton campuses. This initiative began in August 2015 in order to provide additional VR supports to college students and allow the high school transition counselors to begin working with transition students prior to their senior year.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) within the Department of Labor holds an interagency agreement with the Exceptional Children & Early Childhood Education Group, Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), Local Education Agencies (LEA) and Charter Schools. The agreement outlines the commitment of DVR and DDOE to ensure the transition of individuals who are potentially eligible for DVR services from the receipt of educational services

to vocational rehabilitation services in a programmatically sound manner which reduces the disruption of services to the individual.

Delaware has a strong collaboration between DVR and Education. The DVR Transition Coordinator works closely with the DOE Education Associate to facilitate meetings, develop training, and plan for transition services statewide. There are many opportunities for DVR to interact with DOE and LEAs/Charters whether through meetings, training, email or phone calls. In addition, DVR often participates in outreach events through the schools and other state agencies to insure students and families are familiar with a variety of transition related services and resources including pre-employment students for potentially eligible transition students who have IEPs and 504 plans. Regular communication is encouraged and supported to insure proper outreach and connection to services that are critical to the successful transition of students with disabilities.

The cooperative agreement insures DVR is part of the School Transition Team and provides all entities with regular opportunities to share information, provide technical assistance, and outreach to students and support students with their post-school goals. Due to the structure of the DVR transition program in which VR Counselors are assigned to schools, and in order to insure timely eligibility determinations and development of individualized plans for employment, there is regular interaction between DVR, transition students, and school personnel. DVR Transition Counselors work with the students, primarily in the schools, to develop their Individualized Plan for Employment and plan for services related to their post-high school employment goals and to provide students with career exploration and vocational counseling and guidance, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. Counselors have, at minimum, monthly meetings with students at the schools; they attend IEP meetings and have opportunities to communicate with school personnel. DVR Transition Counselors attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings to explain services and make recommendations to assist the student, family and school staff with transition planning and career preparation. School personnel assist Counselors with obtaining space within the school and accessing students during the school day. Information is easily shared among all the parties and allows for everyone involved to be aware of and supporting the student's plan and goals.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with the DOE and other organizations on a variety of other initiatives to facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities and provide pre-employment transition services. Some of these initiatives include the annual Transition Conference, Customized Employment Bootcamp, Project SEARCH and the Start on Success program (SOS). The monthly cadre meetings and regional transition meetings, in which all districts and VR Transition Staff are invited, are other opportunities to provide training and share information.

The cooperative agreement also outlines the financial responsibilities for both DVR and DOE. It emphasizes the adherence to the legal obligations of both agencies as delineated and required by each individual's plan and requires collaboration when planning to insure there is no duplication of services. Once again, the strong relationship between DVR and DOE has allowed for very successful sharing of resources to insure transition services are provided in an efficient and effective manner.

DVR Section (e): Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations.

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

In July, 2013 DVR opened up solicitations for requests for proposals (RFPs) to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. The solicitation process was advertised through Delaware's electronic purchasing site, bids.gov. Proposals were solicited and awarded for the following services: job development, placement and retention services; employment preparation services, community based work assessment services, job coaching services, job coaching for individuals communicating with ASL, behavioral analysis and support services, supported employment services, assistive technology services, vocational training services, and other services. Prior to the issuing of the solicitations to bid, service descriptions were revised based upon evaluation of the effectiveness of services, and recommendations of best practices from DVR Counselors and Vendors.

Effective October 1, 2013, DVR established Purchase of Service Agreements (PSAs) with 43 community based service providers, private and non-profit programs to provide vocational rehabilitation services and training to people with disabilities in Delaware.

It was determined that certain consumer groups and certain geographic areas had additional service needs; therefore, in May 2014 a supplemental RFP for supported employment, and job placement services with ASL was advertised. Seven proposals were received with three specifically to serve counties with fewer providers for consumers. As a result of successful negotiations DVR increased community based service providers to 50 statewide. It has been determined that an additional supplemental RFP be published in late 2015 or early 2016 to increase both competitive and supported employment services to meet the diverse needs of consumers and increase capacity. The RFP is intended to seek services that reflect the WIOA legislation with respect to Career Pathways and model service delivery to achieve that goal.

In the fall of 2012, DVR and the Delaware Department of Education collaborated with Goodwill of Delaware, Christiana Care Network, and Red Clay School District to pilot Project SEARCH in Delaware. After a long planning period, a second Project SEARCH site began in the fall of 2014 in Kent County Delaware, at Bayhealth Medical Center. DVR published a Request for Proposal for both SEARCH sites beginning in the fall of 2014. Contracts were awarded and services implemented in August of 2014. Community Integrated Services and Autism Delaware, Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (POW&R) jointly provide Project SEARCH programming for both Bayhealth Medical Center in Kent County and Christiana Care Network in New Castle County, collaborating with Dover and Red Clay school districts. The first Project SEARCH site, at the Christiana Medical Center Hospital just completed its third year of services. It is a highly successful, highly regarded program in Delaware. Project SEARCH is now operating at or near capacity; a positive increase of service delivery to transition youth in two of the three counties in Delaware with an aspirational goal of expansion in 2016 to Sussex County.

The Start on Success (SOS) Program, a model similar to SEARCH, is very successful in the State of Maryland. The program combines classroom training in job readiness and soft-skills, with skill training at an employer site, using onsite supports. After a review of the program and its successes, Delaware DVR decided to pilot Start on Success Program to Delaware. In FY 2013, DVR contacted Humanim, the service provider administering the SOS program in Maryland. A Cooperative Agreement was developed and in January 2014 Humanim implemented the SOS program in Delaware with the YMCA as the employer. The Program expanded to a second site at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Elsmere, Delaware in the fall of 2014.

In response to WIOA, DVR initiated Transition Youth Summer Pilot programs in the April 2015 through an informal RFP process highlighting the tenants of the Pre-Employment Transition Services legislation. Fourteen (14) proposals were received and eleven (11) contracts were awarded as a result. In June and July 2015 programming was implemented. Job training in customer service, culinary arts, retail sales and hospitality was provided, along with employability skills, within the context of paid summer internships for youth. An additional pre-college experience was afforded to participants. The summer pilot program targeted students with a disability, ages 14-21, enrolled in school, and who are likely to be potentially eligible for DVR services. This engaged students not previously served in integrated employment environments. The outcome of the pilot programs has been positive feedback from youth, their families, and providers along with host businesses. Based upon outcomes and impact DVR is exploring expansion of these services throughout the school year to enrolled students with a disability. DVR is exploring expansion of these services to meet the needs of out-of-school youth with a disability in 2016.

In an effort to maintain effective working relationships with these programs, DVR continues to collaborate with the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (DelARF). Most of the rehabilitation services providers in Delaware belong to this organization and use it to address common issues with DVR. The DVR Contract Administrator and other DVR representatives participate in the DelARF Vocational Committee Meetings to address issues and trends which impact DVR and service providers. The Committee discusses contractual and service-related issues, referred to it by the larger group of DelARF members, such as program performance, consumer choice and satisfaction, as well as staff education and turnover. To increase provider agency collaboration, program development, and quality improvement, DVR initiated Contractor Provider Quarterly Meetings to engage the whole of the provider community for skill building, quality assurance measures, and contract development to standardize and improve service delivery to consumers.

Under the Ticket-To-Work Initiative, DVR has contacted all Employment Networks (EN) that have agreed to serve Delaware. Currently, eight community rehabilitation facilities contracted through DVR are registered as ENs. The Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training became registered as an EN in 2011 and began receiving Ticket to Work referrals.

DVR Section (f): Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

In order to provide supported employment services throughout Delaware, DVR has cooperative agreements with the agency that serves individuals with significant mental illness, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), and with the agency that serves individuals with cognitive disabilities, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS). The agreements are monitored by workgroups that review the programs, identifying best practices and areas that need improvement.

DVR and DDDS collaborate to provide supported employment services to transition-age students and youth and to adults with cognitive/developmental disabilities. The Early Start to Supported Employment Model provides Supported Employment Services to students with developmental disabilities transitioning from school to work. The Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have updated their cooperative agreements to reflect newly implemented evidence-based practices. DDDS provides extended services for individuals, both adult and youth participants, who have reached stabilization.

DVR and DSAMH collaborated on the implementation of the Evidence-Based Supported Employment Project. The goal of the collaboration is for mental health services organizations to provide integrated mental health and supported employment services. The project used a team approach to respond to the employment needs of individuals with the most significant mental health disabilities by creating a system of services and supports.

Since 2012, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) has built its mental health services upon an ACT/ICM Team model. A Request for Proposal was published and new providers were secured, offering multiple teams in each County. Two existing providers also made the transition to the new model. The model was refined further in 2014, eliminating ICM Teams and assigning those individuals to ACT Teams. DVR and DSAMH are continuing to work with the new and continuing providers to develop integrated mental health and supported employment services using ACT team model, throughout the state. While the program has experienced some participation and outcome setbacks during the transition to the ACT team model, both DVR and DSAMH are committed to moving forward and engaging more individuals with significant mental illness in employment. Per the cooperative agreement, DSAMH provides extended services to youth and adults who have obtained employment through supported employment and have reached employment stabilization.

DVR section (g): Coordination with Employers.

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

- (6) VR services; and
- (7) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

Since 1996, having the unique opportunity of being co-located within the Delaware Department of Labor has afforded the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation with enriched connections to workforce information, resources, and other advantages for serving individuals with disabilities. Career exploration, employer engagement, and assisting our job seeker population to go to work are at the forefront of DVR's strategic goals. Consequently, working with employers and employer engagement is not a new role for DVR staff but has become an enhanced focus.

In September 2007, the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation developed an in-house Business Relations Unit to help guide business practices. The unit consists of one Statewide Business Relations Manager, five full-time and 2 part-time Business Relations Specialists, all of whom have post-secondary degrees with concentrations in areas such as of marketing, communications, or human resource management. Unit team members consistently receive training in job development and placement, labor market information, marketing to business customers, employment readiness, soft skills training, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other areas required to bring proficiency to the job. The Business Relations Unit uses information from the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information such as the Delaware Career Compass, the Delaware Monthly Labor Review and other labor market information as a guide for creating career opportunities for people with disabilities who want to go to work and for establishing linkages with business. Utilization of Delaware Job Links, the States free job matching and workforce information service for job seekers and business from the Division of Employment and Training, is also a resource used by the for serving its dual customers population. The Business Relations unit currently functions from a dual customer perspective and exists to:

- Assist the counselors in obtaining meaningful employment opportunities for all assigned job seekers who want to gain
- successful employment
- Identify and prepare the DVR job seekers in a timely manner in response to employer recruiting needs.
- Build solid relationships and engage business and industry in collaborative activities as a resource to meet their workforce demands and needs.
- Increase state agency knowledge and participation in the State of Delaware's Selective Placement and Agency Aide programs to help advance hiring opportunities for people with disabilities seeking employment in State government.
- Work closely with local workforce development agencies, schools and community-based organizations who seek to build relationships with employers by engaging in career fairs, parent nights and other activities.

- Facilitate statewide communication, training, marketing, resource sharing and other activities related to consumer placement and business development.
- Work closely with state and local Chambers, SHRM, rotaries, and other professional organizations to promote a structure for networking and sharing information.

Moving forward, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services.

Utilizing the current practices in place the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will also:

- Engage employers in activities as strategic partners and not use them only in an advisory capacity.
 - Use employers to help identify high demand industries and occupations in Delaware
 - Utilize their expertise to develop career options and credentialed programs for individuals with disabilities who want to work.
 - Promote and encourage their expertise in activities such as apprenticeships, OJT, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities where employer input is valued.
- Pursue careers, not just jobs, with individuals with disabilities who are interested in seeking employment.
 - Use Delaware labor market trend information to assist with developing career options.
 - Use the Talent Acquisition Portal as a way to highlight Delaware's workforce talent and connect job seekers with a larger network of employers from across the country.
- Make use of available tools and resources that address workforce needs and job seeker skill sets.
 - O'NET
 - Talent Acquisition Portal
 - Division of Employment and Training, Delaware Job-Link
 - Delaware Office of Occupation and Labor Market Information (OOLMI)
- Create learning opportunities for pre-employment transition students and transition youth by offering employment activities with business and industry.
 - Job shadowing
 - Mentoring programs
 - Work place visits and tours
 - Informational interviews
 - Guest speakers and tours
 - Career days
- Collaborate with business, community service providers, colleges, universities, and other organizations for skill development training.
 - Work with employers to identify skills gaps and collaborate with local training programs to customize training to meet the needs.
 - Seek business guidance for developing curriculum for training programs.
 - Encourage employer feedback regarding program services through activities such as open forums, surveys, and attendance at meetings in the business community.

DVR Section (h): Interagency Cooperation.

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

- (1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;
- (2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and
- (3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

1. The State of Delaware, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services was awarded a federal grant through SNAP, USDA (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to address the barriers to employment in a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of consumers with wrap around services. DVR was invited to partner to strategically address the needs of participants as it relates to eliminating or reducing the impact of a criminal history on securing employment through the expansion of the Advancement through Pardon and Expungement (APEX) program services. The cooperative partnership is currently in development with implementation set for December 2015.

2. DVR continues to strengthen and expand its relationships with key state agencies that serve individuals with significant mental illness (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health) and cognitive disabilities (Division of Developmental Disabilities) in Delaware. Cooperative agreements exist between DVR, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). Inter-agency work groups that were established by the cooperative agreements continue to address important issues such as program integration, staff training, barrier removal, and serving our mutual consumers. The collaborative efforts of DDDS and DSAMH have enhanced extended services for persons with significant mental illness and cognitive disabilities throughout the state.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Developmental Disability Services continue to strengthen and develop supported employment services and increase the number of individuals placed in community jobs. The Early Start to Supported Employment Model provides Supported Employment Services to students with developmental disabilities transitioning from school to work. The model has been refined since its inception in 2005, adding Customized Employment principles and working with providers to begin services earlier, in the year prior to the student's terminal year. The Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have updated their cooperative agreements to reflect newly implemented evidence-based practices.

The Project SEARCH model- implemented in Delaware several years ago, through collaboration with Red Clay School District, the Delaware Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Christiana Care Health Network- provides employment services to people who are eligible for long term support services through the Division for Developmental Disability Services. DDDS provides long term supports to eligible consumers who received job training and placement through project SEARCH.

3. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health jointly administer the implementation of an Evidence-Based Supported Employment Project. The supported employment model was initiated in 2005, based upon the Dartmouth Evidence Based Supported Employment model. Mental health services organizations provided integrated mental health and supported employment services. The project used a team approach to respond to the employment needs of clients with significant mental illness by creating a system of services and supports.

In 2012, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) revised its mental health treatment design, and implemented an ACT/ICM Team model. A Request for Proposal was published and new providers were secured, offering multiple teams in each County. Two existing providers also made the transition to the new model. The model was refined further in 2014, eliminating ICM Teams and assigning those individuals to ACT Teams. DVR and DSAMH are continuing to work with the new and continuing providers to develop integrated mental health and supported employment services using ACT team model, throughout the state. There are 4 providers in the State working this ACT Team model; Connections, Horizon House, NHS Human Services, Mid-Atlantic Inc. (NHS); and Resources for Human Development (RHD).

DVR Section (i): Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Describe 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, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development
 - A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:
 - (i) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
 - (ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - (iii) projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services 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.

Delaware DVR has a Social Services Administrator dedicated to coordinating training for Vocational Rehabilitation Staff. Throughout the year a series of activities are conducted to analyze the training needs. Staff training needs are assessed through conversation with staff and supervisors, online surveys and requests received from training evaluations. Based on these

needs, trainings are scheduled to ensure the staff is adequately equipped with information and knowledge to perform their duties. DE DVR also supports Counselors that hold the professional credential applicable to the field, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, in the areas of training needed and cost to maintain their certification. We also have some Counselors that hold specific credentials that are applicable to caseloads handling consumers with mental health diagnoses. The Agency also lends support for training to maintain those credentials and licensures as they relate to serving consumers with disabilities to gain employment. In FY 2015 DE DVR determined 2,501 individuals eligible for services and developed 2,075 Individualized Plans for Employment.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Administrative Specialists	17	4	5
2	Support staff- part time	6	1	0
3	Fiscal Staff	3	0	2
4	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	31	1	8
5	Vocational Rehabilitation District Administrators	4	0	1
6	Employment Services District Administrator	1	0	1
7	Employment Specialists	5	0	0
8	Sr. Social Services Administrator	2	0	1
9	Social Services Administrator	2	0	0
10	Social Services Technician	1	0	0
11	Management Analyst	1	0	1
12	Deputy Director	1	0	0
13	Division Director	1	0	1

- (B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:
- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
 - (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

- (iii) 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.

Delaware does not have an institute of higher education with a vocational rehabilitation program; however, we do have one person at an in-state institution pursuing their undergraduate degree with intentions of pursuing a graduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. We maintain communication and close working relationships with our institutions in the Mid-Atlantic Region that do offer the master’s program. In FY 2015 DE DVR employed a 2015 graduate & CRC from Rutgers University. We also utilize Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling programs outside of the region through RSA-supported distance learning. In FY 2015 we also have one VR Counselor that is completing additional coursework requirements to meet the eligibility criteria to take the CRC exam.

Row	Institutions	Currently enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	FY 2015 Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	FY 2015 Graduates without financial support
1	Utah State University- Master’s Program/18 credits	1	1	0	0
2	Rutgers University- Master’s Program/18 credits	0	0	1	0
3	Wilmington University- Bachelor’s degree	1	1	0	0

2. *Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel.* Describe the development 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.

The Social Services Administrator maintains a network of communication with the institutions of higher education that offer a master’s program in Rehabilitation Counseling in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The Social Services Administrator represents the agency on the Advisory Committees at George Washington University and Rutgers University, and at the University of Maryland

Eastern Shore, a historically black university. Job openings are sent through contacts at the universities. Delaware DVR regularly invites graduate students in these programs to complete their practicum and internship experiences with Delaware DVR.

The State of Delaware has a Selective Placement Program in which agencies can interview qualified individuals with disabilities without having to post a position. This program was developed to recruit more individuals with disabilities. The Division has provided training about Selective Placement statewide to all Counselors and Employment Specialists, as well as community partners who have contracts to do job development and job placement services. Once hired, VRC's receive an On Boarding Plan that introduces the agency, provides a prescribed training plan that will be scheduled out over their first few months, aids in navigating their resources, and offers a checklist of various activities they will participate in by way of introduction to the Delaware DVR.

3. *Personnel Standards.* Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:
 - i. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and
 - ii. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has set the following as its personnel standard for rehabilitation counselor:

1. Possession of a Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field OR Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) designation.
2. At least one year experience in vocational rehabilitation.
3. Six months experience in analyzing and interpreting medical, psychiatric, psychological, psycho-social, educational and vocational reports from medical, psychological, and other experts to determine eligibility or an individual's vocational rehabilitation needs.
4. Six months experience in case management which includes assessing, planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating options and services to meet an individual's human service needs.
5. Six months experience in health or human services work which includes applying theories, principles, laws and practices of health or human services programs and services that assist with and improve life for individuals, families, or communities such as financial support, employment, unemployment, housing, health care, disease prevention, substance abuse, child protective services, physical/mental health treatment and prevention or rehabilitation.

6. Six months experience in interpreting vocational rehabilitation laws, rules, regulations, standards, policies and procedures

Currently, 28 of the 31 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation or a related field. The 3 who do not hold a Master's degree have plans to retire within 1-3 years.

The HRD Specialist works with staff interested in pursuing additional coursework to become eligible to take the CRC exam. While it is not a requirement by the State to possess or be eligible to sit for the CRC, DE DVR does hold the Commission in high regards as the only certifying body directly related to field of helping people with disabilities achieves employment. The HRD Specialist encourages staff to pursue the additional coursework and provides information on RSA grants, information from our educational institutions and is willing to lend tuition assistance. To fill specialized positions with special linguistic requirements or positions in rural locations or in the complete absence of candidates who meet the established personnel standards, DVR recognizes that it may be necessary to hire individuals who will not meet the State requirements. In order to minimize the number of individuals not meeting State requirements, DVR has increased its marketing to universities with Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling programs by posting positions through their networks and conducting presentations to graduate seminars to recruit graduate interns. All of our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are required to attend at least 20 hours of training annually directly related to serving people and businesses in regards to supporting people with disabilities.

Every permanent position within DVR has an established job description which outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position. DVR uses competency-based interviewing, a process for determining whether the job candidate has the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities in the job description, to fill open positions.

4. *Staff Development.* Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:
 - A. 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, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
 - B. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The performance of all DVR staff is formally evaluated annually. Specific performance expectations relative to the mission of the Division and the duties of the position are listed on each staff member's performance plan. The performance plans of all Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Specialists include the goal of completing a minimum of 20 hours of In-Service Training. The 20 hours of In-Service Training requirement is consistent with the requirement of the Commission of Rehabilitation Counseling Committee for those with the CRC designation.

During the Performance Review process, the staff member is evaluated based on his or her ability to meet the outlined expectations. When training is recommended to improve performance, it is noted on the performance plan and incorporated into the individual's training needs assessment.

The HRD Specialist collects and analyzes information on the training needs of all division personnel. The data and training needs are collected from a variety of sources; via face-to-face staff meetings, supervisory input, online surveys, and a review of all evaluations of trainings in which there is a designated place to specify additional training requests. The analysis is used to develop the training calendar for the upcoming year. The final year of the In-Service Training grant has to an end. The Division is committed to allocating the same amount of funds for staff development in the coming year.

In the past four quarters, training, information and resources have been provided to staff on a variety of topics, some of which include school-to-careers transition, job placement and related services, motivational interviewing, ethics, specific disabilities, and community resources. This is in addition to the onboarding training all new counselors receive pertaining to the Rehabilitation Act and other legislation, eligibility, comprehensive assessment, informed choice, customer service, fiscal components, and state specific information on specialty programs and our case management system. In the past, under the guidance of the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center through George Washington University (GW TACE), an online course in Assistive Technology was available for staff if in-person assistive technology training was not conducive to their schedule. As this option is no longer available, DVR plans to conduct in-person training in FY 2016 and in subsequent fiscal years.

The Division, with technical assistance from the Division of Employment and Training and the JDVRTAC, is working towards the development and structural growth to engage career pathways into our business process. This philosophical shift in services and business process will involve training our VR Counselors in WIOA and agency shared expectations. There is also mass email distribution to staff, when publications and webinars are available and applicable to their work, through our national resource centers such as the Institute for Community Inclusion, Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, etc.

5. *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 appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

Within the Division, two Counselor positions have been designated as Rehabilitation Counselors for clients who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. One of the incumbents has a hearing impairment and is fluent in American Sign Language, making DVR services accessible to consumers who use manual communication. The other Counselor, currently vacant, is located in the Wilmington office. To fill this position, as well as an anticipated second vacancy due to retirement, DVR has sent hiring information and qualifications related to serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to Master's programs in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Within New Castle County, one position is designated for a bilingual, English and Spanish, Counselor in order to serve the Hispanic population. We currently have two Counselors in the state who speak both English and Spanish fluently. The division hires interpreters to work with clients when there is no available Counselor to serve the client at hand based on language barriers.

6. *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* As appropriate, 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 Act.

The DVR and the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) work closely to provide Transition services to high school students with disabilities. DVR has an assigned Counselor to every public, private and alternative school in the state. Counselors maintain regular business hours within their schools during the school year. The DVR Senior Social Services Administrator for Transition Services works closely with the DOE Educational Associate to coordinate transition programs throughout the state.

In the summer of 2015, 11 contracts were awarded to community providers to serve youth with disabilities for Pre-Employment Transition Services. The programs combined had the capacity to serve over 100 youth throughout the state.

The DVR Senior Social Services Administrator for Transition Services program is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Transition Council and the State Transition Council. The Transition Coordinator represents DVR on the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens and the adult transition services sub-committee. DVR and DOE have partnered with various agencies and organizations and the Delaware Community of Practice on Transition to hold an annual statewide transition conference.

The Statewide Transition Cadre holds quarterly meetings where DOE Administrators, school district administrators, local education agency personnel, DVR Counselors and DVR Administrators come together to collaborate, share ideas and work on enhancing services, post-school planning and outcomes for transition-age youth.

DVR Section (j): Statewide Assessment.

- (1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:
 - iii. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
 - iv. who are minorities;
 - v. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;
 - vi. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and
 - vii. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- (3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

Overview

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies are required to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment on a triennial basis. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the employment-related service needs of individuals in the state in order to develop a plan to address those needs. In 2014, the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), in partnership with the Division's State Rehabilitation Council, conducted their assessment using data from the American Community Survey as well as data collected from the disability community and the agency staff.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration encourages State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to use both existing data and newly created data in carrying out the needs assessment. DVR has used existing data, primarily from the 2012 Delaware Disability Status Report (DDSR), the Delaware-specific information gathered as part of the American Community Survey. In conjunction with DVR's State Rehabilitation Council, DVR has created and implemented online surveys and held a Town Hall Meeting to obtain community and staff input.

Section 1.

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. Services for Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

According to the DDSR, among individuals who are of pre-employment age, ages 16-20, the most prevalent type of disability is Cognitive. The category includes both learning and psychological disabilities. The Cognitive category is also prevalent among working age adults. Many of the individuals with Cognitive disabilities are served through Supported Employment. Both the Consumer and the Staff surveys indicated a need for increased Supported Employment-related services. The need was also discussed at the Town Hall meeting.

DVR staff indicated a need to expand Supported Employment to serve additional populations other than individuals with intellectual and psychological disabilities who also have most significant disabilities. Individuals with physical disabilities are not currently served through supported employment. In order to meet this need, additional funding resources for long-term support would need to be identified. These services would need to be available statewide.

The consumer segment, including consumers, parents/guardians, and advocates, identifies Job Placement Assistance as their #1 barrier to employment, and DVR staff concur but to a lesser extent. Among the Consumer segment, the need for specific assistance such as resume development and job interview preparation are identified. The need for expanding the services that provide or teach these specific skills is indicated.

B. Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities

The surveys and Town Hall Meeting did not uncover racially-based needs. As with the previous survey, individuals who are Hispanic did not respond. The reluctance to respond is likely to be culturally based.

According to the DDSR, 8.6% of the Delaware population is of Hispanic descent. In FY 2013, 4.47% of the individuals who were successfully rehabilitated, or 46 individuals, indicated that they were Hispanic. While it would seem that the Hispanic population is underserved, the DDSR reports that, out of an estimated 78,100 individuals of Hispanic descent live in Delaware, 5.7% (4,400) report having one or more disabilities. This compares to an overall disability rate of 13% of non-Hispanics who report a disability. The data does not indicate a cause for either the lower disability rate or for why a lower rate at which disability is reported. As the reported disability rate is significantly lower, less than half of the reported rate among non-Hispanic residents of Delaware, it is difficult to ascertain if the Hispanic individuals with disabilities are under-represented and to what extent.

A group of individuals who did report barriers to employment were those individuals who do not have transportation to attend training or employment. Public transportation is available less often in rural communities, but is a barrier statewide for individuals for whom employment is offered as shift-work or on weekends when service is reduced. The availability of para-transit, particularly for individuals who do not live near fixed-route public transportation, is limited and may be reduced in the future due to the cost of running the service.

Transportation to employment and to training is seen as a barrier by both DVR Staff and Consumers. Staff sees it as the #1 barrier. While DVR does have contracted services to assist consumers, the services are not well known, not universally available, or may be insufficient to meet the needs of DVR consumers. As a starting point, the availability of the current services needs to be promoted. Expansion of the current services or additional transportation may be indicated.

C. Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved

Among working age individuals, the most commonly reported disability is Ambulatory. Using data from the DDSR, the number is 54.24% of those working-age individuals with disabilities report an ambulatory disability. Approximately 73.3% of this group is unemployed, but only 7.4% report that they are actively seeking employment. According to the DVR Rehabilitated Clients Report, in FY 2013, 10.87% of DVR's successful closures are categorized as having an Orthopedic Impairment. Looking at these numbers, it is evident that DVR could be serving a greater number of individuals with physical disabilities and that additional outreach is indicated.

D. Individuals with Disabilities served by Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System

DVR is co-located at all four of the American Job Centers in Delaware. DVR staff refers clients to the Center's resources. The letter that notifies individuals that they are on the DVR Order of Selection waiting list includes information about the Centers. Both the Consumers and the DVR Staff have the perception that staff in the One-Stop /American Job Centers is not fully prepared to provide services to individuals with disabilities. Center staff refers individuals to DVR who

may not need the more intensive services available through the VR process. Ongoing training and skill building for the Center staff appears to be indicated and in order to increase the comfort levels of both the staff members and the consumers.

E. Individuals who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

This section is new under WIOA as was not included in our last Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Accordingly, the topic was presented for discussion at a State Rehabilitation Council meeting, and written comments were received.

The SRC felt that the upper echelons of the education system are familiar with transition, recommended that more communication be offered to the frontline teachers. They should be provided with information about transition. Parents and school counselors also need additional information.

A recommendation was made that DVR reach out to as many students as possible through pre-employment transition services. As many students are not bound for college programs, the opportunities for job shadowing and planning for internships and apprenticeships are important.

DVR currently has transition counselors who liaison with the academic programs in juvenile detention programs. The SRC identified that Delaware has a problem with youth violence and recommended that DVR work closely with juvenile corrections. The need for ongoing support of social workers, psychologists, law enforcement professionals, religious organizations and community leaders in coordination with vocational rehabilitation was identified. It was also identified that DVR services are a source of prevention to students who are “on the fence.”

Section 2.

The Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the State

Among the DVR staff, 44.4% indicated that he or she had made a referral to a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP). Multiple responses were permitted. The most frequent reason for the referral was for job placement assistance (81.81%), followed by skills training (72.72%), counseling/work adjustment (59.09), and job seeking skills in that order (54.54%). One individual each indicated job coaching and drug/alcohol counseling.

When asked about barriers to referral to or utilization of a CRP program, again, with multiple responses permitted, the responses were:

Transportation	47.61%
Client did not want to attend	38.09%
Waiting list for services	23.80%
Type of program not available locally*	23.80%
Program not accessible to my client	19.04%
Other*	33.33%

* Two staff mentioned criminal history as a barrier to referral to the program/vocational goal desired by the consumer. Others indicated the CRP staff lacked skills to meet the needs of the

consumer or that the consumers wanted specific specialized fields, such as clothing design or interior design, which were not available.

The DVR Contract Administrator is working to address the barriers identified in the survey by meeting with the staff of the DVR offices around the state to identify specific gaps in services available and populations served. An example of how the process is working, and will continue to work, is the recent RFP for providing increased services for individuals who are deaf which will increase the availability of job coaching and employment services to individuals who use sign language as their primary means of communication.

Section 3.

Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

This section is new under WIOA as was not included in our last Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Accordingly, the topic was presented for discussion at a State Rehabilitation Council meeting, and written comments were received.

DVR has had liaison counselors in all of the public and private/parochial school programs in Delaware, and served home-schooled students that are identified, for nearly 20 years. The annual Transition Conference, sponsored by a Community of Practice that includes DVR, the Department of Education, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, was moved from the spring to the fall to provide students and parents with information earlier in the academic year. Yet, the need to provide information to students, parents, guidance counselors, and teachers earlier and more often was identified as a need. Some of the information sharing will occur through pre-employment transition services which will provide opportunities to students as young as 14. The SRC also mentioned that the need to publicize, promote, and inform students, parents, teachers, and counselors about the pre-employment transition services are also paramount.

DVR has begun to offer pre-employment transition services. The agency works with school districts in New Castle and Kent counties to support Project SEARCH. The SRC recommended a Sussex County option be pursued. DVR is also supporting Start on Success at two locations. In FY 2015, DVR offered an RFP to provide pre-employment transition services throughout the state. Over 100 students were served by 11 programs during the summer of 2015. The SRC recommended expanding services to offer opportunities for more students to participate.

The SRC noted that many of the transition services offered by school counselors focus on preparation for college. Students who are not college-bound need assistance in identifying career pathways and plans to achieve the required experiences and training both as part of their educational experience and through DVR services. DVR is training the DVR staff about career pathway-focused planning and working with the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training to increase access to the credential-bearing programs that lead to

employment in Delaware. DVR is also working with the community rehabilitation programs to develop industry-recognized credentials as the end-product of training programs.

DVR Section (k): Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services

According to US Census Bureau data from 2012, there are approximately 4,286 unemployed adults with disabilities in the state of Delaware. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 new applicants will be determined eligible in FY 2017.

Including people carrying over plans from prior years, DVR estimates that approximately 8,500 individuals will receive services through individualized plans for employment (IPEs) under Part A of Title I and/or Part B of Title VI in FY 2017. The estimated cost of providing services to these individuals is **\$9,489,760**.

Out of the 8,500 individuals who will receive services, approximately **120** are anticipated to receive services under Title VI-B.

The estimate of FY 2017 service costs for each category within the Order of Selection for Services is as follows:

	Number of Clients Served	Cost of Services
Category 1 – Most Significantly Disabled – Title I	4,190	\$ 4,617,380
Category 1 – Most Significantly Disabled – Title VI	120	\$ 255,000
Category 2 – Significantly Disabled	3,352	\$ 3,693,904
Category 3 – Not Significantly Disabled	838	\$ 923,476
TOTALS	8,500	\$ 9,489,760

DVR Section (l): State Goals and Priorities

. The designated State unit must:

- (1) 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, and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.
- (3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - (A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - (B) the State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and
 - (C) 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.

Section 1.

Each year, the State Rehabilitation Council and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation review, define, and update DVR’s goal and priorities. In keeping with the Delaware’s WIOA Combined State Plan timeline, the review of goals and priorities occurred at the October meeting of the

SRC. The Goals and Priorities below were jointly developed by the State Rehabilitation Council and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Section 2.

Goal 1.

Provide quality employment outcome for people with disabilities.

Performance measures-

- a. Employment Outcomes (traditional, supported employment, transition)
- b. Average hourly wage adult, transition, supported employment)
- c. Employment in the second and fourth quarters following exit from the program
- d. Median wage in second quarter following exit from the program

Performance Goals-

- a. Employment Outcomes
 1. Increase total outcomes by 10 to 1,148
 2. Increase transition outcomes by 5 to 360
 3. Increase Supported Employment outcomes by 5 to 125
- b. Average Hourly Wage
 1. Increase the overall average hourly wage by \$.10 to \$10.64
 2. Increase the adult average hourly wage by \$.10 to \$11.25
 3. Increase average hourly wage for transition students by \$.10 to \$10.10
 4. Increase average hourly wage for supported employment by \$.05 to \$8.66
- c. Employment in the second and fourth quarters following exit from the program (meet or exceed target estimates)
- d. Median wage in second quarter following exit from the program (meet or exceed target estimates)

Goal 2.

Recruit new training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.

Performance Measures-

- a. Education and training options in high demand occupations based on labor market information.
- b. Education and training options that lead to business-recognized credentials and experiences.
- c. Credential rate for adults and transition participants
- d. Employer measure

Performance Goals-

- a. Use labor market information to identify the top five employment opportunities in each county. Identify the career path to each of these positions.
- b. Work with education and training programs to develop business-recognized credentials and experiences that will enable people with disabilities to enter the identified career paths at multiple points.

- c. Credential rate for adults and transition participants (meet or exceed the established measure)
- d. Employer measure (meet or exceed the established measure)

Goal 3.

Provide pre-employment transition services and transition career services to transition-aged individuals with disabilities.

Performance Measures

- a. Pre-employment transition service opportunities for transition students
- b. Increased number of career preparation choices that result in credentials or experiences that lead to employment on the career pathway selected.
- c. Employment/Training/Education rate in the second and fourth quarters following exit from the program

Performance Goals-

- a. Increase the number of pre-employment transition services, including opportunities such as Project SEARCH and Start on Success, to enable more transition students to participate (establish a baseline in the first full year following the availability of regulations)
- b. Employment/Training/Education rate in the second and fourth quarters following exit from the program (meet or exceed target estimates)
- c. Median wage in second quarter following exit from the program (meet or exceed target estimates)

Section 3.

- (A) WIOA expands the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Section (j) Statewide Assessment, to include input related to transition services. DVR is not currently conducting a CSNA. Accordingly, the State Rehabilitation Council was asked to provide input into sections 1E and 3 of the assessment. Feedback was incorporated into Section (j) as well as into the goals and priorities outlined above.
- (B) Section 116 of WIOA, the common measures, was woven tightly into the goals and priorities above. The measures are included in the performance goals.
- (C) The State Rehabilitation Council, jointly with representation from DVR, participated in an effectiveness evaluation in order to review the goals and priorities established by the previous State Plan and to establish the goals and priorities above. They were presented with performance data from the previous year and participated in discussion. Following the discussion DVR received written input from the SRC members. Their written input was incorporated into the goals and priorities. Prior to submitting the goals and priorities outlined above, the draft goals and priorities were sent out to the SRC members for comments and recommendations.

DVR Section (m): 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

Attachment 4.11 (c)(3): Order of Selection

Due to limited resources, the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation believes that it will be unable to provide services to all individuals who are eligible under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended (the Act). According to section 101 (a)(5) of the Act, if a rehabilitation agency determines that it is unable to provide services for all eligible individuals, an Order of Selection is required in order to ensure that the agency has as its priority the provision of services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and that categories are established to define the priorities.

In FY 2017, we estimate the total cost of serving the number of clients with IPEs in place, absent an order of selection, will be **\$9,489,760**. Available funding will be \$6,204,447 from our Title I and Title VI grants including the required matching funds. *The difference between the projected cost of services and the funding available reveals a deficit of \$3,285,313.* The Rehabilitation Act requires DVR invoke an order of selection to prioritize services to those with the most significant needs when it is not able to serve everyone. Therefore, DVR determines that it must continue to implement an Order of Selection in FY 2017.

Description of Priority categories

Accordingly, DVR establishes the following categories for service provision:

Priority Category I, Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities (MSD)

Eligible individuals with impairments that result in serious limitations of three or more functional capacities that require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time, six months or more.

Priority Category II, Individuals with Significant Disabilities (SD)

Eligible individuals with impairments that result in serious limitations in one or two functional capacities requiring multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time, six months or more. An allowed SSDI beneficiary or SSI recipient is automatically considered to be, at least, an individual with a significant disability, and should be reviewed for possible Priority 1 status.

Priority Category III, Individuals with Non-Significant Disabilities

Eligible individuals with a disability who do not meet the definition for MSD or SD.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has updated its policy to state: An eligible individual who is employed at application, and requires specific services or equipment to maintain employment may receive services regardless of their priority category.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

In order to focus services on the individuals with the most significant disabilities, DVR will serve individuals in the following order:

- First: Priority Category I
- Second: Priority Category II
- Third: Priority Category III

As DVR identifies that the agency has sufficient resources to move individuals from the waiting list, individuals will be moved to active services first according to priority category and secondly according to date of application.

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

Written notification is sent to all individuals who are placed on the waiting list for vocational rehabilitation services. The notification includes information about available services and resources the individual may contact for assistance in employment. Each letter identifies the nearest American Job Center, established per the Workforce Investment Act.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Outcome goals 26s	Outcome goals 28s	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1	4310	550	300	Fiscal Year 2017	\$ 4,872,380
2	3352	575	300	Fiscal Year 2017	\$ 3,693,904
3	838	50	30	Fiscal Year 2017	\$923,476
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

DVR Section (n): Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

- (1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.
- (2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including :
 - viii. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and
 - ix. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Section 1.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funds supported employment services for consumers under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act and allocates all funds for services. Program Funds are used to purchase supported employment assessments and services from the community rehabilitation programs under a Purchase of Services Agreement with DVR. In order to provide supported employment for all consumers who require services, Title I funds are used to supplement the Title VI, Part B allocation.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has a long standing partnership with the DE Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) in regard to providing supported employment (SE) services. Individuals with intellectual disabilities who need long term supports in order to obtain and maintain employment are referred to DVR and DDDS. The individual works with a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) of their choice to begin community-based supported employment assessments to identify a vocational goal and the necessary supports to be successful in employment. The CRP assists the individual with job placement and coaching for a total of 150 days or until the individual is stable on the job. At that time, DVR closes the case and DDDS continues to provide funding to the CRP for the long term supports in order for the individual to remain on the job. For individuals not eligible for DDDS services, but needing long term supports in order to be successful on a job, DVR assists the individual to identify other sources of long term funding or natural supports on the job.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) jointly administer an Evidence-Based Supported Employment Program to individuals with mental illness. This supported employment program has struggled since DE transitioned their services to an ACT model, however leadership at both agencies continue to see it as a priority, and effort has been focused on identifying and training the staff on the ACT teams to provide the supported employment supports. As staff is learning the new model of providing services, supported employment supports have been difficult for them to incorporate into other responsibilities and many staff members are not trained on providing employment supports. Due to this transition, DVR has developed an agreement with additional service providers to ensure job development, placement, and supports are provided to individuals with mental illness who qualify for supported employment services. The DVR and DSAMH have also collaborated efforts and funds to assist providers in hiring employment staff that will assist the ACT teams in doing job development and placement for individuals with mental health disabilities.

The DVR Transition Coordinator provides technical assistance and administrative support for the supported employment program for individuals with DD/ID and the Social Service Administrator oversees supported employment for individuals with mental health disabilities.

Section 2.

Pursuant to section 603(d), DVR recognizes the requirement to reserve 50% of its supported employment allocation on transition-age consumers with the most significant disabilities and will achieve that requirement through the Early Start to Supported Employment program (ESSE). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Education and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) collaborate with the local education agencies,

community rehabilitation providers, businesses, families and students with disabilities to implement ESSE. The ESSE philosophy is that all persons, regardless of disability, are able to be employed and be successful, active, participating members of their communities. The ESSE program starts two years prior to the student exiting high school through the identification of students and assistance and encouragement to apply for services under DVR and DDDS. The program offers students an opportunity to gain exposure to work in the community and assists them with learning and retaining employment related skills. It provides a more seamless transition from school to work and alleviates student and family stress during the transition to life after high school.

DVR leverages long-term extended services that are funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services or, for transition students and youth with mental health disabilities, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. By leveraging the long-term supports through DDDS and DSAMH, DVR is able to expand supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities. DVR also uses Title I funds to supplement Title VI funds for supported employment. When extended services are not available through the support of DDDS or DSAMH, DVR will support extended services for a period not to exceed four (4) years. During the four years of DVR-supported extended services, alternate sources of extended services supports will be pursued, including the development of natural supports.

DVR Section (o): Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

DVR will engage with a wide range of stakeholders in the community in order to expand and improve services including consumer organizations, public and non-profit agencies, community rehabilitation programs, education, and employers. By listening to input from stakeholders and building programs that have value and address the objectives of multiple members of the rehabilitation community, the impact of vocational rehabilitation is increased. Examples of collaboration include the Transition Community of Practice, the Early Start to Supported Employment, the Project SEARCH program, Supported Education, and the Start on Success Program, as well as the numerous committees and programs to which DVR staff contributes and through which DVR reaches out to the community. DVR has specifically identified the expansion of business-focused training programs for transitioning students, specifically Project SEARCH and Start on Success, as its innovation and expansion project. Additional pre-employment transition services programs for transition students have been developed, and the process of refining and expanding the business-focused opportunities will continue.

- (1) 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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation makes assistive technology goods and services available to individuals with disabilities at all stages of the rehabilitation process. DVR maintains collaborative relationships with organizations and entities that provide rehabilitation technology

goods and services, including the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), Easter Seals Society of Delaware and Maryland Eastern Shore, and with other technology providers. In October of 2013, DVR sponsored many members of the DVR staff in a full day of training on assistive technology that was offered by the Delaware Rehabilitation Association. The goal of the program was to increase staff awareness of AT options throughout the VR process and to increase informed choice. The program featured speakers with expertise on a range of Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering topics. DVR plans to offer additional training on AT during Fiscal Year 2016.

DVR and Easter Seals Society of Delaware and Maryland Eastern Shore jointly administer Financing Your Independence, the AT Loan Program and Telework Loan Program in Delaware. DVR has relationships with vendors who provide a wide array of assistive technology goods and services. Counselors who have clients with assistive technology issues collaborate with one of several vendors with specialized knowledge in rehabilitation technology when serving clients with specific AT needs. DVR has a check-off item on every Individualized Plan for Employment to prompt counselors to consider AT needs for every client in the planning process.

(2) 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.

DVR counselors maintain a broad array of referral sources to provide outreach services to people with disabilities in Delaware, including minorities and individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR has been working with the Brain Injury Association in Delaware, BIAD, to make an effort to reach and serve individuals with physical disabilities which has been identified as an underserved population in the on-site review process. The largest DVR office is located in the city of Wilmington, which has the largest population of minority residents in the state. DVR has a Spanish speaking counselor and a Spanish speaking District Administrator who serve the Hispanic population and provide outreach to churches and community centers in the city. DVR has a strong collaborative relationship with the local school district transition coordinators and Delaware Department of Education Special Education Coordinator. DVR receives referral information from all public and most private high schools in the state, including adjudicated youth, regarding transition students and reaches out to the students, often on an individual basis, to connect the students with DVR services. A substantial proportion of these students are minority students and students with significant disabilities. DVR Counselors, District

Administrators, and Program Managers conduct outreach activities to advocacy organizations, other state agencies, non-profit service providers, individual and organizational health-care providers and mental health providers to offer DVR services to their clients.

(3) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of

VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

DVR has a long history of providing transition services that begins with developing relationships with the Delaware Department of Education, as well as leadership within each of the local education agencies, and designating a liaison vocational rehabilitation counselor for each of the high school programs in the state. Even prior to the implementation of pre-employment transition services, DVR had implemented both Project SEARCH and Start on Success and had developed a supported employment program, Early Start on Supported Employment, that focused considerable resources on transition age individuals. DVR plans to continue to expand the models currently in place while expanding on the business-based opportunities for transition students. In the summer of 2015, DVR coordinated 11 pre-employment transition services programs, primarily in business sites, that gave over 100 students the opportunity to explore and experience work environments.

In FY 2016, DVR implemented a focus on career pathways for all DVR consumers. Implementation included agency-wide training on what career pathways are and how to include career pathways information in vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance. DVR is also improving its vocational evaluation process to help consumers, including transition students and youth, identify short and long-term vocational goals. Career pathways and informed choice are key to assisting students and youth to identify steps in building the credentials to meet their goals. Programs at the postsecondary level, both at community rehabilitation facilities and postsecondary education institutions, are being given DVR support to develop and offer industry-recognized credentials that coordinate with career pathways in the local economies.

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

DVR provides rehabilitation services and training to individuals with disabilities through contracts with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in Delaware. DVR follows a request for proposal (RFP) process and solicits proposals from all CRPs in the state to provide services on a two-year cycle. DVR and the community rehabilitation programs have strong collaborative relationships. Referrals for services flow both ways.

DVR holds quarterly meetings with the community rehabilitation programs to review accomplishments and identify ways to improve effectiveness. The division is helping the community rehabilitation programs to understand anticipated changes that will be forthcoming under the WIOA regulations. In incorporating WIOA and the move towards implementing the use of career pathways, DVR is moving away from programs that offer certificates of completion towards programs that offer national industry-recognized credentials and is in the process of incorporating the requirement of industry-recognized credentials to the fullest extent possible. For occupations for which there are no nationally recognized credentials, DVR, in conjunction with businesses, education and training providers, and WIOA partners, towards the development of local, industry-recognized standards and credentials.

(5) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

DVR is in the process of establishing memoranda of understanding with other workforce partners that will enable the division to calculate the common performance accountability measures under Title I, section 116 of WIOA.

DVR maintains processes to continually monitor progress and seek ways to improve performance. DVR maintains a quality assurance process, conducting quarterly reviews of cases to evaluate quality and timeliness of services, and conformance to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and regulations. The review instrument is patterned after an RSA review instrument and tailored to highlight the specific focus-area for that review but is also expanded to gather information on specific topics during many reviews. Counselors, program managers, and fiscal staff review randomly selected case records to evaluate quality casework standards. The results of the reviews are shared with the counselors, their supervisors, and the training administrator. They are used to evaluate the quality of services provided by DVR, and also to identify training needs, performance deficiencies, and policy issues.

DVR's efforts to improve services and training opportunities for people with disabilities as part of the revised RFP process are intended to improve agency performance in addressing the common measure requirements for establishing credential training programs. DVR is working with service providers to promote training programs that are more closely aligned with employer job requirements and to include internships as part of the training experience. DVR is collaborating with Delaware Technical and Community College to provide more educational/training supports and opportunities for transition youth to attend post-secondary educational programs at Delaware Tech.

DVR is collaborating with the mental health agency to implement an evidence-based supported employment program in Delaware for people with mental illness. The goal is continuous improvement in the service delivery capability among the community mental health agencies so that employment, placement, and employment supports are part of the services available in those agencies.

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

DVR is co-located in the four Delaware Department of Labor locations that house the American Job Centers for the State. DVR is working with the rest of the DE DOL to promote the vision and implementation of one-stop and no wrong door. Currently, DVR receives referrals from the Division of Employment and Training (DET) and assists DVR clients in accessing the resources from the American Job Centers. DVR, through resources obtained in previously funded grant programs, has assisted DET in becoming physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities. DVR will continue to work with DET to provide training to their staff so that they are better prepared to assist individuals with disabilities.

In addition to working with resources within the Delaware Department of Labor, DVR has a strong relationship with the Delaware Department of Education and the statewide Delaware

Technical & Community College. DVR and Delaware Tech have created the Supported Education to assist DVR-sponsored students to acquire academic and study skills that foster success in the educational process. The Workforce Development Board is represented on the State Rehabilitation Council by an active member of the WDB Youth Council who is a former DVR client and strong advocate for vocational rehabilitation and individuals with disabilities.

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

- achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
- 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.

(A) Strategies to Achieve Goals and Priorities.

As part of the Effectiveness Evaluation and in conjunction with the results of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DVR and the SRC discussed recommendation for way to address the goals and priorities. Ways in which DVR will continue to support the goals and priorities include:

1) Provide quality employment outcome for people with disabilities.

The priority relates to concerns that there is the need for employment in jobs with sufficient pay and employee benefits to become self-sufficient. According, DVR is responding by:

- Educating clients on career pathways and the development of short and long-term vocational goals.
- Working with postsecondary education and training providers to develop and implement credential-bearing that are geared to labor market information and career pathways.
- Increasing the number of individuals obtaining employment through Supported Employment and Self-Employment as part of the overall goal of increasing employment outcomes.
- Focusing on increasing the hourly wage of employed consumers as part of a focus to increase the quality of employment outcomes.
- Continue to provide benefits counseling to assist clients to understand the impact of employment on benefits and the positive effect of employment on independence and self-sufficiency.
- Assisting clients to understand the availability of healthcare benefits through the Affordable Care Act so that fear of the loss of health benefits will no longer be a disincentive to employment.
- Promoting financial independence and in conjunction with educating clients on the availability of healthcare, encourage individuals to earn as much as they can either through a single full-time job or two part-time jobs.

2) Support training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.

The priority relates to the employment services/employment needs as well as the need for information.

- Utilize employment trend information available from the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information by 1) using the labor market information to advise community rehabilitation programs in the development of training programs, 2) seeking additional programs that offer training in fields where the employment outlook is positive, and 3) using labor market information during the counseling/informed choice process with DVR clients.
- Implement the use of career pathways developed by the Division of Employment and Training as a tool for career guidance.
- Continue to work with Community Rehabilitation Programs as part of the RFP process to use the labor market information to develop credential-bearing training programs that reflect labor market trends. Enable clients to make informed choices about their vocational training by providing information about the training programs through the updated Choices booklet.
- Work directly with employers and with Community Rehabilitation Programs to develop training programs that are held on-site at places of employment in the community.

3. Expand opportunities for students to transition from school to work.

Transition students and youth served by DVR have a wide range of disabilities and vocational needs. They require quality training programs that focus on careers available in the labor market in order to get employment.

- Support training for school to careers transition counselors to enable them to meet the unique needs of youth with disabilities.
- Work with the Department of Education and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services to provide supported employment to common clients under the Early Start to Supported Employment program.
- Collaborate with the Delaware Technical & Community College (DTCC) to provide more training and educational opportunities for transition youth in this statewide, post-secondary educational organization. Use Supported Education to target youth with disabilities as clients who may benefit from the additional supports offered through the program in order to be successful in post-secondary education, basic education programs at DTCC. Include the provision of study skills training, tutoring and other intensive supports on campus to students enrolled in DTCC in the remedial program.
- Participate in the Department of Education in the Community of Practice (CoP) initiative to work collaboratively with parents, students, advocates, and other agencies and service providers in a coordinated and collaborative effort.
- Through the DVR Specialist for Transition, collaborate extensively with the Department of Education and local school district representatives including the implementation of a Student Success Plan (SSP) and the Career Cruising self-assessment/career planning tool for all students, including students with disabilities in the Delaware public school system. Students who are actively using these programs may offer access to the DVR transition counselors to use the programs as a plan-development tool.
- As part of the CoP, co-sponsor “The Annual Community of Practice Transition Conference: Shared Work; Shared Vision” as a collaborative effort by the Delaware

Department of Education, the Division on Career Development and Transition and members of the CoP (i.e.: Parent Information Center of Delaware, school district representatives throughout the state, and the Student Leadership Team). The conference is well attended by students, parents, educators, DVR transition counselors, transition specialists from many high schools, as well as other stakeholders involved in assisting youth with disabilities transition to post-secondary life.

(B) Innovation and Expansion

In FY 2014, DVR established the goal of expanding the availability of employer-based training for transition students. The anticipated goal at that time was to continue the implementation of Project SEARCH in New Castle County while expanding the services into Kent and Sussex Counties. The following progress has been attained:

- The Project SEARCH program in New Castle County has been maintained its relationship with the Red Clay School District since the fall of 2013. A cohort completed the program at the Christiana Medical Center in May of 2015, and a new group began in the fall of 2015.
- A second Project SEARCH site was initiated in Kent County. Project SEARCH is working with the Capital School District and the employer, Bayhealth. The first program cohort, initiated in the fall of 2014, has successfully completed the program, and a new cohort began in the fall of 2015.

DVR has expanded the goals of the Innovation and Expansion project to reflect the implementation of the Start on Success (SOS) program. Similar to Project SEARCH, SOS provides employer-based training opportunities for youth in transition. Thus far, the SOS sites are in New Castle County, but DVR will explore the expansion into Kent and Sussex Counties.

- In FY 2014, DVR implemented the SOS program as a partnership with the Christina School District and several YMCA locations in New Castle County. The training vendor is Humanim. DVR has continued to implement the program in FY 2015 and FY 2016.

DVR will continue the Project SEARCH and Start on Success models as the models implement business-based experience for transition youth. DVR anticipates expanding opportunities for business-based experiences through the implementation of pre-employment transition services

(C) 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.

All locations of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are physically and programmatically accessible for all DVR consumers seeking services from both the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program. Each location has accessible parking designated for individuals with disabilities. DVR locations have accessible entrances and restrooms. If DVR identifies a barrier to providing services to a specific individual, the agency moves quickly to accommodate that individual's need for physical or programmatic access. Examples of barrier removal may include changing the location of the meeting to accommodate transportation barriers, the format of the printed materials, or provision

of interpreter services (sign or foreign language). DVR permits and encourages advocates, including parents and guardians, who, with the permission of the consumers, attend meetings with DVR in order to assist the individual with a developmental or intellectual disability to make decisions in their best interest.

DVR requires that its vendors also be physically and programmatically accessible and works with them to provide accommodations when barriers are identified.

DVR Section (p): Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.

Describe:

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
 - i. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - ii. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
3. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
 - i. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - ii. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
4. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.
5. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Section 1.

Although a State Plan update was not required by July 1st of 2015, DVR conducted and documented a full Effectiveness Evaluation in February of 2015 to review the goals and priorities in the most recent, approved DVR State Plan. The documentation is as follows:

EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION
Standards and Indicators

DVR provided information to SRC members on DVR performance administering the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, as measured by federal standards and indicators under the Workforce Investment Act. The performance on standards and indicators in FY2014 is as follows:

- DVR achieved 1046 outcomes in FY2014, an increase of 16 outcomes over the previous year. This was the highest number of outcomes ever for DVR, and clearly exceeded the RSA standard to equal or better the results from the prior year.
- The Rehabilitation rate in FY 2012 was 65.5%, over the RSA standard of 55.8%.

- 100% of the employment outcomes for FY 2014 were competitive employment in the community at or above the minimum wage. This exceeded the standard of 72.6%.
- Of all those individuals who were competitively employed in FY 2014 as the result of DVR services, 96% were individuals with significant disabilities. This exceeds the RSA standard of 62.4%.
- The average hourly wage increased to \$10.30 in FY2014, an decrease of 16 cents per hour over the previous year. The standard for hourly wage is that DVR clients' wages average 52% of the average wage for all wage earners in the State of Delaware. DVR did not meet this standard.
- The increased percentage of individuals who report their wages as the largest source of support between application and successful closure is 64.72%, above the standard of 53%.
- The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds was 97%, exceeding the 80% standard.

Discussion

DVR exceeded the RSA standards as indicated in the WIA legislation for six of the seven measures and, accordingly met the overall RSA requirements; however, due to the high average wage of workers in Delaware, DVR did not meet Standard 1.5. Delaware, along with many other states in the region and northeastern United States, has not met Standard 1.5 in many years. Although there was a significant increase in the average hourly wage of Transition clients, there was a decrease in the average hourly wage of adult and supported employment outcomes. DVR has not yet instituted the Common Measures as outlined in WIOA and will be implementing them once they are fully defined in the pending regulations.

Employment Retention

DVR attempted to reach individuals who achieved a successful employment outcome in FY 2014, at least 90 days after closure, to ask them about job retention. A total of 462 individuals, or 44%, were successfully contacted. Of those reporting, 77.71% indicated that they were currently employed. Of those, 52.65% indicated that they were in the same job in which they had been employed when their case was closed by DVR. 47.35% of the individuals indicated that they were employed in different jobs. Of those who have stayed in the same job, 46.88% indicated that their earnings had remained stable. 14% indicated an increase in earnings due to a raise in pay. 12.5% indicated a decrease in earnings due to decreased hours. (16.15% refused to answer this question). Of those changed jobs, 43.35% indicated that their earnings had remained stable. 15.61% indicated an increase in earnings due to a raise in pay. 6.94% indicated a decrease in earnings due to decreased hours. (20.81 refused to answer the question) Of those currently not employed, the primary reasons were "Quit" 32.67%, "Fired" 25.74%, "Disability" 18.81%, and "New Medical Problem" 10.89%.

Consumer Satisfaction

The 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey was designed to seek out specific ways in which DVR services could improve. As such, the participants were asked to rate a service on a Likert scale from "Excellent" to "Poor." For each item that was not rated "Excellent," the participant was asked what DVR could have done differently that would have resulted in an excellent rating.

- The majority of participants, both rehabilitated and not rehabilitated, rated overall satisfaction with DVR as excellent with 63.76% and 52.24% respectively. Combined with the 22.15% and 25.37% who rated services as good, the positive ratings are 85.91% (rehabilitated) and 77.61% (not rehabilitated).
- For individuals who were successfully rehabilitated, the positive counselor relationship was 89.62% (with 72.41% excellent rating) along with an 82.52% (60.84% excellent) rating of ability to choose services.
- For those who were closed not-rehabilitated, the counselor relationship received an 80% (52.14% excellent) positive rating with a 55.88% (44.12% excellent) positive rating for the ability to choose services.
- Comments about ways to improve services centered on common themes such as the need for better communication, less perception of being rushed, and better explanation of the available choices. Some participants who were not rehabilitated indicated very limited interaction with their counselors.
- Among those who were closed as rehabilitated, the positive rating was 91.79% (67.16% excellent). Reasons for a not-excellent rating centered on common themes such as the time it took to find a job and dissatisfaction with the job type, benefits, or hours.
- For individuals who were successfully rehabilitated, the positive counselor relationship was 89.62% (with 72.41% excellent rating) along with an 82.52% (60.84% excellent) rating of ability to choose services.
- For those who were closed not-rehabilitated, the counselor relationship received an 80% (52.14% excellent) positive rating with a 55.88% (44.12% excellent) positive rating for the ability to choose services.
- Comments about ways to improve services centered on common themes such as the need for better communication, less perception of being rushed, and better explanation of the available choices. Some participants who were not rehabilitated indicated very limited interaction with their counselors.
- Among those who were closed as rehabilitated, the positive rating was 91.79% (67.16% excellent). Reasons for a not-excellent rating centered on common themes such as the time it took to find a job and dissatisfaction with the job type, benefits, or hours.

Goals and Priorities

Participants in the Effectiveness evaluation were given the opportunity to review the previously approved goals and priorities. For each goal/priority, the participants were given some additional information related to that goal which is included below.

FY 2014 GOALS & PRIORITIES

1. Provide quality employment outcome for people with disabilities.

Performance measures-

1. Number of outcomes: Traditional; Self-employment; Supported employment
2. Average hourly wage: Adult; Transition; Supported Employment

Target Goals-

- a. Achieve 50 Supported Employment Outcomes from Evidence Based Program
- b. Achieve 40 Supported Employment Outcomes from DDDS/DVR SE Program

	FY14	FY13	Change
Employment Outcomes: Total	1,046	1030	+16
Self-Employment	4	2	+2
Supported employment	96	86	+10
Transition	322	263	+59

	FY14	FY13	Change
Total Hourly Rate			
All Clients	\$10.30	\$10.46	-\$0.16
Adult	\$10.85	\$11.14	-\$0.29
Transition	\$9.80	\$9.26	+\$0.54
Supported Employment	\$8.35	\$8.73	-\$0.38

Supported Employment Closures by referral source:

Supported Employment	50
Early Start	29
DSAMH	15
Other	2

2. Support training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.

Performance Measures-

1. Training choices for clients in areas of job availability
2. Outcomes per training program

Target Goals-

- a. Develop at least 1 new training program in Kent & Sussex County
- b. Develop at least 1 new training program in the healthcare industry
- c. Develop at least 1 new training program for people with Traumatic Brain Injury

- 1588 clients received training services
- 557 clients received post-secondary education services
- DVR provided OJT services for 90 individuals in FY 2014.

3. Expand opportunities for students to transition from school to work.

Performance Measures

1. Number of new students served
2. Number of transition outcomes

Target Goals-

- a. Increase number of new students served by at least 10
- b. Increase number of outcomes by at least 10
- c. Develop a social group program for students with autism downstate
- d. Increase number of students in Supported Education Program in DTCC Stanton Campus to 12

Number of new students served:

FY 2014: 857 (+48)
FY 2013: 809

Number of transition outcomes:

FY 2014: 322 (+59)
FY2013: 263

Section 2.

A. Many students in the ESSE Program are in a vocationally focused, 18-21 program in which they will not be receiving a diploma, but a certificate of completion. The ESSE collaboration has offered earlier engagement of students into the supported employment process resulting in fewer students being placed in sheltered employment or day habilitation settings. In addition, more students are getting connected to adult service providers and receiving community-based employment services prior to exiting high school. For the students who obtain employment prior to leaving high school, they are able to either hold a part time job along with completing high school or exiting high school prior to 21 as their goals for employment have been achieved.

For adults with most-significant disabilities, DVR provides supported employment services for individuals who have developmental/cognitive disabilities and individuals who have mental illness. Adults with developmental/cognitive disabilities receive services from the same vendors as the youth participants. Adults with mental illness are served through the mental health ACT teams. DVR has liaison counselors who are present at the ACT team locations in order to coordinate services.

B. There are still many families and students with cognitive disabilities who do not believe community-based employment is a viable option and choose not to pursue those services. Some school personnel do not make referrals to DDDS and DVR because they do not believe the students will be eligible for the services. In addition, some families are not engaging as early as possible which may hold up the process until after the student leaves high school. Over the course of the 10 full years ESSE has been in place, we see fewer of these barriers, however they still exist. For adults with cognitive disabilities, the barrier to success is the created by the lack of community service providers. DVR is pursuing additional service providers.

For individuals with significant mental illness, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health's change in the service provision model has posed an impediment to success. Members of the new service team have not been familiar with supported employment. The training of the ACT team members is underway.

Section 3.

Section three requests feedback on DVR's performance on the performance evaluation indicators as outlined in WIOA, Title I, section 116. Regulations and Guidance have not yet been formally approved for the WIOA legislation. DVR is familiar with section 116, and the indicators are reflected in the DVR goals and priorities in Section (I), found in the Vocational Rehabilitation section of the Delaware Combined State Plan. DVR has not yet measured its performance based on the performance evaluation indicators in section 116.

Section 4.

Innovation and Expansion:

Start of Success began in Delaware in the spring of 2014. Fourteen Students were selected from the Central School and Christiana High School and the partner business was the YMCA (Central and Western locations). For the 2014-2015 academic year, SOS was expanded to Brandywine School District where 14 additional students participated, totaling 28 students in New Castle County. The Brandywine YMCA and Veteran's Administration Hospital are two additional businesses where students are participating in internships. The goal is to expand statewide and discussions have begun to identify business and school partners in Kent and Sussex Counties.

In the fall of 2012, DVR and the Delaware Department of Education collaborated with Goodwill of Delaware, Christiana Care Network, and Red Clay School District to pilot Project SEARCH in Delaware. DVR published a Request for Proposal for both SEARCH sites beginning in the fall of 2014. Contracts were awarded and services implemented in August of 2014. Community Integrated Services and Autism Delaware, Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (POW&R) jointly provide Project SEARCH programming for both Bayhealth Medical Center in Kent County and Christiana Care Network in New Castle County, collaborating with Dover and Red Clay school districts. A second Project SEARCH site began in the fall of 2014 in Kent County Delaware, at Bayhealth Medical Center.

The first Project SEARCH site, at the Christiana Medical Center Hospital just completed its third year of services. It is a highly successful, highly regarded program in Delaware. Project SEARCH is now operating at or near capacity; a positive increase of service delivery to transition youth in two of the three counties in Delaware with an aspirational goal of expansion in 2016 to Sussex County. The Project SEARCH program in Delaware has been nationally recognized for the successful employment of participants.

The Specialisterne-Computer Aid, Inc. (CAI) partnership continues to provide unique training and employment opportunities in the information age to individuals on the autism spectrum. The transition from Specialisterne as the primary provider of service to CAI who has had its own learning curve to working with a broad spectrum of autistic youth and adults has been an evolution facilitated by Autism DE, POW&R (Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation). CAI is fundamentally an employer learning how to engage, interact and train

individuals with autism for prescribed government and private contracts within deadlines for production. The program has not expanded as far as an increase in training available statewide or in an alternative location. CAI has come to understand that term is broader than they originally understood. With the help and support of POW&R and DVR, CAI is developing an understanding of how to work effectively with participants across the autism spectrum which leads to successful training and employment for individuals with autism disabilities.

DVR Section (q): Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

- (1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.

Section 1.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation administers the Supported Employment Program under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act. Supported Employment occurs in an integrated setting where individuals with the most significant disabilities receive minimum wage or above for work. In the absence of the services available as part of supported employment, many of the participants would not obtain or retain employment.

The Division is focused on providing quality services through the use of the following strategies:
*Quality Assurance Reviews of all supported employment programs operated by rehabilitation providers. A representative from the administrative unit and representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation Services meet with staff from the Community Rehabilitation Programs on a quarterly basis to review progress and resolve programmatic issues.

*Oversight monitoring in partnership with long term funding agencies. At least quarterly, representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) meet with DVR program staff to address issues related to the smooth transition from DVR services to the extended services provided by the other divisions.

*DVR coordinates the Customized Employment Bootcamp training that is provided by George Tilson, Ed.D, formerly with TransCen, Inc., to provide job development and coaching training to front line staff at the community rehabilitation programs (CRP). The training program certifies staff providing services through the programs. The training was held once in 2015, training 20 CRP staff. Bi-monthly training work groups have been held with DVR, DDDS and CRP staff, along with Dr. Tilson, to determine training needs in Delaware and the capacity to increase the Bootcamp training. DVR is working with Dr. Tilson to develop a “Train the Trainer” component to the Bootcamp and offer it quarterly, increasing the capacity to 80-100 staff being trained per year. DVR works with the Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to fund and coordinate training through a SE Consortium of state agencies.

*The ongoing development of training programs to maintain and increase the expertise of all staff providing supported employment services. Staff from all of the State agencies, including DVR, participates in training programs to enhance their abilities to provide supported employment services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is currently under Order of Selection which prioritizes services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR has been able to serve all individuals with most significant disabilities. To ensure that Supported Employment services are available to eligible individuals, DVR augments the Title VI, Part B funds with Title I funds.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides supported employment services for those populations considered to have the most significant disabilities and for whom long term funding has been secured for extended services or in which natural supports can be developed on the job.

The division uses needs assessments and strategic plans to identify and address the needs of unserved and/or underserved populations. The need for supported employment services is evident in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The CSNA also indicates the need for services for individuals with physical disabilities. DVR is exploring the long-term follow-along options that may make supported employment services for individuals with physical disabilities possible. DVR conducts a supported employment assessment for every client referred to the supported employment program to determine the client's need for the intensive services available through the program.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works with the DDDS, local education agencies and the DSAMH to identify appropriate referrals for supported employment services. Primary indicators for supported employment are:

*Demonstrated inability to maintain employment utilizing traditional employment programs without extended follow-along services as the result of a most significant disability.

*Indication that, due to the significance of the disability, the individual is not likely to obtain and maintain employment in the absence of intensive services from DVR and extended services from DDDS, DSAMH or natural supports.

Individuals with the most significant mental health or developmental/intellectual disabilities who are identified as appropriate for supported employment services will have the following services available:

1. Assessment services to assist the individual in selecting an appropriate vocational goal consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, interests, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.
2. Job development and job placement in an integrated work environment based on the results of the assessment.
3. Intensive job coaching services on-site and/or off-site to enable the individual to become stabilized in his or her employment.

4. Upon stabilization, DVR and the agency identified to provide extended services commence the transition to extended services. DVR will be the lead service provider, facilitating communication with the individual, the employer, and the extended service provider for a minimum of 90 days following stabilization.
5. The individual will be eligible for post-employment services for those services unavailable through the extended service provider for a time period not to exceed four (4) years.

This process remains the same for transition students, however, for those who achieve employment while still in high school and reach stabilization and 90 days of successful employment prior to exiting, funding options will be discussed by DOE and/or the LEA, DDDS and DVR. Due to the well-established Early Start to Supported Employment program, all entities collaborate regularly as well as for individual situations and decisions are made based on requirements and responsibilities of each agency involved in order to maintain employment supports for the student.

Section 2.

Supported employment services are available to clients for no more than 24 months by which time a client should achieve job stabilization. When circumstances, documented in the client's IPE, indicate that an extension of services will be necessary to enable an individual to retain employment, exceptions may allow the services to extend beyond the 24 month time limit. Clients are determined ready for follow-along services when job stabilization is achieved. Although the program is flexible in order to provide for the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, stabilization is generally achieved when the individual requires job coaching supports only 20% of the time that they are working. The client, DVR Counselor, job coach, case manager, and employer must agree that work performance is satisfactory and employment can be maintained with the level of Follow-Along Services available. When job stabilization is declared the DVR Counselor starts the ninety-day count for DVR closure.

The transition to extended services begins at job stabilization. In order to increase the availability of extended services and increase supported employment, most participants in supported employment are provided with extended services by a long-term funding agency that has contracted with the community rehabilitation program providing supported employment services. Only when funding for extended services is not available by a long-term funding agency does DVR fund the extended services, and then only for a period of up to four years. During the four year period, DVR looks for alternate funding to support the participant's extended services in order to preserve the supported employment funds. DVR does not limit financial support to supported employment to only those funds received specifically for supported employment.

During the transitional period, from job stabilization to closure, both DVR and the long-term funding agency work together to insure the client will retain employment. Closure from DVR services occurs only if there is agreement among the parties that the client is performing satisfactorily on the job, at which time funding is transitioned to the long-term agency.

Public comments can be sent to HarrietAnn Litwin at HarrietAnn.Litwin@state.de.us
To be considered, all comments must be received by Monday, December 7, 2015.

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