



***Wisconsin Department of Vocational  
Rehabilitation and Lac Courte Oreilles  
Vocational Rehabilitation***

**Cooperative Agreement**

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**Introduction:**

- A. Parties Involved** – The Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, known collectively as the Parties.
- B. Purpose** – This Cooperative Agreement is between Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as "DVR") and Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program (hereinafter referred to as "LCO VR"). The purpose of the Cooperative Agreement is to enhance, to the greatest extent possible, the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible American Indians with disabilities who live in Sawyer County, which is within the service area of the LCO VR Program. The LCO VR Program defines their "on or near" designated service area, which is within the Sawyer County boundaries.

DVR has the responsibility to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all qualified individuals in the State of Wisconsin. However, LCO VR is the recipient of a "Section 121" grant with the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, which enables the LCO VR to provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indian individuals with disabilities residing within the LCO VR service area. These shared responsibilities create the potential for duplication of services and efforts. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires that the State of Wisconsin shall enter into a Cooperative Agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians to clarify issues and areas of potential conflict or duplication. Because of the long and historical relationship that exists between DVR and the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, this is the renewal of the Cooperative Agreement which outlines the provision of services to disabled American Indian participants who reside within the tribally defined LCO VR services area. This agreement will be renewed every five years according to LCO's grant cycle.

**Joint Agreement**

**The Parties Mutually Agree:**

- A. To have regular meetings between the staff of DVR and LCO VR for the purpose of collaboration in delivering services to qualified applicants and participants.**
- B. To cooperate in the operation of a system of service provision which ensure a smooth interface and sharing of cases and information between DVR and LCO VR.**
- C. Upon initial contact with a new participant, the DVR counselor, or the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) counselor shall offer to refer the participant to DVR if the counselor believes the participant may be eligible for services, in order to establish a joint case.**
- D. DVR and LCO VR programs share the same eligibility criteria related to disability. After a participant, who is determined eligible by the DVR program or a LCO VR program, is referred for joint case development, the VR Counselor receiving the referral may use the referring agency's certificate of eligibility as well as other documentation in order to expedite the eligibility determination process. For referred participants, the expectation is that an eligibility determination will be made in less than 15 calendar days.**
- E. DVR and LCO VR may take credit for action on a case, and each may close the case successfully, if each has provided significant services leading to an appropriate employment outcome.**
- F. All participant evaluation results, medical and/or psychological records, school records, and other pertinent information shall be shared with each DVR and LCO VR counselor with an open case after a release of information is signed by the participant granting permission for the agencies to share such information.**
- G. DVR and LCO VR shall safeguard all consumer personal information and records to prevent inadvertent or unintentional disclosures. The applicable references for confidential information at the time of this Agreement are 34 CFR 361.38 and Wis. Admin. Code Ch. DWD 68.**
- H. After a participant is determined eligible by the DVR and LCO VR programs, a meeting shall be scheduled with the participant, the DVR counselor, and the LCO VR counselor. All parties shall work together to develop the participant's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The participant will have separate IPEs with each program; however, each IPE shall reflect the services provided by DVR, the LCO VR program, and any comparable benefits. Each VR Counselor may only provide and/or obligate services by the VR agency they represent.**
- I. Individuals served by DVR and LCO VR shall be informed about their right to make informed choices. Individuals who require or request assistance in exercising informed choice shall be offered support services to assist them in this process.**

- J. DVR and LCO VR will develop and participate in joint training, cooperative statewide studies and needs assessments, and will work collaboratively in efforts to improve the provision of services to American Indians with disabilities.**

**DVR Agrees to:**

- A. Provide technical assistance and consultation regarding case service issues and documentation requirements to LCO VR.**
- B. Provide services to mutual participants of LCO VR and DVR. Individuals who are certified eligible by LCO VR shall be eligible for DVR services.**
- C. Assign DVR counseling staff as a liaison to the LCO VR program and to provide direct services to LCO VR referred participants.**
- D. Continue to provide training to DVR counselors and specifically, DVR's liaison counseling staff so that referrals from LCO VR are served in a timely manner.**
- E. Provide additional training to DVR staff on American Indian cultural issues and concerns to promote sensitivity to the special needs of joint American Indian participants.**

**LCO VR Agrees to:**

- A. Utilize a service delivery system similar to the system used by DVR. This will ensure the provision and transition of services for mutual participants. LCO VR is responsible for reporting requirements under the Section 121 grant criteria.**
- B. As part of LCO VR outreach efforts, non-tribal disabled participants who reside within the LCO VR service area, identified by the LCO VR program as eligible for DVR services, will be referred to DVR.**
- C. Seek technical assistance from DVR as appropriate.**
- D. Provide cultural sensitivity, and other culturally relevant training on issues of concern to American Indians to DVR liaison and other staff.**

We accept the statements above as defining the working relationship between DVR and LCO VR in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities.

For DVR:

DocuSigned by:  
Meredith Dressel  
6792CD231934403  
DVR Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/24/2024

For DWD:

DocuSigned by:  
Pamela McGillivray  
296276D77EE9448  
Deputy Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/24/2024

For LCO VR:

LCO VR Program Director: Miriam Binotto Date: 2/8/2024

LCO Tribal Chair: [Signature] Date: 2-23-24