

AGENDA
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
August 10, 2023
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

WebEx Virtual Meeting

<https://dwdwi.webex.com/dwdwi/j.php?MTID=m4d4e89560a3682f6b1d12fa86fd45ad4>

To join by phone only, call 855-282-6330 access code 2597 841 5090

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Roll Call and Introductions
Announcements
Quorum Check
Approval of Minutes – May 2023 |
| 9:15 – 10:15 | Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Engagement Committee• Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee• Policy Review and Administration Committee• Services to Business Committee• Executive Committee |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Bylaws Change Discussion and Vote |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | DVR Administrative Update
Delora Newton, DVR Administrator |
| 11:45 – 12:15 | Lunch Break |
| 12:15 – 12:30 | Public Comment |

- 12:30 – 1:15 Final State Plan Presentation
Deanna Krell, Director DVR Bureau of Management Services
- 1:15 – 1:30 CAP Report
Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Disability Rights Wisconsin
- 1:30 – 2:00 Overview of Training Grant Services
Tania Hanford, DVR Program and Policy Analyst
- 2:00 – 2:15 Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics
- 2:15 Adjourn

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.

DRAFT MINUTES
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
May 4, 2023
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM
UW-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County
1006 Connie Road
Baraboo, WI 53913

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

WRC Member Attendees:

Alan Kaltenberg, Alexis Riggs, Alicia Reinhard, Deb Henderson Guenther, Dr. Debbie Lee, Liz Kennedy, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Jenny Felty, Joalyn Torgerson, Jolene Wanek, Kyle Kleist, Lindsey Kreitzman, Lori Karcher, Natalia Graf, Norene Lueck, Dick Straub, Steven Wheeler, Ann Franz, Megan Bisonette

DVR Staff:

Kay Schoone, Sarah Kuehn, Tania Hanford, Meredith Dressel, Deanna Krell, Kathleen Enders, Allison Gordon, Anna Eggebrecht, Andrea Simon, Jen Klein

Guests:

Daughter of Lori Karcher, Jennifer Espinoza-Forlenza (DRW/CAP)

WRC Members Absent:

Michael Jackson, Antrice Brown, Edward Kastern

Roll Call and Introductions

- Members introduced themselves.

Announcements

- Delora is out sick today. Meredith will be covering her agenda items.

Quorum Check

- We have quorum.

Approval of Minutes – February 2023

- Motion to approve minutes – Allen and second by Alicia – approved.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

Council Engagement Committee

- Met in November 2022. Recruiting for new members, will send a notification to any members who are eligible for a second term including instructions on how to do that.
- All members need to recruit new members. Vacancies include three advocates and one business/labor representative.
- Deb will send a reminder to all members that includes information on how a person can apply to be a new member.
- Motion by Dick to appoint Lindsey to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee. Seconded by Liz and approved.

Policy Review and Administration Committee

- Committee has been meeting monthly.
- Transportation issues have been one focus of the committee. The WRC will get an update on this topic later in the meeting.
- Reviewed DVR training grants and DVR Hearing Aid Checklist.

Services to Business Committee

- Have not had a formal meeting due to quorum issues. Set a scheduled time for meetings moving forward.
- Patti Johnson provided some updates on Services to Business and set some goals for the Committee.

Annual Report Workgroup

- No updates

Executive Committee

- Committee has met to set agendas, provided feedback on DVR State Plan, set up the WRC SharePoint site to save documents, and put a focus on the Executive Committee as a feedback opportunity to the other Committees.
- Discussed that Robert's Rules of Order as written in the WRC Bylaws are a bit confusing around how WRC can have individuals who are not WRC members on Committees as well as having a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to participate on a committee as needed.

- The Executive Committee will draft language changes to the bylaws to clarify the allowance of former WRC members to participate on Committees.
- Members felt that we should allow former members as Committee members and SME to present to committees. If someone has not been a former member, they will not be allowed to be appointed to committees. This does not include SME.
- Dick asked for a definition of a SME. They would be invited to attend a committee but would not be a formal member and cannot vote.
- Lori expressed concern with recruiting new members if we allow former members to serve on committees with no set timeframe.
- Alan proposed that the timeline for formers members to participate on Committees is two years. Others agreed to the timeline.
- The former WRC member and the SME can't vote.
- Steven will draft some bylaw edits to address the issue of committee membership for the Executive Committee to review.

Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee

- Finalized State Plan recommendations and forwarded to Executive Committee.
- The recommendations have been shared with DVR. Awaiting DVR's response to the recommendations.
- Reviewed the DVR Goals for the State Plan and provided WRC input. DVR will share their response at the June WRC Executive Committee.

CAP Report Disability Rights Wisconsin – Jennifer Espinoza-Forlenza

- Her background is as an Ombudsman for Managed Care through DRW
- Currently recruiting for an attorney to be assigned to CAP. Jennifer also supports CAP activities for DRW.
- Reviewed specific CAP representation.
- Outreach to Independent Living Centers (ILC) to educate them on the role of CAP for ILC's.
- Developing new consumer friendly materials to explain CAP.
- Streamlining consumer intake by phone and through website/email.
- Shared a case example for an ILC consumer and explained the process they use to assist those consumers.
- Kyle provided an explanation of ILC's and the five services they provide. Those services include Information and referral, IL skills training, Peer support, Individual and systems advocacy, and Services that facilitate transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community, aid those at risk of entering institutions, and facilitate transition of youth to postsecondary life. ILC's also focus on rehabilitation technology (loan and demonstration), Work

Incentive Benefits Analysis, Self-Advocacy training, and Pre-ETs Services. Some of them run volunteer driving programs, as well as accessible affordable housing education. ILC's are all represented the Wisconsin Coalition for Independent Living. This body provides support and lobbying. ILC's are State and Federal funded as well as their fee for service activities.

State Plan DVR Goals Review

Deanna Krell, Director DVR Bureau of Management Services



State Plan PY24 thru
PY27 DRAFT Goals.do

- Deanna reviewed the six goals in the document.
- Deb asked for an explanation of Staff Engagement. Deanna explained it to mean that when we engage staff, they are more productive, happy, feel safe and are more likely to stay with DVR. DVR has put a strong focus on employee engagement and are using a survey to gauge where our staff are at.
- Some of the feedback on the State Plan Goals from the WRC will become strategies under the six goals.
- WRC Committee members noticed that there was a difference of opinion on the percentage of wage increase goal. DVR settled on 10% increase in the average hourly wage. 10% would be \$1.70 increase. DVR includes Supported Employment in this average calculation. Supported Employment consumers work a lot less hours and tend to make a lower wage.
- DVR will continue to work on refining these goals and create strategies under each. This information will be shared with WRC.

WRC Officer Elections

- Chair, Vice-Chair and Member-at-Large and will serve until May 2025.
- Nominations have been made and were asked to include some bios to share with the WRC.
- Dick, Liz and Kyle have been nominated to date to fill these positions. WRC will take nominations from the floor today and a second is not needed.
- Results of the election will be announced after lunch.
- Chair nominations – Dick Straub – Motion to close nomination by Noreen, seconded by Alan and passed.
 - Deb shared Dick's Bio.
- Vice-Chair nomination – Liz Kennedy – Motion to close nomination by Jenny F., seconded by Noreen and passed.
 - Deb shared Liz's Bio

- Member at Large nomination – Kyle Kleist and Liz Kennedy – Motion to close nomination by Jolene seconded by Noreen and passed.
 - Deb shared Kyle's Bio

WRC Officer Elections Results

- Chair is Dick Straub
 - Steven Wheeler gave an exiting address
 - Dick Straub gave an incoming address
- Vice-Chair is Liz Kennedy
- Member at Large is Kyle Kleist

Working Lunch

Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Plan Overview

Sarah Kuehn, DVR Program and Policy Analyst

- Stakeholder Input Session May 22nd at 11:30.
<https://publicmeetings.wi.gov/view/23316a9f-32aa-44ad-85a9-1c95334b3f97>
- Completed introduction and overview of Act 178.
- DVR is lead on this but is required to bring in partners. CIE interagency workgroup was created. They worked on drafting the plan. This is required every two years.
- A service provider work group was also created.
- A joint agency leadership team reviews and approves the plan and annual reports.
- Reviewed Executive Summary, Guiding Principles, and Performance Improvement targets.
- CIE website is where data/documents are housed.
- Review of DVR specific activities. Noted correlation between DVR state plan and CIE Plan.
- The new plan is for state fiscal year 2024-25 and starts July 1, 2023.
- Gaining input from stakeholders via email and virtual meeting. All input for stakeholders on May 22 at 4:30 p.m.
- Once the plan is finalized after the Stakeholder Input Session it will be sent to all three department secretaries for final approval before it is sent to the Legislature on June 30, 2023.
- Legislature requires DVR to send an annual report of CIE activities by June 30 of each year.
- WRC recommendation for transportation to expand collaboration with additional agencies.
- Benefits from process of collaboration:

- Interagency collaboration is starting to be nationally recognized, and the committee has been asked to present on their collaboration.
- Helping each member to avoid activity repetition with other partners.
- Data collection and collaboration has been very helpful and useful. Noted Informational Graphics are being used to make data understandable.

Public Comment – 12:30 – 12:45pm

- None

DVR Administrative Update

Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Meredith Dressel is completing this as Delora Newton is absent.
- Reviewed Program year 2022 Outcomes.
 - Review of performance measure required by WIOA.
 - Status 26 are successful closures.
 - Status 28 are individuals who did not reach the goal in their plan to be counted as a successful closure.
- Review of Federal Fiscal Year DVR Budget
 - DVR receives funding each year from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. DVR has two years to spend the money and must return any portion not spent within 24 months. DVR is actively monitoring spending to make sure no funds must be returned.
 - Discussion of how information is pushed to staff to inform them about helping to support use of the budget.
 - SLT (Senior Leadership Team) visits, BlueJeans with Delora monthly virtual meetings, and local district management oversight.
 - Review of bureaus in DVR SLT and their roles.
 - DVR has a Dashboard that has up to date analysis of budget spending and other data. This data is also regularly review with local district managers and directors.
- Review Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
 - President Biden's proposed budget for FFY 2023 includes a seven percent increase.
 - Discussion of DVR cost sharing with other partners and braided services. DVR does have to consider comparable benefits.
 - Under WIOA, DVR is mandated to spend 15% of their federal funds on Pre-ETS services. This would be for students with disabilities who are 21 and under in post-secondary and/or secondary training. If this funding is not used in a fiscal year, that funding expectation is rolled into the next year's expected budget of spending on Pre-ETS. DVR would also be

considered in non-compliance with the federal grant if they do not spend the 15% funds per year.

- DVR SLT spend three days in mid-April at the Council on State Administrator's of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) discussing fiscal management.
- WRC noted DVR has had some trouble accessing Milwaukee public school building to connect with DVR Students in Milwaukee area.
- Review of Existing Business Employment & Wage Assessments
 - EWA is Employment and Wage Assessment – looking at taxes for last 3 years to confirm individuals are making above minimum wage as part of the business.
 - DVR is also working on updating their Self Employment Policy – for individuals wanting to start a small business.

Lunch Break – 15 mins

- Review of Assistive Technology Fee Schedule Exception Requests
- Review Governor Evers' DVR Budget Items
- Review Statewide Service Provider Meeting – Deanna Krell
 - Review of DVR Service Provider portal and additional training needs.
 - The statewide meetings are in addition to local district service provider meetings.
- Top things happening in DVR:
 - At any given time, DVR has about eight percent staff openings.
 - DVR is making progress in CPA grant (Career Pathways Advancement). Have about 3 ½ years left on this grant. DVR goal is a minimum of 500 consumers enrolled in the grant.
- Review Internal Workgroup updates:
 - Policy Academy
 - It is made up of one representative from each WDA (12 individual districts across state), two individuals from SVRI and SLT/Policy Analysis
 - Quality Assurance
 - START (Statewide Transition and Reaction Team)
 - AsTec – Assistive/Adaptive Technology Team
 - SenseAbility – Team to support individuals with Sensory Loss
 - Update working on Eye glass guidance.
 - UW-Oshkosh reached out to DVR for support with assisting students with visual impairment/blind. Team working on feedback for them.
 - Workplace Wellness Team
 - Employee Resource Group

- DVR Staff Training Updates
- DVR Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Visits
- DVR has not received any new Mediation requests during last time period.
- DVR received four appeal requests during last time period.
- Review FFY 2024-2027 State Plan Process
 - Review of timeline
- DVR Outreach Plan Update
- DVR has a New Financial Literacy Dashboard
 - Was rolled out a couple months ago.
 - Continue review if additional resources need to be developed.
 - Question from WRC about consumer who has family support participant in service. DVR replied that family supports can be a part of the service provided to consumer. Also noted a number of financial literacy services are free and family members can also use them. Deb noted DVR may be able to support family financial literacy as part of helping consumer reach their long-term job goal.

Service Provider Transportation Update

Deanna Krell, Director DVR Bureau of Management Services

- DVR completed review of survey sent to providers.
 - DVR is moving forward with allowing service providers to transport the consumers in privately owned vehicles when they are already being served for specific situation on an as needed basis.
 - Timeline is to implement this by July 1, 2023. DVR does have to give 30-day notice anytime items are added to service provider agreement. They also need to notify local staff of the change. DVR completed consultation with legal counsel and other partners prior to this decision.
 - DVR will update the service provider agreement so they would have to check a transportation box to provide the new form of transportation to consumers. This will signify that they satisfied all requirements to provide this transportation.
 - For a provider to transport a consumer they will need to have a commercial business auto policy (one-million-dollar minimum coverage). Currently providers are required to carry workers comp and commercial liability coverage.
 - This service is an as-needed option, not all service providers have to provide transportation services. Some service providers already have transportation divisions that DVR may already be supporting.
 - This would be in situations where other transportation services haven't already been arranged. Not intended as a regular/routine source of

transportation and only when the service provider is willing to provide this service on an individualized basis.

- DVR will be monitoring this the provision of this service. Future decision may be made regarding continuation of this service.
- About 30% of providers agreed they would be interested in doing this.
- WRC voiced concern that providers may not be willing to support this as they are not getting paid for the service. WRC is hoping in the future, DVR could pay for this service.

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- Steven will draft some bylaw edits to address the issue of committee membership for the Executive Committee to review.
- Motion by Dick to appoint Lindsey to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance committee, seconded by Liz and approved.
 - This appointment was approved by vote and no other action is required.
- Inquired about future agenda items?
 - No items

Adjourn

Steven Wheeler offered a motion to adjourn, seconded by Liz Kennedy and Kyle Kleist. Meeting adjourned.

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Current Language for Article IX

Article XI - Conduction of Meetings

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise provided herein.

Recommended Amended Language for Article IX

Article XI - Meeting Management and other Council Operations

The Council shall use the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order for meeting procedures. For avoidance of doubt, this includes use of the provision that committees of the council can include outgoing council members who may serve in an advisory capacity to those committees. Unless the full council votes to assign a different length of committee service for a specific committee or committee member, each committee appointment shall conclude after two years of committee service or 2 years after the individual is no longer a member of the full council, whichever occurs first.

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

Vocational Rehabilitation

DVR Quarterly Update

DELORA NEWTON
DVR Administrator

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council | August 10, 2023 | WebEx

Follow-up Items from May Meeting

- WRC By-law update to clarify who may be appointed to committees – on agenda.



Program Year (PY) 2022 Outcomes

- For cases closed **July 01, 2022 – June 30, 2023:**

PY 2022 Closures	All Cases	All SE Cases	All Non-SE Cases
Total Successful Closures	3,124	741	2,383
Average Wages Earned per Week	\$431	\$166	\$513
Average Wage Per Hour	\$17.55	\$12.07	\$18.40
Average Hours Worked per Week	25	14	28
Private Insurance	1,118	178	940



PY 2022 Outcomes (cont.)

- Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) Attainment Rate
 - **5,044** Enrolled in Training/Education
 - **3,148** MSGs Attained
 - **62.4%** MSG Rate (*Negotiated goal was 48.0%*)
- Credential Attainment Rate
 - **2,156** Enrolled in Training/Education
 - **608** Secondary Credentials Graduated and Employed
 - **335** Post Secondary Credentials Attained
 - **41.3%** Credential Rate (*Negotiated goal was 29.0%*)

**Data current as of July 29, 2023*



Case Review

	PY 2020	PY 2021	PY 2022
Potentially Eligible Students	627	657	566
All Applicants Determined Eligible	7,547	9,042	10,323
New IPEs	5,517	6,539	7,298
*Closed Status 26	3,095	3,446	3,124
**Closed Status 28	6,069	6,438	6,485
Total Served	26,131	26,436	27,922

** Limited to Consumers closed in employment meeting their IPE goal.*

*** Consumers may decide to close their case for various reasons including, but not limited to, changes in health, relocation, or accepting employment that does not meet their IPE goal.*

**Data current as of July 20, 2023*



Eligibilities by OOS Category

	PY 2020	PY 2021	PY 2022
Category 1	3,645	4,875	5,610
Category 2	3,828	4,097	4,666
Category 3	48	48	29
Not Eligible for Services	26	21	18
Total Eligibility Determinations	7,547	9,042	10,323

**Data current as of July 20, 2023*



Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) DVR Budget

- Unspent FFY 2022 federal funds were carried over and will be spent during FFY 2023.
- FFY 2023 budget reflects final federal award and applicable state match.

FFY	TOTAL Budget	TOTAL Spending
2021	\$82,673,781	\$82,673,781
2022 to date	\$82,248,222	\$81,386,725
2023 to date	\$89,605,936	\$40,031,308

**Data current as of July 24, 2023. Budget for 2023 includes all applicable state match. State GPR match funding has not changed during the reporting period.*



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

FFY23 Purchased Expenses YTD: \$7,535,678

WDA	Consumers	Expenses	WDA	Consumers	Expenses
1	220	\$432,322	7	64	\$119,161
2	268	\$628,988	8	252	\$626,362
3	428	\$1,280,251	9	124	\$379,161
4	344	\$973,393	10	353	\$1,178,584
5	254	\$774,560	11	154	\$335,051
6	215	\$808,836			

**Data current as of July 23, 2023*



Existing Business Employment & Wage Assessments

April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023

	Referral for EWA*	EWA Met Min. Wage	EWA Did Not Meet Min. Wage	Debt/Asset Ratio Requested **	Debt/Asset Ratio Passed	Debt/Asset Ratio in Process	Exception Requested	Exception Approved
Farm	17	2	10	7	2	5	1	1
Non-Farm	4	2	2	1	0	1	0	0
Total	21	4	12	8	2	6	0	1



Existing Business Case Closures

April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023

	26 Closed Rehabilitated	28 Closed Not Rehabilitated (After IPE Initiated)	Average Total Cost Per Case
Farm	3	1	\$44,463.45
Non-Farm	2	1	\$8,047.33
Total	5	1	\$26,255.39



Assistive Technology Fee Schedule Exception Requests

April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023

	Exceptions Requested	Total Amount Requested	Exceptions Approved	Total Amount Approved
Farm	1	\$17,543.00	1	\$17,543.00
Non-Farm	3	\$67,463	3	\$67,463
Total	4	\$85,006	4	\$85,006



Top Things Happening in DVR

- Recruiting, hiring, and training staff.
- Progress on Career Pathways Advancement grant.
- Work on FFY 2024-2027 State Plan.
- Implementing DEI Action Plan.
- Monitoring consumer services spending patterns to ensure DVR is providing all services necessary for consumer success.
- Leadership training for all DVR Managers.
- ALJ refresher training on VR law.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Policy Academy

- Reviewed:
 - Rapid Engagement Guidance Review
 - Gig/Independent Contractor Jobs
 - Presumptive Guidance
 - CIE SFY 2024-25 Plan and CIE SFY 2023 Report
- WDA budget and expenditure update.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Quality Assurance

- Reviewed case closures; report in progress.
- Rapid Engagement Workgroup formed to develop rapid engagement guidance for staff based on QA review.
- Hiring for a new Quality Assurance Analyst.
- Upcoming: Plan for biennial peer review session.
 - Staff from each WDA participate in a statewide QA project and review cases over the course of two days.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

START

- Met in *May 2023* (meet quarterly).
- Difference between IPS and Supported Employment.
- Reviewed Summer Pre-ETS programs by WDA.
- Discussed how each WDA interacts with consumers involved in the Juvenile Justice Programs.
- What are the needs for Transition Training in the field.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

AsTec

June meeting:

- Business Services Section Chief Patti Johnson discussed best practices for requesting assistive technology accommodations with employers.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

SenseAbility

Met on June 30:

- Reviewed Corrective Lenses Purchasing Guide.
- Presentation update by workgroup member about the Wisconsin Chapter for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (WAER) Collaborative Vision Conference in May.
- Helen Keller National Center outreach discussion.
 - Approved to provide services for Deaf/Blind in Wisconsin.
- Reviewed and updated the charter.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Workplace Wellness

- In-Person Meeting in June.
- Team discussion as to how our team can assist with Employee Engagement efforts.
- Had EAP training as to how to help wellness coordinators support colleagues in their wellness journey, while taking care of themselves.
- August is National Wellness Month; promoting events for this month.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Employee Resource Group

- Meeting in June. The group continues to define their role and continued work on the team charter.
- The group has deferred activity until the larger DEI plan is implemented so that they can define and clarify their role.



DVR Staff Trainings Update

- May
 - Comprehensive New Staff Training – total of 5 days
 - Training Grants – DVR staff Kathleen Enders and Jenny Wendlandt
- June (Part 1 of 3)
 - Customer Service in VR setting – Kyle Walker from Stout Vocational Rehab Institute
- July (Part 2 of 3)
 - Rapid Engagement (VR professionals Chaz Compton and Kyle Walker)
 - Provided national and statewide data and suggestions for consumer engagement.
 - Leadership Training for DVR SLT, Directors and Supervisors
- August (Part 3 of 3)
 - Training on Customer Service and Rapid Engagement Standards Guidance – DVR Policy Analysts



New Mediation Requests 03/25/23 to 06/28/23

DVR did not receive any mediation requests during this time period.



New Appeals Requests 03/25/2023 to 06/28/2023

DVR did not receive any appeal requests during this time period.



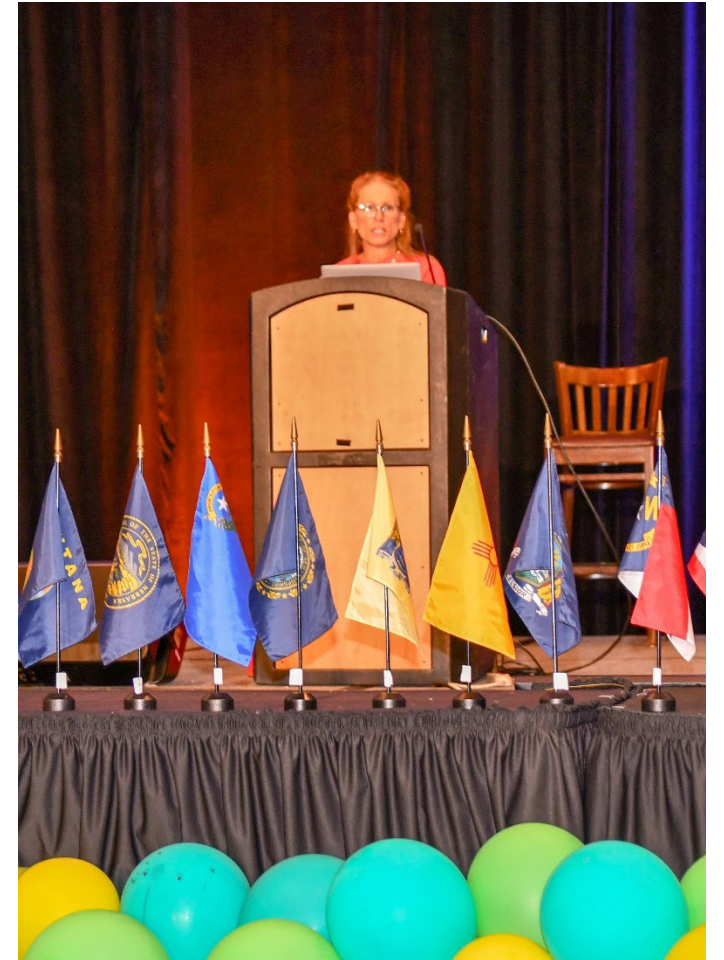
Project SEARCH



Project SEARCH National Conference

16th Annual National Conference

- Milwaukee, July 11 – 14
- Hilton Milwaukee City Center and Baird Center
- 800 attendees
 - Canada, Iceland, United Kingdom
- 150 speakers
 - Assistant Deputy Secretary Jennifer Sereno
 - DVR Administrator Delora Newton
 - DVR Bureau Director Deanna Krell



Project SEARCH Employment After Graduation

70 – 90%

- Andis Company - Sturtevant
- Ascension NE Wisconsin-Mercy Campus - Oshkosh
- Bellin Health/HSHS St Vincent Hospital - Green Bay
- Marshfield Medical Center - Marshfield
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Eau Claire
- Milwaukee County Zoo - Milwaukee
- West Bend Mutual Insurance - West Bend

100%

- Aspirus Riverview Hospital – Wis. Rapids
- Aurora Bay Care Medical Center – Green Bay
- Thedacare Regional Medical Center - Appleton
- University of Wisconsin Stevens Point - Stevens Point

Working 16 hours or more per week after graduation.



Questions?



Contact Us



Delora Newton

DVR Administrator

608-261-4576

Delora.Newton@dwd.wisconsin.gov



PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(a) State Rehabilitation Council. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

(A) is an independent State commission.

[X] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative’s term.

Council Representative	Member	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council	Kyle Kleist	1	September, 2021
Parent Training and Information Center	Lori Karcher	2	July, 2022
Client Assistance Program	Jennifer Espinoza Forlenza	1	May, 2023
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the State VR Agency)	Gadeen Taylor Duke	2	June, 2023
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Jennifer Felty	1	July, 2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	Alan Kaltenberg	2	June, 2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	Michael Jackson	1	August, 2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	Richard Straub	2	June, 2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	
Disability Advocacy Groups	Jaclyn Borchardt	1	May, 2023
Disability Advocacy Groups	Jolene Wanek	1	August, 2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	Kathy Meisner	1	June, 2023
Disability Advocacy Groups	Elizabeth Kennedy	2	July, 2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	Dr. Deborah Lee	1	July, 2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	Lindsey Kreitzman	2	June, 2023

Disability Advocacy Groups	Natalia Graf	1	September, 2021
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Norene Lueck	1	August, 2021
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Alexis Riggs	1	July, 2022
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	Megan Bisonette	2	July, 2022
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Alicia Reinhard	1	August, 2019
State Workforce Development Board	Ann Franz	1	August, 2022
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Delora Newton	1	May, 2023

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

Wisconsin's Rehabilitation Council (WRC) is meeting the composition requirements.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

In October 2022, DVR informed the WRC of the State plan requirements and state timelines. DVR also asked for WRC's recommendations. DVR attended committee meetings when the council was creating their recommendations for the state plan to provide support, responses, and answer questions. DVR received the WRC state plan recommendations in May 2023. WRC reviewed their previous state plan recommendations as well as recommendations from the 2021 CNSA to help inform the recommendations submitted in May 2023. DVR presented our response to the recommendations at the June 2023 Executive Committee and Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Meetings and took additional feedback. DVR presented our state plan draft to the Full WRC council meeting in August 2023.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

WRC Recommendation #1: DVR is encouraged to adopt a biennial review of its processes and timelines related to eligibility determination, plan development, and delivery of consumer goods and services.

1A. This review should include feedback from service providers regarding the effectiveness of the services being provided, the ease of providing the services, concerns related to service delivery including payment for the services and any recommendations for improving the consumer experience.

1B. This review should include feedback from consumers regarding the effectiveness of the services being provided, the ease of accessing services, concerns related to the delivery of services, and any recommendations for improving the consumer experience.

DVR is encouraged to obtain council input on the review processes and to share the results of this review with the council for further quality improvement.

DVR Response:

In response to 1A., we continually receive feedback from service providers that helps to inform our decisions. We have and will continue to survey providers every two years to help inform the service agreement review/renewal process as well as collecting input to inform statewide service technical specification changes. In local areas where service provider capacity and concerns have been brought up, DVR has offered local area focus group meetings with providers. These meetings have produced good suggestions and are helping to inform decisions related to provision of services to consumer. We will continue to offer these focus groups as needed. DVR continues to meet with a Service Provider Advisory group twice per year. DVR will also hold two Statewide Service Provider meetings each year with the intent to provide information and solicit feedback.

In response to 1B., DVR has been doing quality assurance case reviews related to our processes and consumer experience. We are and will continue to implement rapid engagement strategies and consumer contact standard guidance. DVR's Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan, our 3-year Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and WDA 2's Milwaukee Equity Action Plan has strategies related to obtaining consumer feedback to help improve the consumer experience. We also feel that DVR staff feedback is important to consider as well.

WRC Recommendation #2:

DVR is encouraged to identify, implement, and conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. In addition, DVR is encouraged to conduct a basic computer and internet assessment for all consumers engaged in work search and post-secondary education. When needed, DVR should purchase the necessary equipment (including adaptive equipment) to ensure that

consumers are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband Internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. DVR should also provide the necessary training for the consumer to be proficient in using a computer and navigating the internet.

DVR Response:

DVR agrees that technology, such as basic computers and access to the internet, is an important part of a consumer's employment success. DVR is an individualized service program. Requiring this type of assessment for every consumer could slow down the DVR process and a consumer's path to employment. While this type of assessment may be necessary for some consumers, it will not be necessary for others. We will look at technology, access and needs on an individualized basis. DVR has updated its computer purchase guidance and will educate staff on it. There are assessment questions provided in this guidance for staff to use with consumers to help determine technology and connectivity needs. It is hoped that this guidance will get the types of services suggested in this recommendation to the consumers who need it.

This recommendation and response focus mainly on basic computer/technology needs. DVR will continue to focus on technology needs such as specialized/adaptive equipment and software related to disability accommodations.

WRC Recommendation #3:

DVR is encouraged over the lifetime of this state plan to increase the:

- 3A. Overall hourly wage, hours worked per week and employee benefits by 15%,
- 3B. Number of credentials attained by consumers by 10% and
- 3C. Number of consumers pursuing a credential by 10%. This recommendation includes consumers in supported and customized employment. Benefit analysis services should be offered to the consumer to ensure that any increase in wages and hours does not negatively impact the consumer's benefits or affect the overall welfare of the consumer.

DVR Response:

We agree increasing hourly wages, hours worked per week and employee benefits is important. DVR has added a state plan goal to increase consumer wages by 10%-15% over the lifetime of the plan. DVR and WRC agreed to use this range during the WRC Full Council meeting in May 2023. We believe the focus on high quality jobs with an increase in hourly wage will also create an increase in hours worked per week and employee benefits. DVR's Career Pathways Advancement grant also seeks to promote training advancement options for consumers. Additionally, DVR's state plan goals will include strategies to promote education and training services which will lead to increased credentials and high wage jobs. Finally, DVR offers work incentive benefits services and Ticket to Work information to consumers to ensure they have access to information about the impact of earned income on benefits, and the resources to make informed employment decisions.

WRC Recommendation #4:

DVR is encouraged to increase supported and customized employment providers across the State of Wisconsin by 10% over the lifetime of this state plan, with an emphasis on building capacity in underserved regions of the state.

DVR Response:

DVR agrees with this recommendation and has a specific goal related to decreasing the number of providers with waiting lists. A strategy for this goal will be to increase capacity of current providers as well as find new providers.

WRC Recommendation #5:

DVR is encouraged to survey the Business Services Consultants (BSC) to identify training that would enhance their professional knowledge. The council recommends that the BSC's receive at least one yearly training on disability-related employment supports that have been identified as effective in aiding a person with the most significant disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

DVR Response:

DVR agrees with this recommendation. This will be a strategy under the business service state plan goal.

WRC Recommendation #6:

DVR is encouraged to identify at least four regional resources that would help reinvigorate training in supported and customized employment for service providers across the state.

DVR Response:

We are currently working with Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) to provide supported employment training that is Association of Communication Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certified. We will continue to investigate and encourage training in these areas for providers. Service Provider training will also be a strategy under DVR's goal of increasing service provider capacity.

WRC Recommendation #7:

DVR is encouraged to work with the WRC-Policy Review and Administration Committee to review the processes DVR uses to establish service rates and fees using the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) rate-setting methodology guide as a tool.

DVR Response:

DVR has been increasing service provider rates over the last several years based on feedback from providers, DVR staff, and consumers. DVR will explore the Rate-Setting Guide from VRTAC-QM and will also be looking into options to contract with an outside resource to assist with setting rates. Review of rates will be a strategy within the state's goal of reducing

service provider wait lists. DVR can provide information to the council related to changes in service rates and fees as we have been doing.

WRC Recommendation #8:

DVR is encouraged to identify and implement at least two formal transportation service options that offer timely, reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation services in rural, urban, and tribal areas. Priority should be given to "transportation deserts" or areas with a limited number of transportation providers.

DVR Response:

DVR is not in the position to assess or create transportation service options. This is a Wisconsin transportation system issue. We will continue to have DVR representation on the Non-Driver Department of Transportation committee. We are open to being a part of other committees or workgroups to address this systemic issue. DVR staff in our local areas help consumers investigate available transportation options to support the IPE. We have assisted consumers with mileage reimbursement, use of public transportation, use of private options like taxi services, Uber and Lyft, and assistance in learning how to use transportation options. Additionally, at the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council's request, DVR investigated and modified language in our Service Provider agreement to allow for limited transportation of a consumer by a DVR Service Provider who has met defined insurance requirements when the provider is providing a service under the agreement to that same consumer.

(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

- (1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:
 - (A) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

The following themes emerged in the most recent CSNA completed in 2021 in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment.

- Transportation, job skills and training were all identified as the most important rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities. Transportation was by far the most frequently mentioned need, especially in the rural areas;
- Mental health impairments were frequently cited as a barrier to employment for DVR consumers.

- The need to develop social skills and to dispel employer’s misconceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities to work were frequently cited as needs;
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities are often fearful of losing SSA benefits, and this continues to affect the jobs they pursue and the hours they strive to work;
- There is a waitlist in many areas for extended services in supported employment and difficulty getting job coaches due to provider turnover during the pandemic;
- Financial literacy was identified as a service need for DVR consumers and the inability to manage money, plan for the future, save and invest was cited as a reason that DVR consumers may lose jobs and return to DVR for services again;
- Affordable housing was identified as an emerging need for individuals with disabilities; and
- There is continued need for the development of supported and customized employment among providers in order to be able to help these individuals transition to competitive integrated employment from sheltered workshops.

(B) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The 2021 CSNA identified the following recurring themes related to the needs of individuals with disabilities who are from minority racial or ethnic groups:

- Community and systemic racism were identified as a primary barrier to employment for minorities with disabilities.
- Other rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities from diverse culture are similar to all individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin.
- Most of the individuals that participated in this CSNA did not believe that DVR underserved any specific population of individuals based on race, disability type or geography. However, those that did identify potentially underserved groups cited individuals with disabilities living in rural areas, Hispanics and Asians.

The August 2020 report titled, Understanding the Influences of Race, Disability, and Poverty on Employment: Perspectives from Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Participants Living in the Central City of Milwaukee produced by VRTAC-TC and WINTAC funded through RSA identified six primary themes as well as near-term and long-term recommendations. This report resulted from input from 30 residents of Milwaukee’s Central City who were engaged with DVR and either pursuing employment and career opportunities or recently having exited the program.

Milwaukee area DVR staff with support of DVR Senior Leadership and Central office staff are currently working on implementing these recommendations.

Primary themes shared by participants included:

- The Importance of Effective Counselor Communication, Responsiveness, and Working Alliance
- Concerns About Staff Turnover, Delays, and Lack of Time and Flexibility
- The Influence of Race
- Challenges Presented by Poverty
- Participant Perspective on Improving DVR Services

In 2022 DVR engaged in a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Needs Assessment Study with Roadmap Research Global. In addition to the 2021 CNSA and the 2020 Understanding the Influences of Race, Disability, and Poverty on Employment: Perspectives from Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Participants Living in the Central City of Milwaukee, this study examined DVR's DEI-related data, policies, internal and external communications, and training strategy to critically analyze DVR's current DEI practices and to understand DVR's culture. Furthermore, the DVR DEI Needs Assessment Study involved leadership and front-line interviews of 30 individuals across the agency to gather employee thoughts and perspectives on DVR's culture, the current state and priority of DEI, and ideas for improving DEI at DVR in the coming years. The assessment identified key findings and both short and long-term recommendations. This assessment helped to inform DVR's 2023 DEI Action Plan.

2022 DEI Needs Assessment Key Findings:

- The Culture of DVR is generally defined as caring, compassionate, and one that thrives on collaboration and teamwork.
- There is a significant amount of support for DEI initiatives across all datasets (ERG Survey, DWD Employee Engagement Survey, and DEI Needs Assessment Interviews)
- The data unanimously confirm the need for greater DEI focus at the state level and for all WDAs, indicating a significant underrepresentation of focus on the Hispanic/Latino population, disproportionately low case success rates for people of color, and a lack of acknowledgement of Intersectional diversity in general.
- Consumers and Employees are ready for DVR to move beyond DEI messaging and demonstrate DEI action and understanding.
- Local WDAs need local-level DEI planning and ownership within a unified state framework.
- Internally and Externally, DVR has room for improvement when it comes to communication with and outreach to consumers, DVR leadership

communication with staff, and DVR communication skills related to receiving tough feedback and having critical conversations.

- There is a fear of reporting problems and experiencing retaliation in the agency and no clear means for employees to report problems in an actionable way.
- DVR's workforce (particularly management) could be more diverse, representative of the consumers it serves; developing stronger talent pipelines and developing current employees could offer solutions.
- DVR's ERG is a great first step for engaging people of color at DVR, but the ERG's purpose is not clearly defined. In general, DVR could be asking people of color for too much emotional labor without compensation or personal professional/career benefit.
- There is a strong desire for and need for more in-depth training and shifting away from "one and done" trainings
- When it comes to internal and external policies, there is a general consensus that current policies are not necessarily inequitable but are often too complex, too slow, require too many "hoops," are too rigid, and are poorly communicated.

- (C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

The 2021 CNSA identified the following needs of individuals with disabilities served through the workforce development system:

- The interview participants indicated that it is common for DVR to have their consumers register with the Job Centers of Wisconsin and this is borne out by the data on the number of DVR participants that access employment services (Title III) through the Centers. The relationship between DVR and the Job Centers was described as good, but the pandemic resulted in the Centers operating exclusively online, so access has been limited. The relationship remains primarily one of referral between DVR and the Centers;
- The referral stream from the Job Centers to DVR was steady prior to the pandemic but has decreased significantly since the office closures from March 2020 to June 2021. DVR is hopeful that this referral source will pick back up in the future;
- Prior to the pandemic, the Job Centers struggled to provide effective services to individuals who are blind, deaf, or have significant mental health impairments. These individuals were routinely referred to DVR without accessing the in-person services at the centers; and
- The partnership with Adult Education and Family Literacy was noted as an area where DVR and WTCS could increase collaboration and share resources for training for DVR consumers.

- (D) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. 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 IDEA

The 2021 CNSA identified the following needs of youth with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services:

- The pandemic and resulting school closures had a significant impact on transition at all levels, especially on providers of pre-employment transition services. However, providers were able to shift to remote service provision and DVR was very supportive of the process;
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in Wisconsin are similar to all individuals served by DVR except that the need for social skills and self-advocacy skills were cited more frequently and with a greater level of importance than adults;
- All five of the pre-employment transition services were identified as important needs for students with disabilities, with work-based learning cited as the most important service that can help prepare youth and students for employment upon transition;
- Interview participants stressed how important independent living skills development is for youth if they are to be successful in the world of work and achieve their highest potential;
- The Project Search sites were praised by several interview participants as being helpful for transition-age youth and an important source of job training and soft and hard skill development; and
- Section 511 requirements for youth and the career counseling and information and referral have impacted and disrupted the pipeline from secondary school to sheltered workshops. The interview participants stressed that service providers need the capacity to serve this population through supported or customized employment in order to promote competitive integrated employment for youth with disabilities.

- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

The 2021 CNSA identified the following needs To establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state:

- There was a need for job coaches noted throughout the state by providers, DVR staff and partners. This service has been especially hit hard by turnover in

providers due to COVID. Interview participants indicated that job coaches and other Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) staff are able to make much more money in other jobs in the current economy, so they are leaving in large numbers, and this severely impacts the capacity of providers to deliver services;

- Several participants indicated a need to improve the quality of job placements provided by vendors. This was a recurring theme in multiple interviews. Placements were described as primarily entry-level and low paying;
- CRP and provider staff were very appreciative of the rate increases DVR authorized during the pandemic, indicating that these increases helped many of them stay afloat during the pandemic;
- The need for IPS services throughout the state was identified by interview participants, especially since individuals with mental health impairments continue to constitute a large percentage of those served by DVR; and
- CRP and other providers articulated gratitude for the training that DVR has provided to them in the past and requested that this continues in the future as they have a lot of new staff.

(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

- (1) Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

DVR developed draft goals in January 2023 to present to the WRC Performance measures and Quality Assurance committee. We presented our goals to a WRC committee in March 2023 and at a full council meeting in May 2023 and obtained feedback. This feedback was incorporated into the state plan goals and strategies and presented to the WRC full council in August 2023.

- (2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in Section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

- (A) Support innovation and expansion activities;
- (B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

- (C) 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); and
 - (D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.
- [text box: List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority]

DVR developed 6 goals based on our most recent CSNA (2021), performance accountability measurements, WRC feedback and recommendations, agency staff survey information on engagement/employee satisfaction, agency staffing data, 2021 Council on Workforce Investment Business Climate Survey, and DVR's DEI needs assessment. Goals are measurable and address consumer barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services, improving services that lead to quality employment outcomes, continued focus on providing services to transition students, and use of innovation and expansion activities when possible.

1. Business Services:

In each program year of the State Plan, engage 2,820 business establishments to understand their business needs, introduce them to DWD Services and enhance hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. The number of business establishments is based on an average productivity standard for each DVR Business Services Consultant. (Basis: performance accountability, WRC recommendations, 2021 Council on Workforce Investment Business Climate Survey)

- a. Identify and distribute employment opportunities that meet competitive integrated employment standards
- b. Inform business about ways to connect with WDVR talent, including:
 - i. Recruiting directly through WDVR
 - ii. Creating opportunities for career exploration, including informational interviews, job shadows, and work experiences
 - iii. Engaging youth and students in work-based learning, company tours, and virtual events that provide occupational information
 - iv. Connecting to DVR consumers as they advance along a career pathway
- c. Engage business in learning about disability and employment topics, such as increasing disability awareness, creating inclusive work cultures, and adopting strategies to hire and retain disability talent.
- d. Foster relationships between business and WIOA, workforce, and community partners to ensure access to a full scope of resources and services.

- e. BSCs will complete an annual survey to identify training needs.
 - f. BSCs will engage in training to learn about competitive integrated employment and disability-related supports that can aid individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain and maintain employment and share that information with businesses as appropriate.
2. Increase consumer hourly wages:
10%-15% increase of the average hourly wage for consumers exiting with competitive integrated employment by providing needed services to achieve high paying jobs over the state plan timeframe (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028).
(Basis: 2021 CSNA, performance accountability, and WRC recommendation)
- a. Increase the number of consumers pursuing a credential by 10% from current percentage. This recommendation includes consumers in supported and customized employment.
 - b. Increase Work Incentive Benefits services by 10% to assist consumers understand the use of Work Incentives, Trial Work Periods, and Ticket to Work when pursuing employment to inform individuals how to work off benefits.
 - c. Use of LMI data by staff and consumers to identify high quality jobs and training needs during the IPE development process.
 - d. DVR Business Services Consultants sharing local labor market information and "hot" job lead information with other staff and consumers.
 - e. Continue to implement the Career Pathways Advancement Grant with focus on health care, manufacturing, digital/information technology, and construction.
3. Pre-employment Transition Services:
DVR will continue to achieve the Pre-Employment Transition Services 15% expenditure goal in each Federal Fiscal year during the State Plan timeframe by providing outreach and needed Pre-Employment transition services to students with disabilities throughout the state ensuring they can explore and achieve competitive integrated employment.
(Basis: performance accountability, WRC recommendation, 2021 CSNA)
- a. DVR will continue to assign a DVR staff to each public high school to provide outreach, technical assistance, information and referral to secondary education officials in those schools, attend Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings when invited and available, and provide Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible and eligible students.

- b. DVR staff will provide information regarding DVR services at in-service/teacher trainings, local job fairs, parent teacher conference, statewide conferences and CCoT meetings.
 - c. DVR staff will work with eligible students and their teams to coordinate transition services, braid funding between DVR and local schools as needed, explore career options, provide Pre-ETS services and other necessary services, and support them towards achieving their employment goals.
 - d. At the local WDA level, develop summer work experiences, workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills, and other work-based learning experiences to meet the Pre-ETS service needs.
4. Staff Engagement:
Increase DVR staff engagement by improving DWD Employee Engagement survey results to 3.5 or higher out of 5 on a Likert scale in all areas of the survey to nurture a positive work environment which will improve employee retention; increase employee productivity; advance good customer service towards consumers and business partners; and aid in the recruitment and advancement of DVR staff. (Basis: Agency's staff engagement, recruitment, and retention data, DVR's DEI Needs Assessment)
- a. Advocate for pay increases for staff and for review of possible pay adjustments based on equitable pay structures as outlined in the Wisconsin State Employee Compensation Plan, Discretionary Equity and Retention Adjustments. This is accomplished through discussions with Human Resources staff and DWD Secretary's Office.
 - b. Broadly share job postings and promotional opportunities with diverse audiences to attract qualified applicants.
 - c. Provide monthly trainings to educate and refresh staff on a variety of topics. Regular training will promote consistent statewide practice, enhance customer service, and instill greater confidence in staff as they perform job responsibilities.
 - d. Conduct Stay Interviews at least biannually to cultivate and improve supervisory relationships and learn what staff enjoy about work, what they would like more of or less of on the job, and how their supervisor can help them succeed.
 - e. Encourage staff to complete annual surveys distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development that measure employee engagement levels. Use the results to determine and implement policy and process changes necessary to improve staff morale.

- f. Utilize DVR's Employee Engagement Team to solicit feedback from staff on training needs, hiring and promotional practices, effectiveness of management communication, and other topics raised by staff that will improve engagement and result in employee retention.
- g. Implementation of DVR's DEI Action Plan strategies that focus on building safe and supportive workspaces for staff.

5. Service Provider Capacity:

DVR seeks to reduce the number of consumers impacted by a DVR service provider wait list by 20% by the end of the state plan timeframe (June 30, 2028) thereby increasing services provider capacity.

For more than 5 years, WI DVR has identified a decrease in the capacity of service providers with a DVR service agreement to deliver authorized services in a timely manner. This has caused a delay in progress for consumers. DVR has defined a service Provider waitlist to be a situation in which a Service Provider is unable to initiate a service(s) within 30 calendar days of receiving a DVR service authorization or continue services for 30 calendar days for an existing authorized consumer. The reasons for provider waitlists include: high turnover, low pay, inadequate training, labor market economic factors, lack of professional growth opportunities, lack of consistent credential requirements or qualifications, unpredictable work schedules, changeable work locations, work related travel requirements, reporting requirements, programmatic complexity, funding and fee differences between schools/DVR and long term care agencies, changing nature of work for people with disabilities, shift from sheltered work to competitive integrated employment.

(Basis: WRC recommendation and performance accountability and service provider waiting list data)

The measurement is made using the DVR dashboard report comparing consumer waiting list numbers tracked and averaged on a quarterly basis.

- a. Increase awareness and understanding about the impact of a service provider wait list on consumers and the programmatic health of the DVR program. Provide information to the provider and stakeholder community including the locations, number of consumers, services, and budgetary impact of wait lists.
 - i. Provide regular updates using the DVR dashboard waitlist report and to the providers, programs and agencies serving common customers.
 - ii. Provide information on use of and need for the DVR wait list mechanism available to all DVR statewide service providers.

- iii. Provide technical assistance directly to providers experiencing a wait list.
- b. Work to stabilize and expand the workforce of individuals who work in key positions including job developers, those who complete key assessments and systematic instruction providers by encouraging professional training and recognized credentialing opportunities to creating upward mobility for quality providers and improve service quality.
 - i. Promote credentialed training opportunities meeting Association of Community Rehabilitation ACRE standards and other industry recognized standards.
 - ii. Coordinate implementation of qualification standards with other state departments delivering supported employment services
- c. Stabilize funding and reduce cliff effect when consumer support services transition from one funding source to another in supported employment.
 - i. Encourage transparency from all funding sources to stabilize and grow the provider network. This includes regular and on-going discussions with our partners overseeing and providing long-term care funding such as the Wisconsin Department of Health Services as well as Managed Care Organizations and IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) Consulting Agencies (ICA).
 - ii. Regular meetings between DVR and Department of Health Services Leadership to discuss the issues being faced within the Supported Employment system.
 - iii. DVR will monitor and adjust rates of payment to cover costs to deliver services and changing economic factors, not setting rates so low as to effectively deny an individual a necessary service; and not absolute with exceptions permitted so that individual needs can be addressed.
- d. Continue to gather input from DVR staff, providers and others in the workforce and supported employment system in Wisconsin DVR staff to identify the causes of waitlists to develop solutions and adjust approaches as needed.
 - i. Engage in discussions with the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC), the DVR Service Provider Advisory Group, related stakeholder forums and gatherings to identify causes and potential solutions to provider wait lists.

- ii. Include and analyze questions about capacity in the statewide service provider technical specification surveys and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
 - iii. Include in DVR staff and administrative meeting agendas discussion and updates and mitigation plans related to provider wait lists.
 - iv. Identify and implement promising and innovative approaches through reserved innovation and expansion funds to increase effectiveness of services and increase provider capacity in partnership with DVR service providers and stakeholders.
- e. Continue with active statewide partnerships and provider outreach

6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

DVR will focus on increasing the current percentage of underrepresented/marginalized groups who have an IPE that leads to successful closure. DVR will also increase the percentage of consumers of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity who apply for DVR services.

DVR will implement a 5-year DEI Action Plan beginning in March 2023 focused on equitable experiences for consumers from underrepresented and marginalized groups. DVR will analyze our data each program year by determining the percentage of American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, and Multi-Race consumers within the following categories: new applicants, new eligibilities, new IPE's, education and training services, pre-employment transition services and successful employment outcomes.

(Basis: 2021 CSNA, DVR 2022 DEI Needs Assessment, 2023 Wisconsin CIE Plan Report).

- a. DVR will develop a DEI foundational training series for staff.
- b. DVR will focus on consumer engagement through rapid engagement and customer service training.
- c. DVR will add language to service provider agreement acknowledging a DEI focus as well as provision of DEI training for Service Providers.
- d. DVR will develop additional data reports on the DVR data platform (Dashboard) focused on the consumer experience from the perspective of underrepresented and marginalized groups, e.g., wage data by demographics, service provider data by demographics.

- e. Creation of local level DEI Action Plans which will focus on consumer outreach targeting underrepresented and marginalized groups and development of community partnerships.
- f. Increase staff diversity through a review of hiring practices and using tools such as added pay for bilingual counselors.

(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

(1) Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs.

[text box: List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies]

- Goal 1 Business Services:

In Program Year 2022, DVR's Business Services Consultant (BSC) staff (12) engaged with 2903 business establishments providing 7918 services to these businesses. Services include activities such as employer information and support services, workforce recruitment activities, access to the untapped labor pools through DVR job seekers, and training.

During PY2022, DVR made some structural division enhancements and created a Business Services Section within DVR's Bureau of Management Services. BSC staff were then brought under the supervision of DVR's Business Services Section Chief. Previously each BSC position had been supervised by different local DVR Directors. This effort was made to enhance and streamline DVR's services to employers.

DVR's Business Services Section is working on a local business outreach plan template for each BSC to use in the workforce development area they work within. This will help the BSC staff be strategic in their business outreach efforts. have in the past worked from local employer outreach plans.

The Business Services Section Chief can provide consistent training and direction to the BSC staff. BSC are involved in mandatory trainings required by DVR and can attend other trainings that meet their needs. Over the next few program years, there will be an effort to provide training related to the employment needs of consumers with the most significant disabilities. Most DVR BSC staff were trained on Windmills and have been providing this training to our workforce partners as well as

employers. BSC staff will continue to offer training to employers based on their needs.

DVR's Business Services Section is working on enhancing marketing materials as well as updating the DVR Business Services webpage.

- **Goal 2 Employment Outcomes**
In Program Year 2022, DVR consumers who were closed successfully working earned an average wage of \$17.55/hour and worked 25 hours per week. In Program Year 2021, the average hourly wage was \$15.86/hour at 25 hours per week. To continue to help increase quality outcomes, DVR would like to also look at increasing the amount of benefits counseling services that are provided to SSI/SSDI recipients so that they can make informed choices about work hours and pay rate. In Program Year 2022, DVR provided 4867 benefits counseling services. DVR also has focused on training staff on the use of labor market information with consumers for planning purposes. DVR has added useful labor market information resources and will continue to build staff knowledge and access to resources in this area over the next few program years. DVR'S Business Services Consultants have provided labor market information to DVR staff as needed and will continue to build on this. DVR has been implementing the Career Pathways grant to help individuals maximize employment outcomes. In Federal Fiscal years 2022 and 2023 (as of August 2023), DVR has enrolled 415 consumers in this grant. This grant lasts for 5 years.
- **Goal 3 Continued Focus on Pre-ETS:**
In FFY22 the Pre-Employment Transition services 15% expenditure goal was \$9,945,503. In FFY22 DVR spent \$11,226,399 in Pre-ETS services. The FFY23 expenditure goal is \$10,577,981. DVR is on track towards achieving this goal.

In PY22 DVR has a staff assigned to each public high school, provided transition services and outreach, provided trainings and information to partners, parents, and teachers through a variety of methods to help ensure we are meeting our Pre-ETS expenditure goals. DVR has also started using data from the State Education Agency, Department of Public Instruction, related to numbers of students with disabilities in each district and comparing to DVR consumers who are student to target areas where we could get more referrals from.
- **Goal 4 Staff Engagement:**
DVR continues to use the DWD Staff Engagement surveys that are completed every year. The 2022 DWD Employee Engagement results showed the following areas needed improvement: having staff feel like their opinions count, trusting that leadership is looking out for best interests of staff, and receiving recognition. DVR's leadership and employee engagement team focused on the area of trust. The DVR employee engagement team created a survey centered around gathering feedback on how trust could be improved. The DVR trust survey results were received in May

2023. At this same time, DVR received our results from the 2023 DWD Employee Engagement survey.

The following are some key take-ways from the 2023 DWD Employee Engagement Survey:

- DVR should comply with all recommendations in the 2023 Department Wide Employee Engagement Survey Report, particularly those related to the job satisfaction barrier Anonymity, and the RESPECT models areas of Empowerment and Consideration, as those were area identified for improvement for DVR.
- DVR should review current programs for employee recognition, as well as policies and procedures for supervisor support and supportive feedback towards front line staff. Staff recognition and increasing feelings of support amongst staff should be a priority for the DVR engagement team in the upcoming year.
- Communication or training programs should be distributed by division leadership regarding the procedures for reporting harassment, bullying, or discrimination. Division leadership should make a point to show their support for these reporting programs.
- Additional effective communication training for DVR supervisors is also recommended.
- Continuous Improvement (CI) and "Moving Up-Down-and-Around" (MUDA) training is advisable for DVR staff. CI training can assist with workflow processes and can help alleviate feelings of being overwhelmed by workload. MUDA training is also helpful for showing staff what a long and successful career can look like at DWD.

DVR leadership and employee engagement team worked on an Employee Engagement Action plan to address the results of the DWD Employee Engagement Survey and DVR Trust Survey.

Over the 2022 and 2023 DWD Engagement Surveys as well as the Trust Survey, staff concerns with pay continue to be stated. DVR has and will continue to work within the parameters of the state compensation plans to leverage pay adjustments. Over the last 2 years, DVR has been able to provide a large number of equity pay adjustments.

In 2022, DWD asked that all managers complete stay interviews with staff. DVR will continue to complete these at regular intervals and review the results.

DVR's Employee Resource Group created and released a survey to DVR employees in September 2021 to employees covering a wide range of topics, including participant demographics, DEI sentiment, experienced microaggressions, reporting of microaggressions and support of those experiencing microaggressions, career development, and respondent ideas to foster DEI and inclusion. This provided information on how we could help support and engage DVR staff and helped to inform the DVR DEI Action Plan as well as elements of this state plan goal.

- Goal 5 Service Provider Capacity:
Service Provider capacity data for April-June 2023 (first quarter with data):
 - 36 providers with a published wait list, 187 with no wait list
 - 268 consumers of approx. 12,000 in the quarter with IPE's on a provider wait list
 - 8 statewide services of 8 with a provider wait list
 - 72 Wisconsin counties of 72 with a provider wait list
 - 11 Workforce Development Areas of 11 with a provider wait list

DVR has begun regular meetings with referral partners in supported employment to problem solve how to provide supports in a timelier manner for individuals closed by WI DVR.

DVR has also completed a process mapping using lean principles to examine the supported employment case process experience from the consumer experience. Several recommendations are being implemented to find efficiencies and provide timely and accurate information to consumers and their families about competitive integrated employment.

DVR leadership organizes routine meetings with Wisconsin Department of Health Services leadership to discuss the overall health of the supported employment system and the needs of our mutual consumers with the most significant disabilities.

DVR is also part of a required statewide Competitive Integrated Employment Plan. The State Fiscal Year 2024-2025 plan includes some specific targets related to supported employment: 1) Implementation of a 5-year strategic plan to promote quality and broaden access to IPS 2) Operationalize interagency sharing of supported employment assessment and other information that supports individual employment outcomes.

DVR is an active member of the IPS state team and has identified a Policy Analyst position to take the lead in efforts to coordinate IPS services statewide and provide technical assistance.

- Goal 6 DEI:

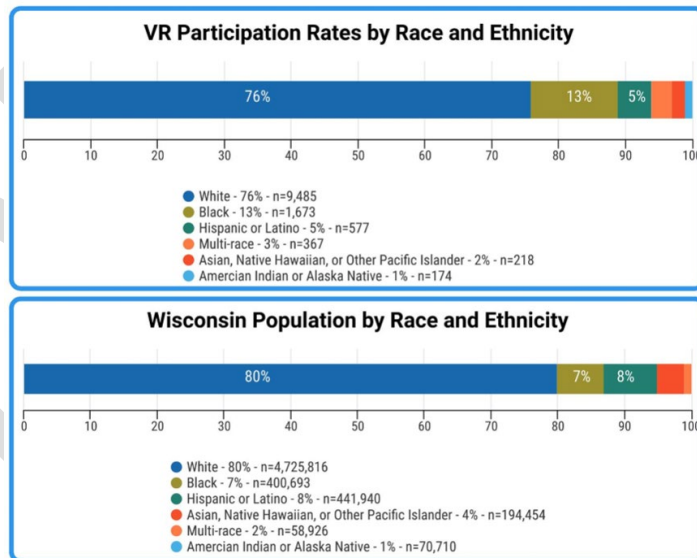
Several data sets were reviewed in addition to the 2021 CNSA and 2022 DEI Needs Assessment to determine this goal and describe where DVR is currently at. These other data sets included 2022 US Census data for Wisconsin, State Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report Wisconsin Act 178 Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes, DVR's Data Dashboard on Demographics for Program Year 2022, Wisconsin Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) 2022 Statewide Report of 2020-2021 Exiters with Disabilities, and the Mental Health Community Services Block Grant: 2021 Wisconsin State Summary Report.

In general, Wisconsin DVR participation mostly mirrors state breakdown by race and ethnicity. There is an increase in DVR participation amongst DVR consumers who identify as Black (13 percent in services with DVR versus 7 percent by overall state population). We do observe the opposite effect in participation amongst individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino (5 percent in services with VR versus 8 percent by overall state population).

Participant Percentages

Comparing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) participation rates by race and ethnicity to the population of Wisconsin

2022 Participation Rates of Individuals who were CIE Eligible in 2019¹
All individuals connected² to VR sometime between 2019 and 2022



If you compare the participation of the various race and ethnicity groups in DVR during Program Year 2022 is it similar to the participation rate of these same race/ethnic groups receiving special education services (Wisconsin TIG Report) with the exception of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino, which is lower. Doing outreach within schools and agencies that are connected with the Hispanic/Latino community would help

DVR to increase the participation of this group of individuals along with a focus on hiring more bilingual DVR staff.

Wisconsin 2022 Statewide Report of 2020-2021 Exiters with Disabilities
 Comparison of Statewide Population and Statewide Respondents
 All Participating Districts



	Statewide Population *		Statewide Sample*		Ineligible State Sample *		Statewide Respondents	
	N=7854		N=6892		N=206		N=4881	
Totals								
Male	5269	67%	4605	67%	142	69%	3272	67%
Female	2584	33%	2287	33%	64	31%	1609	33%
White	4898	62%	4205	61%	96	47%	3149	65%
Minority	2956	38%	2687	39%	110	53%	1732	35%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	153	1.9%	125	1.8%	5	2.4%	83	1.7%
Asian	185	2.4%	180	2.6%	1	0.5%	126	2.6%
Black or African American	1280	16.3%	1184	17.2%	51	24.8%	729	14.9%
Hispanic / Latino	1012	12.9%	916	13.3%	36	17.5%	600	12.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0.1%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Two or More Races	321	4.1%	279	4.0%	17	8.3%	193	4.0%

DVR's Dashboard on Demographics for Program Year 2022 shows differences in the percentage of several race/ethnicity groups when you consider the percentage of each group that moves from developing an IPE with DVR to being closed successfully. DVR has recently implemented a DEI Action Plan that will focus on strategies like staff training, consumer engagement, and a review of the application of our policies to improve the experience of underrepresented groups within the DVR program.

Program Year 2022 DVR Dashboard												
	New Applicants	% New Apps (of total)	New Eligibilities	% Elig (of Apps)	New IPEs	% IPEs (of Elig)	Edu/ Trng Services	% in E/T (of IPEs)	26's	% 26's (of IPEs)	Pre-ETS	% PreETS (of total)
American Indian	367	3%	257	70%	167	65%	25	15%	48	29%	207	4%
Asian	213	2%	196	92%	154	79%	13	8%	71	46%	149	3%
Black	2088	18%	1777	85%	1101	62%	126	11%	336	31%	555	10%
Hawaiian/Pac Islander	23	0%	17	74%	17	100%	3	18%	4	24%	17	0%
White	8352	71%	7470	89%	5460	73%	683	13%	2538	46%	4252	78%
Multi Race	468	4%	374	80%	249	67%	38	15%	82	33%	259	5%
N/R	267	2%	231	87%	155	67%	18	12%	45	29%	10	5%
TOTALS	11778		10322		7303		906		3124		5449	
Hispanic	957	8%	801	84%	554	69%	80	14%	218	39%	543	10%
Non-Hispanic	10622	90%	9346	88%	6627	71%	812	12%	2866	43%	4902	90%
N/R	199	2%	153	77%	122	80%	14	11%	40	33%	4	0%
TOTALS	11778		10322		7303		906		3124		5449	

- (2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Measure	PY22 Negotiated Level of Performance	Actual Performance
Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)	48.8%	62.9%
Credential Attainment	29%	41.4%
Median Earnings	\$3,100	\$3,362
Quarter 2 Post Exit	52%	56%
Quarter 4 Post Exit	49.8%	53%

- (3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (Sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

WI DVR reserves funds for the operation of the SILC known in Wisconsin as the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (ILCW). WI DVR fully funds but does not reserve funds for the operations and activities of the SRC (WRC) as needed annually including covering travel costs for WRC identified members to attend state and national meetings.

WI DVR fully funds but does not reserve funds for innovation and expansion projects in Wisconsin. WI DVR has initiated several projects using and measuring the effectiveness of innovative approaches to expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services.

WI DVR has partnered with the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay to assign an upperclassman with a disability as mentor to an underclassman student with a disability. The mentors receive credits and training and on being a mentor and the mentees receive credits to implement a plan to improve college and community engagement. The goal is to determine if post-secondary students have better outcomes when they have a mentor.

WI DVR has initiated a project called "Thinking Skills for Employment" to use cognitive behavior strategies to improve the employment experience for individuals with mental health barriers. The goal is to determine if working individuals can maintain employment more successfully when they have training on changing thinking patterns about their own success.

Another project WI DVR has implemented is Step Into STEM. This project was designed to provide hands on experience and exposure to various jobs in science technology engineering and math for youth. The goal is to allow for career exploration in these

higher paid occupations and provide basic skills and experience prior to enrollment in post-secondary options or employment.

WI DVR has continued to monitor and foster previously initiated projects including Partners with Business and Explore Work. Partners with Business is a strategy for providing on the job support using a consumer's co-workers instead of a provider employee. The employer is reimbursed for the time a co-worker spends assisting a consumer. This service is especially effective for consumers transitioning to Long Term Supports in Supported Employment but can also be used for consumers that will not.

Explore Work is a web-based learning program that covers topics critical to a successful career outcome. The modules are geared toward youth but may be helpful for adults as well. Individual remotely delivered sessions may be authorized to ensure timely and appropriate services for the consumer. Skills are taught using a variety of activities that are engaging and targeted to youth or adult learner.

(e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

(1) Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) **X - VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.**

(B) VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(2) If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

Goals and Priorities:

WI DVR accepts the title VI funds and utilizes the full grant award. In FFY 22, the entire grant award and matching state funds was used to fund services for youth and adults with the most significant disabilities in supported employment. The services have assisted consumers following the placement in permanent competitive integrated employment through the delivery of ongoing job supports. Several State Plan 2024-2027 goals/priorities and strategies address the experience of consumers in supported employment programs. DVR is prioritizing the need to increase the quantity of DVR services providers providing quality supported employment services. DVR will also focus on increasing the average hourly wage and hours worked per week for consumers in supported employment. Individuals participating in Supported Employment services for Program Year 2022 earned an average wage of \$12.07 per hour and worked an average 14 hours per week. This was an increase from Program Year 2021.

(3) Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe 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; and the timing of transition to extended services.

WI DVR uses both title 1 funds and title VI funds to deliver supported employment services in Wisconsin.

Quality

Individuals participating in Supported Employment services for Program Year 2022 earned an average wage of \$12.07 per hour and worked an average 14 hours per week. Individuals not in Supported Employment earned \$18.43 per hour and worked an average of 28 hours per week. Both groups increased the average hourly wage by about \$2/hour.

Scope

WI DVR also provides specialized services prior to supported employment to assist individuals in finding employment to meet their individual goals and interests as well as matching their skills. Individuals in Supported Employment are provided supports until they are deemed to be stable in employment and then they are transitioned to long term supports. In Wisconsin long term supports are provided by Medicaid funded managed care and county mental health agencies.

Extent

Supported Employment services are available in all counties in Wisconsin which could include typical Supported Employment, Individual Placement and Support, or Customized Employment. In Program Year 2022 WI DVR transitioned 747 individuals to long term supports, 741 of these resulted in a successful closure for Wisconsin DVR. This was approximately 24 percent of WI DVR closures.

(4) Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).

WI DVR has formal agreements with the state Medicaid Adult and Mental Health and Education agencies to facilitate cooperative service delivery and transition to long term supports once a job is stabilized in supported employment. In addition, WI DVR has service agreements with community rehabilitation programs to deliver the services directly to DVR consumers with the most significant disabilities in supported employment. WI DVR funds ongoing support services up to 24 months prior to transition to a long-term support agency and extended services for up to 48 months for youth under age 25.

WI DVR has a Competitive Integrated Employment Plan per WI Act 178 Legislation. The SFY 2024-25 Plan includes the following activities that are related to Supported Employment Services for DVR.

- Finalize and implement a strategic five-year plan to broaden access to IPS including implementing three new IPS sites in each year of the joint plan.
- As a result of the supported employment LeanValue Stream Mapping Process completed in 2022, operationalize interagency sharing of supported employment assessments, and other information that supports individual employment outcomes.

(f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

(A) VR Program; and

During FFY 2021, DVR served 25,846 individuals with disabilities.

During FFY 2022 DVR served 26,040 individuals with disabilities.

During FFY 2023 DVR has served 23,354 individuals with disabilities as of June 3, 2023. —

(Considering a review of trends for new applications, we anticipate that in the remaining months left in FFY 2023 we will end up serving a total of 26,500 individuals with disabilities.)

For FFY 2024, our projected goal is 27,500 individuals with disabilities served. FFY2024 spending goal is roughly \$2000/case, totaling \$55,000,000.

For FFY 2025, our projected goal is 28,325 individuals with disabilities served. FFY 2024 spending goal is roughly \$2040/case, totaling \$57,750,000.

This goal is realistic given our Title I funding levels and need to spend budget during the 2-year period of performance. This is based on the economy, unemployment rate, intended federal/state match funding, consumer data/patterns, and VR policies remaining constant.

While Wisconsin DVR does have Order of Selection in place, we currently are immediately activating anyone who falls into Categories 1 and 2. Individuals in Category 3 are activated the first of every month based on available resources.

The number of individuals falling into Category 3 (activated every month):

FFY 2021 = 57 individuals in Category 3

FFY 2022 = 47 individuals in Category 3

FFY 2023 = 19 individuals in Category 3 (as of June 3, 2023 - estimate 27 individuals by end of FFY 2023)

Most recent completed data Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023):

Category 1 = 10,796 consumers, \$33,990,718 total expenses

Category 2 = 6,882 consumers, \$15,531,593 total expenses

Category 3 = 43 consumers, \$190,546 total expenses

(B) Supported Employment Program.

In FFY 2021 there were 4038 individuals within DVR's supported employment program including IPS and CE.

In FFY 2022, there were 4418 individuals within DVR's supported employment program including IPS and CE.

In FFY 2023, there have been 3753 individuals within DVR's supported employment program including IPS and CE (as of May 31, 2023).

All individuals within DVR's supported employment programs are in OOS Category 1. Average cost per cases in OOS Category 1 are roughly \$3000/case.

In Program Year 2022, DVR provided supported employment services including customized employment and IPS to 749 individuals with the most significant disabilities hired into competitive and integrated employment and successfully transitioned to long-term support services. In Program Year 2022, the total costs of supported employment services including customized employment and IPS were \$6,461,460.

For FFY 2024, we estimate that roughly 4,000 individuals will be served within DVR's supported employment program including customized employment and IPS. The estimated costs of supported employment services including customized employment and IPE are estimated to be \$7,100,000. An estimated 750 individuals within the supported employment program will obtain permanent competitive integrated employment, receive on-going support services, and transition to long-term support.

For FFY 2025, we expect a similar number of individuals, 4,050-4,100 with a slightly higher cost estimate of \$7,810,000.

We are anticipating rate increases for DVR service providers providing supported employment services.

After Wisconsin DVR exhausts all funds under the Title VI supported employment program (50% used for youth), Title I funds are used for supported employment costs.

(g) Order of Selection.

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

X - The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

(1) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

DVR continues to adapt to the changing nature of caseloads as a result of WIOA. DVR staff are working with more consumers who are students, who tend to have longer than average caseloads as they pursue education, training, and internship/temporary work experiences. Additionally, the low unemployment rate in Wisconsin and nationally has DVR staff working with more consumers with the most significant disabilities, such as severe and persistent mental illness and developmental disabilities, who often have longer case lengths and receive more intensive services such as extensive vocational guidance and counseling and supported employment.

Furthermore, DVR's continued focus on developing sustainable, long term, and career focused job goals with consumers that often requires the pursue of formal job training or education to reach their goals. Finally, limited fiscal resources and staff capacity impede DVR's ability to serve all eligible individuals in the State of Wisconsin at times.

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Consumers with the most significant disabilities will be given priority, consumers with significant disabilities will be given second priority, and other eligible consumers with disabilities will be given third priority.

DVR will continue with the current OOS plan, which has the support of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC), if resources are available. Categories 1 and 2 will continue to be activated immediately, and other eligible consumers with disabilities will remain on a wait list in Category 3 with review and activation of these cases monthly and at least annual contact by DVR to discuss any needs for possible reassessment.

Category 1: A consumer has a most significant disability if a mental or physical impairment seriously limits four or more of the consumer's functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and the consumer's vocational rehabilitation requires multiple services over an extended period.

Category 2: A consumer has a significant disability if a mental or physical impairment seriously limits one, two or three of the consumer's functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome and the consumer's vocational rehabilitation requires multiple services over an extended period.

Note: Consumers who receive SSI or SSDI are considered to have at least a significant disability, and therefore placed in Category 1 or 2.

Category 3: Other eligible consumers include those who have a disability, however, their disability does not seriously limit one or more functional capacities and/or they do not require multiple services over an extended period.

DVR has developed a resource management dashboard and forecasting/projection tools. DVR reviews this tool monthly to determine resources (staff and financial) and consumer demands to project changes to priority categories.

- (C) The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

The following shows the amount of time (in months) it took from IPE development to successful closure in PY 2021 and current data for PY 2022 up to June 1, 2023, for consumers in Categories 1, 2, and 3:

Category	PY 2021	PY 2022 (up to June 1, 2023)
Category 1	28 mos.	27 mos.
Category 2	25 mos.	23 mos.
Category 3	6 mos.	7 mos.

Consumers with the most significant disabilities are given priority, consumers with significant disabilities are given second priority, and other eligible consumers with disabilities are given third priority.

Currently, DVR immediately serves individuals with the most significant disabilities (OOS Category 1) and individuals with significant disabilities (OOS Category 2) without placing them on a wait list. All other eligible individuals (OOS Category 3) are currently placed on the OOS wait list. As of December 2020, DVR began and continues to activate all consumers on the waitlist monthly.

DVR has activated 204 individuals from Category 3 waitlist from December 2020 to May 2023.

DVR evaluates resource availability and determines if OOS Category 3 consumers can be activated that month. If at a point in the future DVR determines resources are not available and it cannot activate Category 3 consumers, DVR contacts those individuals, at least annually, to notify them of their waitlist status and provide other employment resources. At any time, individuals on the waitlist may choose to be removed or provide information for review of their category placement.

When consumer is notified of Eligibility for DVR and their placement in one of the three (3) OOS Categories, regardless of OOS category placement, the consumer is also given information and referral to their local job center and other employment resources.

(2) Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

- Yes

No

(h) Waiver of Statewidness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewidness or has a previously approved waiver of statewidness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewidness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewidness, please indicate “not applicable.”

Not Applicable

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a

description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

- (1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—
 - (A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the State VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

Table below includes the type and number of personnel employed by DVR.

Permanent Authorized Employees

Job Title	Total Positions
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	178
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist	46
Office Operations Associate (field)	2
Financial Specialist-Senior	39
Field Managers/Supervisors	25
Business Services Consultants	12
Central Office Senior Leaders	8
Central Office Support Staff	28
Total	337

Allocation of positions for local Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) statewide is based on several factors including referrals, applications, eligibilities, IPEs, and caseloads. The current ratio of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients is approximately 1 counselor to 90 clients. DVR has two position classifications in addition to counselors to assist with managing workload, recruitment, and staff retention. One position is a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, designed to allow counselors more time to focus on counseling by these positions providing case management and project management support. The second position is a Financial Specialist-Senior, which focuses on the purchasing and receiving of services with consumers and service providers.

To assist with workload, DVR contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) in 2015 to develop an eligibility/OOS review process, authorizing SVRI to collect and make recommendations to appropriate DVR staff for eligibility and OOS determinations. With SVRI completing this service, DVR staff have additional time to focus on working with potentially eligible students, developing new IPEs, and working on consumer cases actively in IPE status.

- (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the State VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Table below shows the number of permanent authorized positions by personnel category, and the current vacancies as of August 2023 for each category.

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies /Personnel Needed
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	178	9
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist	46	3
Office Operations Associate (field)	2	0
Financial Specialist-Senior	39	1
Field Managers/Supervisors	25	2
Business Services Consultants	12	1
Central Office Senior Leaders	8	0
Central Office Support Staff	28	3
Total	338	19

- (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State VR 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.

Table below shows the number of permanent authorized positions by personnel category, and the anticipated vacancies in each category expected in the next five years. DVR anticipates an average turnover rate of approximately 10% percent each year, for the next five years, based on previous data and labor market trends. DVR anticipates the need to maintain the current total number of permanent authorized positions by personnel category over the next five years.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	Projected Annual Turnover per Year for the next Five Years (Number of Positions)
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	178	18
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist	46	5
Office Operations Associate (field)	2	1
Financial Specialist-Senior	39	4
Field Managers/Supervisors	25	3

Business Services Consultants	12	1
Central Office Senior Leaders	8	1
Central Office Support Staff	28	3
Total	338	36

(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:

Based on our case numbers slowly increasing and efforts to further increase cases, we anticipate our average ratio of VR Counselor to client during this State Plan period to remain as it currently or have a slight increase. We anticipate the ratio to range from 1 VRC to every 90-100 clients

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

WI DVR had begun seeing a decline in individual numbers beginning in 2018 and a large decline during the pandemic. In PY20 we served 26,131, in PY21 we served 26,436 individuals, and in PY22 we served 27,431. We have seen a slow increase in consumer numbers. If this trend continues, we anticipate serving approximately 27,500 in five years.

(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

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

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates (Spring, 2023)
University of Wisconsin-Stout	M.S Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling-On Line, only	49 *	18
University of Wisconsin-Madison	M.S Degree in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	41	18
Marquette University	Master's in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	10	5

*Majority of students already have employment in various DSUs.

- (B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency 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.

In addition to new position classifications that have been developed to ensure DVR business needs are met (see Section i-A), DVR continues its relationship with local Rehabilitation Counseling graduate programs and other counseling programs to help build a pipeline of candidates for future recruitment. DVR encourages students from the local Rehabilitation Counseling programs to apply for internships and practicums with DVR. Many VR Counselor hires are former interns or practicum students.

In its recruitment materials and practices, DVR requires that applicants for VR counselor positions meet the standards for employment as specified by DSPS and as required by Wisconsin State Statute. With the reduction of rehabilitation counselor graduates and applicants statewide and nationally, DVR has hired many licensed counselors who come from a general counseling background. DVR's hiring plan includes coordination of job announcement postings with diverse entities in the state, including partners in the one-stop system, professional organizations, and accredited university programs. DVR also sends its postings to a listserv of WI licensed counselors. DVR also seeks to attract candidates from other states as part of its hiring strategies. For internships, DVR will continue to target university programs that attract diverse students, including individuals with disabilities.

Job announcements are posted using various media serving minority groups and advertised across partners in the one-stop system, including partners that specialize in services to target groups. DVR regularly evaluates and modifies recruitment efforts and in-service training plans to ensure all personnel, particularly VR counselors, meet the highest standards in Wisconsin applicable to their job classification. DVR has also offered sign-on bonuses and relocation expenses to assist in the recruitment of hard to fill positions and has increased the starting pay for several DVR positions to attract qualified candidates.

Staff retention is a key element of succession planning, and DVR management regularly reviews this topic and includes retention as part of strategic planning efforts. DVR will continue to focus on retention of staff members who receive their initial employment with DVR but are recruited away by other employers for higher salaries.

DVR has worked diligently over the past several years to address compensation concerns and continues to work with DWD's Human Resources staff to focus on retention efforts that will adequately compensate DVR staff. DVR has been able to provide some pay adjustments.

DVR completed stay surveys with its staff and DWD completes an annual employee engagement survey. The results have been used to identify areas that DVR can build upon to help retain current employees. DVR has worked to create a work environment where employees want to work by providing employees as much flexibility as possible, maintaining focus on employee wellness and work life balance. Since the pandemic DVR has moved to a hybrid work environment where staff are allowed to telecommute up to 4 days a week depending upon the business needs of their office, consumer needs, and their position. Staff have shared that they appreciate having a hybrid work environment. DVR leaders will also look for additional tools to augment compensation packages to further address retention efforts.

- (C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:
- i. 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
 - ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The educational needs for DVR personnel are determined based on input from several sources, which include, but are not limited to:

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Relevant Federal Regulations through WIOA and RSA, e.g., 34 CFR Part 361
- RSA sub-regulatory language such Policy Directives, Technical Assistance Circulars, etc.
- Information, resources, and training from VR Technical Assistance Centers
- Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code (administered by DSPS)
- Professional state councils, (e.g., WRC)
- DVR's Quality Assurance Analyst/Team
- Comprehensive Training Needs Assessment
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
- Individual staff performance reviews

Based on several of the above identified sources, DVR's Training Officer develops a training plan and budget each year identifying training and

conferences relevant to the education and professional development needs of all staff. Staff are emailed regarding these training opportunities. Staff can also find additional training opportunities and request support from management to attend. Annual employee performance reviews are conducted by management with each employee helping DVR identify training needs for staff. Wisconsin statutes and administrative codes outline specific training needs based on licensure requirements for VR counselors to practice in Wisconsin, e.g., ethics courses. The Division maintains a membership with the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which awards continuing education hours to staff at no cost to the staff member. Continuing education hours are essential for VR counselors to maintain state licensure. To promote employee engagement and leadership development, all staff are encouraged, and as appropriate, funded to participate in training activities. Additionally, DVR provides training to statewide management staff at bi-monthly meetings.

DVR provides comprehensive new staff training to all new employees. This training program examines DVR processes from point of application, eligibility assessment, IPE development, provision of VR services such as training and job placement, and case closure. The program also incorporates material on rehabilitation technology resources, effective counseling and assessment practices, the Rehabilitation Act, and WIOA performance measures, and other key components of successful rehabilitation outcomes.

DVR continues to ensure that all staff understand and are trained to meet job description performance standards. DVR uses various training modes including local and regional trainings, monthly topic-specific virtual trainings, and all-staff conferences to provide staff training. Training as available in multiple formats including in person, virtual, online/on demand. DVR monthly trainings are offered in real-time, virtually and are also recorded for future viewing. DVR training topics include policy, processes, data collection for WIOA performance measures, refreshers on eligibility assessment and IPE development, ethics, disability-specific education, case documentation, diversity, equity and inclusion topics, and counseling tools such as motivational interviewing, trauma informed care, and effective communication techniques.

DVR also has statewide teams focused on Sensory Disability and Assistive Technology. These teams review and develop policies related to rehabilitation technology needs, identify statewide resources, and provide training to staff on these topics.

DVR collaborates with UW-Stout and the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin to offer AT training to DVR consumers and staff at venues across the state. DVR will continue to emphasize the use of rehabilitation technology services and resources in presentations to professional and paraprofessional staff

to identify and access training material (including online formats) available from a variety of Wisconsin resources and other VR agencies.

New DVR supervisors are required to attend supervisory trainings offered by DWD. DVR has also implemented training targeted at staff members who have demonstrated management skills, which may play an important role when supervisory positions open in the future. DVR staff members are selectively sponsored for advanced management and leadership training through the Wisconsin Enterprise Management Development Academy and DWD Leadership Challenge Mentor Experience Program. DVR will continue to support sending one or two managers per year to attend the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute and training through the National Training Center for Transformational Rehabilitation Leadership. DVR's senior leadership team also attends CSAVR conferences and has allowed other staff to attend virtual CSAVR sessions.

DVR has access to the Department of Workforce Development's electronic training platform called Cornerstone. Staff can seek out many different types of training opportunities through this platform. This platform also tracks completed training. The Department of Workforce Development also requires annual trainings for all staff related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Records Management, IT/Security, Protection of PII data, and Wisconsin's Mandatory Reporting Law.

DVR developed a platform called the Information Center that provides online access to VR regulatory and program policy information on key issues and topics of relevance to program staff. The Information Center includes VR federal and state requirements and rules, policy interpretations, procedures, guidance, and informational items in a Q&A format. The Information Center also features a search option that cross-references and indexes all the policies, directives, and related guidance affecting the VR program.

DVR employs two full-time Policy Analysts who provide ongoing technical assistance, consultation, and training to staff statewide on service delivery issues as mandated by the Rehabilitation Act/WIOA. DVR Policy Analysts develop guidance and best practices for staff by researching other state practices, conducting literature reviews, researching state and federal laws, and participating in the DVR Policy Academy. The purpose of the Policy Academy is to address and develop policy and guidance pieces and background information on topics relevant to VR in Wisconsin. Members of the Policy Academy share information from these meetings with staff in their respective local area. DVR WDA Directors and Supervisors meet regularly, during which various training topics are addressed so that they can train and support staff locally. Statewide emails are also sent notifying staff of new or changed policies and housed as a chronological announcement in DVR's Information Center. Staff

can also access research information disseminated through teleconferences and webinars sponsored by RSA and the national network of disability research and training entities. Research findings and promising techniques, including information from the RSA Technical Assistance Centers and CSAVR, are regularly shared with staff. DVR will continue to emphasize the need to use and apply research when developing guidance, best practices, and staff trainings.

- (3) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—
- (A) 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
 - (B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Personnel standards for VR counselors in Wisconsin are established in Chapter 457 of the Wisconsin State Statutes under licensure requirements for the title of Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Under these rules, individuals who practice professional counseling must have a state license or hold a temporary or training license. Counselors must have a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or closely related fields, complete 3,000 hours of post-master's degree clinical supervision and pass the National Board for Certified Counselors (NCC) exam or the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) exam. This state personnel standard exceeds the national standard. DVR holds a seat on Professional Counselor Licensure Board through DSPS to promote DVR's interests and recruitment needs, prepare and retain qualified staff, and stay up to date on rule changes.

Since May 1992, all VR Counselors employed by DVR have met the State required standards for licensure as a condition of employment, including all LPC continuing education requirements, which include courses in professional counselor ethics and boundaries. For paraprofessional staff, personnel standards are established by DVR and the State of Wisconsin. Opportunities for continuing education courses are open to all paraprofessional and professional rehabilitation counselor staff. DVR provides and requires that all newly hired staff participate in a comprehensive orientation and training program that occurs early in employment. DVR's established maintenance of education/experience requirements and offerings ensure its personnel have 21st century understanding of the evolving needs of the labor force and individuals with disabilities.

- (4) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel 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.

DVR maintains the ability to communicate with customers in their preferred mode using a variety of resources. Designated staff maintain and coordinate foreign language translation and interpreter lists, including remote and onsite Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services. Verbal foreign language interpretation is available, on demand, via phone using a contracted vendor. To further meet communication needs, DVR recruits staff fluent in Spanish, Hmong, and American Sign Language. DVR also maintains relationships with providers for both verbal and written translations in over 60 languages. Translations of DVR's most frequently used publications and forms exist in English, Spanish, and Hmong, and can be translated into other languages using a contracted vendor. Written information can also be translated to braille or a large print format using a contracted vendor. Additionally, the Department uses a standard translator option on many of our public facing webpages.

- (5) 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.

As required by WIOA, DVR has an Interagency Agreement with the WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI) that is designed to create common understanding and establish collaborative efforts regarding services that will ultimately improve employment outcomes for students with disabilities who may be eligible for DVR services. To provide those services, staff from DVR and LEA's must have shared knowledge of the most effective way to provide transition services to students with disabilities. Annually, DPI is awarded the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) from the federal Department of Education to provide effective, targeted, and low-cost professional development to WI youth, parents, educators, and stakeholders in the area of transition to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities.

Once a year, the TIG staff meet with DVR START to provide updates and feedback on how collaborative services are being provided to students at the local level. TIG sponsors transition services trainings and DVR transition staff participate in those events with staff from the local LEA's. This shared learning enhances the development of best practice in providing collaborative transition services to students with disabilities. TIG also maintains a website that provides online learning materials and resources on transition for DVR and LEA staff to access for professional development.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(j) Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

- (1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)

WI DVR in collaboration with local educational agencies are required to offer to transition age high school students with disabilities (ages 14-21) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) using 15% of our federal allocation on an annual basis. Pre-ETS services include:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences, (which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experience outside the traditional school setting including internships, that are provided in an integrated environment)
- Counseling on opportunities in comprehensive transition or enrollment in postsecondary educational programs
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy/peer mentoring

WI DVR is required to spend 15% of our grant award during each Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). To achieve the expenditure goal of 15%, each WDA is given an expenditure target. To reach those goals each WDA is ensuring they have a strong relationship with the local school districts and the local Work Force Development Boards. Summer work experiences, workplace readiness training to develop social skills, Explore Work sessions, Project SEARCH programs, independent living, and other work-based learning experiences have been implemented statewide. Wisconsin DVR has achieved the 15% Pre-ETS spending goal each year since it has been measured.

DVR has developed a Pre-ETS Policy Guide. This policy guide serves as guidance to DVR staff and describes statewide service provision to students with disabilities, specifically regarding pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), and to youth with disabilities, specifically regarding limitations on subminimum wage employment (Section 511). This guide also contains policy on providing Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students as defined by WIOA.

Per WI DVR policy students with disabilities are recommended to apply for DVR services at least two years prior to graduation. The plan for employment should be developed as soon as possible, but the time shall not exceed 90 days after the enrollment. DVR staff will use rapid engagement and motivational interviewing techniques when working with this population. DVR in collaboration the local education agency will provide services to assist the student in developing and successfully achieving their Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) goal.

On a statewide basis, DVR has designated high school transition staff to provide leadership, information and referral, advocacy, technical assistance, and to promote collaboration among consumers, parents, adult service providers, and other service agencies. The designated DVR transition staff consists of a Statewide Coordinator and the Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team (START). START has a DVR representative from each of the eleven Workforce Development Area's (WDAs) in the state. For their respective areas, the START members take lead responsibility for transition services delivered across their WDA. This lead responsibility includes coordination of activities and training of other DVR staff. DVR staff is also involved in various local transition councils and statewide transition initiatives.

To facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, DVR will:

- Continue to have counselors assigned to each school district and/or school building as identified by DPI. It is the role of the assigned liaison counselors to provide outreach, technical assistance, information and referral to the secondary education officials in their assigned schools and districts as well as to assure the provision of direct services to eligible youth.
- Maintain the Interagency Agreement with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to include the Medicaid agency, the Department of Health Services (DHS). DVR utilizes this agreement as the official document to guide its coordination of transition activities for youth with disabilities as they move from school to post-high school vocational rehabilitation services with education officials and with long-term care and employment support providers.
- Promote the use of the web-based Transition Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) to compliment the Interagency Agreement. The TAG details and supports the interagency coordination processes and procedures to deploy the necessary supports and activities for DVR eligible youth to successfully transition from school to post-high school employment. The TAG includes roles and responsibilities of each participant in the transition process, frequently asked questions, acronym and definitions, and best practice examples.
- Assign committed staff to participate in the Wisconsin Community on Transition (WiCoT) leadership team. The WiCoT is comprised of state level leadership whose focus is on areas of transition for youth in Wisconsin. The WiCoT promotes our vision of: All youth with disabilities will transition to a healthy, full, meaningful life. This team is comprised of leadership from the Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health Services (Integrated Employment and Children Service), Transition Improvement Grant, Independent Living Center, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, Youth Apprenticeship Program, Wisconsin Technical College System, and Family Advocate Organizations.

Interagency Agreement on Transition between DVR, DPI, and DHS

DVR also has a tri-agency Interagency Agreement that defines necessary relationships, policies and procedures between the DVR, and the Departments of Public Instruction (DPI) and Health Services (DHS). The intent of the agreement is to clearly define necessary relationships, communication, and procedures between DPI, DWD-DVR, and DHS to establish collaborative efforts for service delivery to improve CIE outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This agreement also includes elements of the CIE Plan required under 2017 Wisconsin Act 178 legislation. The interagency agreement was originally developed in 2010 and was revised in June of 2020. The three agencies also jointly developed a Transition Action Guide (TAG) that is now a web-based tool for all partners in transition process to use to guide their roles and responsibilities in the process. The TAG puts this agreement into practice.

This agreement between DPI, DVR and DHS has four overall priorities supporting integrated employment:

1. To comply with federal legal mandates under CMS, WIOA, the Rehabilitation Act, and IDEA
2. To provide practical guidance, technical assistance, and training to internal and external stakeholders and staff regarding competitive integrated employment (CIE) related services and supports.
3. To provide information on CIE-related services to individuals with disabilities and their family members or guardians so they will be able to participate fully in CIE.
4. To provide stakeholder role clarification within each respective department regarding individuals with disabilities who have CIE-related support needs to ensure seamless, nonduplicative, and transparent services.

DVR staff attends Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, with consent from the student and family. DVR is also available to provide information and technical assistance on transition services to teachers, parents, and other organizations and councils.

As outlined in the TAG and DVR Policy, the development of the plan for employment for students who are eligible for plan development, is to occur prior to the student leaving school. DVR staff and educators are encouraged to coordinate the provision of services and transition activities for students who are eligible for both IEP and an IPE services to assist them in transitioning from school to work.

DVR Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team (START)

The DVR Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team (START), supported by the interagency agreement, have the role to improve consistency and engagement in the

transition process. The DVR START team and DPI Wisconsin Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) also collaborate to improve consistency in the provision of service to youth with disabilities as they transition from school to post high school activities that include VR services. TIG provides technical assistance to school districts, Cooperative Educational School Districts (CESA) and County Communities on Transition (CCoT), including, information dissemination and participation in staff development activities. The Interagency Agreement also supports TIG. DVR START and TIG also collaborate to provide training regarding the Interagency Agreement.

DVR staff engages in student outreach by presenting at local conferences, schools, council meetings, and at various other organization meetings. The agreement calls for DPI, DVR, and DHS to share outcome data to determine the impact on outreach efforts

- (2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:
- (A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;
- WI DPI and DVR will provide consultation and technical assistance to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including Pre-ETS. Consultation and technical assistance may be provided in person or through alternative means, such as email, webinars, conference calls, and video conferences
- (B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- WI DPI and DVR will work with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and other state agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of transition services, including Pre-ETS, in accordance a student's IEP, IPE, identified needs, and any additional applicable service plan in place.
- (C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

The roles and responsibilities and financial responsibilities for each agency are detailed in the interagency agreement as well as a conflict resolution process.

- (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

The interagency agreement between DVR and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) includes information about DVR's and the LEA's responsibilities to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities ages 14-21. DVR has a liaison staff assigned to each public high school in Wisconsin. These staff develop strong relationships with staff at the schools they serve to ensure seamless identification of students with disabilities interested in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). These liaisons provide technical assistance and consultation, develop collaborative approaches for student outreach and referral for DVR services, and assist with transition planning and service provision that facilitates the student's transition from school to post-school employment. Students have the option to fill out a referral form to become a Potentially Eligible consumer with DVR, where they are able to receive only the five core Pre-Employment Transition Services, or they can apply to DVR to see if they are eligible to receive all DVR services necessary and appropriate to achieve their employment goal, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. Students are encouraged to apply for DVR services as early as appropriate during the transition planning process or at least two years prior to graduation.

Information that is shared during these outreach efforts include a description of the purpose of the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures and the scope of VR services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

DVR staff assigned to public high schools also provide information regarding DVR services at in-service/teacher trainings, local job fairs, parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, statewide conferences (e.g., Employment First, Transition Academy, Self-Determination Conference, Transition Collaboration, and Statewide Transition Conference), and County Communities on Transition (CCoT) meetings.

The 2017 Wisconsin Act 178 CIE plan, first published in July 2019, outlines DVR's responsibility to document the outreach efforts of DVR staff in providing information about DVR services to students, including those receiving SSI and SSDI benefits.

DVR counselors also attend local CCoT meetings to provide information on the DVR services available to Wisconsin students. Additionally, DVR staff offer

training opportunities for local school districts to learn about DVR services at statewide training events including the Statewide Transition Academy and Employment First Conference.

- (E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 C.F.R. part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

WI DPI and DVR developed options for coordinating documentation at the local level to satisfy the requirements set forth in Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act regarding individuals with disabilities who are age 24 or younger and are seeking subminimum wage employment. Information can only be shared directly between LEA and DVR personnel with permission of the student and, if applicable, the student's parent or guardian.

- (F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

Included in the interagency agreement under the Statewide State Educational Agency (State SEA) is the assurance under 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, that LEAs are not allowed to enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), to operate a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage. WI DPI provided written notification to LEAs that such contracts with outside agencies are not permissible under Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.

(k) Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

The WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) includes a Business Services Section under the Bureau of Management Services. The Section includes a Section Chief and 12 Business Services Consultants (BSCs) who serve business customers in each WI workforce development area. The collective goal of the DVR BSCs is to develop and maintain relationships with business, learn about business's workforce needs, work together to create solutions, and inform business about DVR talent and services. BSC staff create local employer outreach plans based on the needs of the area as well as the types of jobs identified in consumer IPEs. DVR BSCs are members of Integrated Business Services Teams in their local regions. These teams include various workforce and community partners such as Veteran's Employment Services, Job Center, Workforce Development Board, technical college, and corrections

representatives. Business Services Teams collaborate to serve area business in a seamless and comprehensive manner. BSC staff have been integral members of local transition groups, Project SEARCH Business Advisory councils, Youth Apprenticeship consortiums/steering committees which are geared towards employment for students and youth with disabilities. BSC staff have also worked with employers to develop training and employment opportunities for students and adults served by DVR, e.g., Kwik Trip and Walgreen's partnerships. BSCs also provide services designed to increase awareness about disability and employment, accommodation solutions, and a variety of community and workforce partners resources. BSC staff have been trained on the Windmills curriculum, a disability awareness training series. BSCs offer this training to employers as a free educational opportunity which also promotes the hiring of people with disabilities.

(I) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), 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 to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

- (1) State programs (designate lead agencies) and implementing entities)) carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The lead agency for the Assistive Technology Act is the Wisconsin Department of Health Services which provides coordination and support for the Assistive Technology Council. DVR has a staff person that is appointed to the Council. In addition, DVR has an Assistive Technology Statewide Team that provides a resource to DVR staff when providing assistive technology. DHS provides technical assistance to this team as needed.

- (2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

We have not engaged in collaborative discussions with programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture at the state level. DVR staff refer consumers at the local level as appropriate.

- (3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

DVR has agreements with the Oneida Nation and the College of Menominee Nation to receive Section 166 grant (Title I) services, which include services to youth. DVR also has been in collaborative discussions with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families that administers the Foster Care program.

- (4) State use contracting programs;

DVR has no formal agreement with Wisconsin State Use Program outlining cooperation with or utilization of services and facilities. There is a DVR staff person on the State Use Board, appointed by the Governor as required by State Statute.

- (5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

DVR has an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services that includes the State Medicaid system. In addition, we have two separate Technical Assistance Guides for youth and adults. These guides are intended to improve communication, coordination, and services for youth and adults with disabilities seeking integrated employment who participate in either the Family Care, Family Care Partnership, PACE or IRIS long term care programs and who are jointly eligible for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) services. It is designed to be useful for all persons and agencies involved in the process of vocational placement and providing long term support for integrated employment.

- (6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

DVR has an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the state agency that provides services for individuals with developmental disabilities. This MOU was discussed in (1)(5) above.

- (7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services; and

DVR has an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the state agency that provides mental health services. This MOU was discussed in (1)(5) above. DVR also has an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services, Bureau of Prevention and Recovery, that governs cooperative service delivery for Individual Placement and Support (IPS) in Wisconsin.

- (8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system.

DVR has developed Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with agencies and programs at the federal, state, and local levels that outline DVR's cooperation with and utilization of agency and program services where common customers are served. DVR keeps a current listing of these agreements on the public-facing DVR webpage. The agreements outline how services and funds will be coordinated to meet the goals of DVR consumers who may be served by comparable benefits. At the federal level, DVR has developed an MOU with the Veterans Administration and cooperative agreements with two federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin that receive American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) grants from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The agreements include specific logistical agreements for processing interagency referrals, coordinating services and expenditures, cross training, and resolving disputes. Additionally, DVR has cooperative agreements with a tribal college and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, each of which also receive grants from AIVR. At the state agency level, DVR has several agreements which govern

cooperation with and use of agency and program services. The agreements include specific logistical agreements for processing interagency referrals, coordinating services and expenditures, cross training, and resolving disputes. These partners at the state level include the Client Assistance Program, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (the agency that administers TANF), Wisconsin's Independent Living Council, the University of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Technical College system. DVR is also included in a departmental agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.

NA

DRAFT

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The [enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,] is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, ¹ and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the [enter the name of designated State agency] ² agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ³ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁴ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁵ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁶ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

¹ Public Law 113-128.

² All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

³ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁴ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

⁵ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁶ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of

	WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140.
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (e) as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act (h) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the

	<p>provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A)</p> <p>(m)the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <p>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the</p>

	<p>Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.</p> <p>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) has developed and will implement, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)). (iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5.	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</p> <p>(a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
6.	<p>Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:</p> <p>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>

	<p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</p> <p>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Review of Training Grants

Tania Hanford
DVR Program & Policy Analyst
WRC Meeting | Aug 10, 2023 | Virtual

Reminders

- Services and goal must be in a signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- Services and goal must be reviewed and agreed to by job seeker and DVR counselor.
- Many factors affect if a training grant/DVR service is approved.
- Amounts of training grants are a calculation that is different for each consumer.



Post Secondary Training Grant (T.G.)

- DVR uses the term Training Grant (T.G.) This term means different things:
 - It is a policy
 - It is a process
 - It is a form
 - It is a place
 - It is funding



Post Secondary Education Funding

- Factors that *may* determine how funding for education will work:
 - Is the individual going to an in-state/public school
 - Is this a financial aid eligible program
 - Is consumer on academic or financial aid probation/suspension
 - Is consumer SSI/SSDI recipient
 - Number of credits per term



Training Grant Portal

- DVR has a portal within our case management system that communicates directly with college and universities financial aid offices (FAO).
- This allow the FAOs to confirm:
 - Number of credits consumer is taking
 - Any expected family contribution
 - Other grants/scholarships consumer is receiving
 - And help calculate DVR unmet need.
- FAO completes this by completing a T.G. form and can directly message DVR staff via this portal.



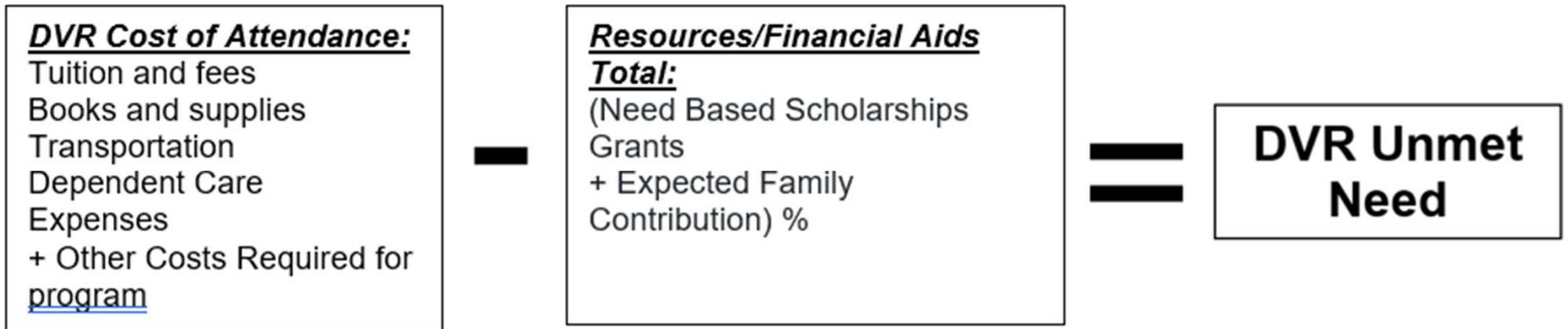
Training Grant Cost of Attendance

- DVR has defined cost of attendance as the sum of the following:
 - Tuition and Fees
 - Books and Supplies
 - Transportation
 - Dependent Care Expenses
 - Other Costs Required (something specifically required by the school/program to participate)
- These amounts are acquired directly for the Financial aid office of the school consumer is attending.



Training Grant DVR Unmet Need

DVR unmet need is calculated by subtracting a percentage of the Resources/Financial Aids Total from the DVR Cost of Attendance:



Training Grant DVR Unmet Need

- The DVR Training Grant offered typically, not always, equals the DVR unmet need.
- The DVR Training Grant is not to exceed \$6,000.00 per academic school year.
- If the DVR Unmet Need/DVR Training Grant offered equals \$0 or is less than what a student requires, students should be encouraged to go back to their school's Financial Aid Office to discuss possible changes to their FAFSA information budget and resources identified.



Training Grant Additional Living Expenses

- Additional living expenses are provided if a student **must** maintain two households because their IPE goal and post-secondary program requires them to travel to another city and they cannot commute due to distance or disability. A DVR student who has not yet established their own household would not generally qualify for additional living expenses.
- Additional Living Expenses are generally **not** approved.
- If approved DVR would then add Room and Board and Personal/Miscellaneous to cost of attendance



Training Grant Consumer Responsibilities

- In order for DVR to complete the T.G. process. Consumer are required to:
 - Complete FAFSA each academic year
 - Apply for and be admitted to academic program
 - Sign Training Grant form/release to school
 - Supply DVR with School Schedule
 - Supply DVR with Final grades from previous semester or program
 - Pass classes with high enough grades to stay in their program and not be on academic or financial aid suspension/probation.



Career Pathways Grant

- Current grant DVR has to help consumers in advancing their careers in information/digital technology, healthcare, construction, or manufacturing.
- If individual get enrolled in Career Pathways Grant, could receive additional funds to cover the entire cost of FAO attendance.
- There are three years remaining for this grant.

