Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2020-2023 State Plan, January 16, 2020 (DRAFT)

A. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

Introduction

This section has been jointly developed by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR). Included herein are the input and recommendations of the WSRC, provided to DSHS/DVR during FFY 2018-2019, as well as DSHS/DVR's formal responses to each item.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council

The WSRC provides guidance and advocacy to improve vocational rehabilitation services and makes recommendations about important or emerging issues. The WSRC met on a quarterly basis during the reporting period.

Summary of Input & Recommendations

WSRC Item One

December 21, 2017

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) recommends engaging representatives of community rehabilitation programs and other providers on a quarterly basis, to:

- Provide CRPs and other providers with regular updates on DVR's service delivery and expenditure forecasts, including DVR's best estimates for new plans to be initiated and new authorization of purchased services.
- Hear and understand how DVR reductions in service referrals are impacting providers.

- Discuss strategies for ensuring DVR customers can continue to access needed services without delays in all areas of the state, particularly those with very limited resource options.

WSRC Item Two

July 27th, 2018

The WSRC submitted the following recommendation to address timeliness of service concerns by implementing a drop down category selection of IPE Extension Reasons in Stars client database. The benefits of the drop down selection list would be for management to have a quick report they could pull to see primary reasons for extensions vs. having to pull up each customer case to review narrative explanations for extensions.

WSRC Item Three

July 27th, 2018

The WSRC submitted the following recommendation for DVR leadership to reinforce the importance of responding to customers by phone or email within 24 hours.

WSRC Item Four

July 27th, 2018

The WSRC recommends DVR review the current volume of counselor reassignments that occur and related practices. We recommend a policy or practice that assures case transfers are minimized to the extent possible, changes are communicated promptly to customers, and a new counselor is promptly assigned and establishes contact with the customer. Practices need to reflect steps in place to reduce the adverse impact of staffing changes on the delivery of services and case progress.

WSRC Item Five

July 27th, 2018

The WSRC recommends DVR implement foundational training for counselors related to working with customers whose needs and barriers are especially complex, such as individuals with mental health disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and others.

Summary of Consumer Satisfaction

WSRC Summary

Between October 1, 2017 and September 30th, 2018, customer satisfaction input was gathered as follows:

After a reviewing the quality of the feedback shared in our quarterly customer forums, the WSRC decided to improve the structure and effectiveness by shifting to a customer focus group model starting in July 2018. WSRC extends an invitation to all customers in the local office we

will be visiting, the first 10-12 customer respondents are confirmed to attend the focus group. Each customer who attends the hour and a half session receives $25 gift card as compensation for their time and expense to attend. WSRC members ask customers the following questions during the focus group:

- On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate DVR on timeliness of service?
    - Tell us why you chose that number.
- Are there any barriers you have to receiving services?
    - Tell us about these?
- DVR has phases of service – eligibility, plan etc. – What phase are you currently in?
- What has DVR done well?
- How would you describe your overall satisfaction with DVR?
- Is there anything else you would like DVR to hear?

The WSRC also invites DVR Leadership, Supervisors, Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians to participate in a separate focus group during the same time so the council can learn about barriers and successes to providing timely services.

The WSRC and DSHS/DVR worked together to support the automated Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) module. Through the CSS module, monthly surveys are generated and sent to a random sample of customers in all case statuses asking a set of six core questions. The CSS module has built-in features to assure the validity and reliability of survey results. The survey asks customers to rate their experience on the following measures by using a five point Likert scale:

1. My counselor does a good job keeping in touch with me.
2. My counselor understands what is important to me.
3. My counselor understands how my disability affects me.
4. My counselor cares about my input.
5. DVR moves quickly enough for me.
6. Overall, I am satisfied with DVR.

This system is in its 3rd year collecting customer satisfaction responses. Between October 1,2017 and September 30th, 2019, the WSRC used the CSS module to send out 16,274 surveys and received 3,090 responses resulting in a 19% response rate. The WSRC continues to make improvements to the CSS module and plans include reaching more customers by making the survey accessible online and customizing surveys to add questions in a specific target area or to a specific target population. In addition, to gaining the ability to obtain office and regional level data.

The data for this period shows the following trends:

1. My Counselor cares about my input is consistently the highest rated category. (average of 4.05)
2. DVR moves quickly enough for me is the lowest scoring measure across all case statuses (average of 3.48).
3. Closed other case status has the lowest satisfaction level on all measures (overall satisfaction of 3.16).

2. The Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

DSHS/DVR Responses to Input & Recommendations

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item One

In response to this recommendation, DVR implemented quarterly webinars for CRP representatives to present an informational briefing and program update conducted by DVR's Community Programs Manager. Announcements are sent to providers by email in advance of the webinars. Content of the webinars is determined based on current issues and CRP input and questions.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Two

DVR decided not to make this change in its electronic case management system. DVR counselors must enter extensive data related to the customer and the customer's case services throughout the rehabilitation process. Entering federally-required data represents a significant portion of a counselor's overall work. With the passage of WIOA, required data collection requirements increased substantially. To manage counselor time spent entering data, DVR must carefully weigh each request for new, discretionary data collection requirements. While a best practice, documenting the reason for an IPE extension is not an RSA-required data element.

Additionally, in 2018 DVR began assessing the need to modernize or replace its case management system. A decision and initiation of a project is expected in 2020. As a result, DVR is minimizing discretionary changes to the existing system and will address change requests as part of its system upgrade or replacement project.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Three

DSHS policy establishes an expectation that staff respond to customer contacts by phone within 48 hours. As a DSHS program, DVR has adopted the 48 hour response. In March 2019, an update to the DVR customer service manual was published and announced that outlined these response expectations for DVR staff. The manual entry is as follows:

For in-person or telephone contact, DSHS employees will:

- Acknowledge or respond to in-person or recorded telephone messages within 48 hours or two business days of receipt or return to work;
- Identify themselves and use a courteous and professional tone when speaking to customers;
- Use plain language and explain any agency terminology or acronyms; and
- Follow-up with appropriate action to aid and respond to the customer's request.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Four

Washington DVR acknowledges the substantial impact that staff turnover can have on a customer's continuity of services and timely progress. Current practice is for the VR supervisor to cover the caseload while recruitment is under way or to reassign cases to other VR counselors

within the unit or office. Throughout the last two years, DVR has been experiencing higher-than usual staff shortages in many offices throughout the state. Challenges in recruiting qualified new staff and retaining current staff exacerbate this impact to customers.

DVR agrees with the Council that attention is required in this area. DVR will address this problem as a goal/priority in this State Plan and will implement strategies to engage field staff in exploring options and identifying short- and long-term solutions.

Addressing the staff recruitment and retention problems that create this problem is also a priority within the State Plan. Improving practices related to vacant caseloads and efforts to improve recruitment and retention of DVR staff will help alleviate the impact to customers.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Five

Washington DVR agrees with the Council that counseling staff need up-to-date, effective training related to serving individuals complex disability-related impediments, including individual with behavioral health conditions, traumatic brain injuries, and others.

DVR conducted a competitive recruitment to procure foundational training for VR counseling staff. The contract was awarded to the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation. Attendees will complete 12 days of training delivered in four separate sessions. Multiple sessions will be delivered statewide beginning in January 2020 and concluding approximately July 2021. All counseling staff will attend the VR Institute over the coming 18 months.

The VR Institute training will include segments on medical aspects of disability to include targeted training on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training to address the specialized needs of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, behavioral health, and others is a part of the course specifications.

In addition, DVR regional trainers will attend the VR Institute, with special attention to how they will reinforce and build upon the VR Institute as they build core VR training to be implemented beginning in 2020.

3. DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Customer Satisfaction Summary

The WSRC submitted recommendations for goals and priorities to be included in the State Plan that address key findings of the WSRC Customer Satisfaction Survey. The greatest need identified by the survey is to improve the timeliness of DVR services. Efforts to improve timeliness are included in Goal 1, Priority 1, as this issue was raised more frequently and in more ways than any other issue. Strategies to improve the timely delivery of services and to promote continuous case progress will begin in 2020.

The WSRC also asks respondents to rate their counselor's responsiveness (My counselor does a good job keeping in touch with me). While not the lowest scoring measure, DVR is adopting strategies in the State Plan to address this issue in 2020.

The designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

DVR did not reject any recommendations. Item 2, requiring a change in DVR's case management system, has been saved for future consideration as DVR implements a project to modernize its electronic case management system.

C. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

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

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

DSHS/DVR and WDVA have procedures for referring DSHS/DVR customers with military service to WDVA to determine eligibility for any state or federal Veterans' benefits. This collaboration has increased the use of Veterans' benefits as comparable services for DSHS/DVR customers who are veterans with disabilities.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA)

DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with the regional USDVA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) and its regional offices to facilitate improved service delivery for customers receiving USDVA benefits by formalizing referral procedures, designating local referral liaisons, and coordinating services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS)

DSHS administers a wide range of programs which include, but are not limited to, Medicaid services, substance abuse recovery, long term care and disability services, children's services, economic assistance services, and juvenile justice services. DSHS/DVR continues close collaboration throughout DSHS.

DSHS Community Services Division (CSD)

CSD administers the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Program (formerly known as the General Assistance - Unemployable (GAU) Program), Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program, and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program. These programs provide time-limited income assistance and other support services to low-income families and individuals. Washington DSHS/DVR continues to have an interagency agreement with the CSD that defines mutual roles and practices for serving joint customers.

DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with employment service providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers. DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with

DDA to facilitate improved service delivery for customers receiving DDA by formalizing referral procedures, designating local liaisons, and coordinating services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

- DSHS/DVR and DDA leadership meet on a regular basis, and are co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers and community rehabilitation programs that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DDA customers.
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA)

ALTSA provides long-term care through personal care attendant services, Kinship Care, Roads to Community Living, "money follows the person" policies, New Freedom Services, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Council, the Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), and the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment program. ALTSA supports FCS network development and provider engagement. DSHS/DVR and ALTSA will explore the development of a cooperative agreement for serving joint customers.

DSHS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

ODHH coordinates with DSHS/DVR's assigned supervisor on multiple projects including accessibility and accommodations for DSHS/DVR customers. Specific liaison duties are distributed locally to supervisors and the 13 rehabilitation counselors for the deaf. ODHH manages the Sign Language Interpreter Contract and values feedback from all sources to improve the quality of interpreter services. ODHH is the managing agency for DSHS/DVR's contract for Video Relay System (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) technologies.

Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) oversees the operation of thirty-nine Community and Technical Colleges across the state. DSHS/DVR will develop cooperative agreements with SBCTC programs authorized, and not authorized, by WIOA to jointly serve students with disabilities who require VR services to achieve competitive employment outcomes.

Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families

Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR)

JR provides rehabilitative services to justice-involved youth. DSHS/DVR and JR have a cooperative agreement to jointly serve JR youth who are eligible for Pre-employment Transition Services and other DSHS/DVR services. Through coordinated services, JR youth with disabilities will receive services supporting community re-entry along career pathways.

Washington State Health Care Authority

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all eligible DSHS/DVR customer recipients. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive

medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA contracts with Amerigroup, a Third-Party Administrator, to administer Foundational Community Supports (FCS), a Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project that provides supported employment services. FCS utilizes an evidence-based practice known as Individual Placement and Support. HCA Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) and the Department of Social and Health Services Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (ALTSA) support FCS network development and provider engagement.

HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HWD to assist qualified individuals to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

HCA Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)

DBHR was moved to HCA to integrate physical health with behavioral health, thereby providing whole-person care. DBHR manages the majority of public behavioral health services in Washington. DBHR provides a broad range of community based mental health, substance use disorder, and pathological and problem gambling services using multiple funding sources to meet broad behavioral health needs. In addition, DBHR sponsors recovery supports and the development of system of care networks.

FCS provides training and technical assistance to community behavioral agencies that participate in FCS programs. DBHR supports FCS network development and provider engagement.

DSHS/DVR is in the process of completing an Interlocal Agreement with DBHR. The purpose of the agreement is to establish a collaborative framework for both agencies to provide employment services for individuals with behavioral health conditions. This framework identifies shared eligibility criteria, and defines roles and responsibilities for DSHS/DVR's Supported Employment Program and DBHR's FCS Supported Employment Program.

- DSHS/DVR and HCA/DBHR leadership meet on a regular basis for ongoing coordination and collaboration between systems.
- In addition to DSHS/DVR and HCA, DBHR participate in the FCS Amerigroup Advisory Committee with other FCS partners Aging and Long-Term Support Administration and other FCS stakeholders.
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Behavioral Health Advisory Council.
- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers at the local level that are funded through HCA/DBHR contracts with each county.
- DSHS/DVR is collaborating with HCA/DBHR the FCS program for shared supported employment customers, using Medicaid behavioral health funding. designed to integrate the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported employment with DSHS/DVR supported employment services.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR signed a Memorandum of Collaboration that establishes methods for Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to be provided as extended services for joint DSHS/DVR supported employment customers.
- DSHS/DVR assigned liaison counselors that are assigned to work with behavioral health agencies across the state, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for behavioral health consumers.
- King County Behavioral Health and Recovery has become a Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network and is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those mental health customers who require a supported employment model.

Tribal Programs

DSHS/DVR and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) have a joint memorandum of understanding with eleven Tribal 121 programs, including ten in Washington and one in Coeur d'Alene, ID. This joint memorandum outlines how all partners will ensure effective communication, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation in serving individuals with disabilities who are tribal members in Washington. The agreement, updated on an annual basis, outlines procedures for referrals, joint cases, financial responsibility, shared training opportunities, information sharing, and communication. Tribal 121 directors meet annually with DSHS/DVR and DSB directors in a government-to-government collaboration to promote partnership, maximize resources, and ensure high service quality.

Through DSHS, DSHS/DVR continues its cooperative working relationships and service delivery commitments with all federally recognized tribes in Washington, including those that do not operate federally funded Tribal VR programs. DSHS/DVR participates as a member on the DSHS Indian Policy Advisory Committee. This includes annual and quarterly meetings to review our partnership and identify service delivery improvements for individuals with disabilities who are members of federally recognized tribes as well as those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

The DSHS/DVR Director participates as a member of the GCDE and partners with committee members on initiatives.

Centers for Independent Living

DSHS/DVR currently contracts Title VII, Part B funds to four independent living centers statewide. These centers use Part B funds to enhance and expand core independent living services with a focus on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, independent living centers have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment for youth with disabilities in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of independent living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and how engage with legislators about disability issues.The independent living centers' Title VII, Part B contracts are aligned with and can be amended to meet the goals set

forth by the State Plan for Independent Living; the strategic plan developed by the Washington State Independent Living Council.

Washington Workforce Association

The Washington Workforce Association (WWA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization comprised of Washington's twelve LWDBs. The WWA partners with state, regional, and national organizations advocating for a coordinated and fully funded workforce development system focused on the needs of job seekers and businesses. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the WWA have created and signed a *Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration* document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities in Washington's One-Stop Centers.

Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities

The Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities (ACHS-DD) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization of the thirty nine County Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Coordinators across the state who contract with DSHS/DDA to deliver residential, employment and other services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Washington State Business Leadership Network (WSBLN)

The WSBLN is a network of employers who educate and support businesses to hire, retain, and improve customer service for people with disabilities.

Community Employment Alliance

The Community Employment Alliance is a membership organization comprised of Community Rehabilitation Programs. DSHS/DVR participates in meetings to share information, hear concerns and collaborate on issues affecting employment services.

Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council

In the late 1990s, DSHS/DVR was the primary sponsor of a demonstration grant to identify gaps in providing services to individuals who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). DSHS/DVR continues to be a represented member of the TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council. This group discusses TBI-related policy issues, system development, and the need for services to meet the needs of TBI survivors, family members, prospective employers, and community members. The TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council has identified gaps in housing, a lack of resources, and a need for support group facilitator training. This Council has successfully encouraged the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation that adds fees to specific traffic violations (e.g. negligent driving and speeding) which correlate with increased risk of injury accidents and TBIs. These collected fees are used to help fund TBI-related programs and resources. DSHS/DVR continues to be an active partner in addressing the needs of individuals who have been, or will be affected by, traumatic brain injuries.

University of Washington Rehabilitation Program

Since 2006, DSHS/DVR and the University of Washington Rehabilitation Medicine Unit have collaborated to maintain an on-site Rehabilitation Medicine-DSHS/DVR liaison role. This

mutually beneficial relationship improves inpatient and outpatient care at the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) by providing UWMC patients with direct access to DSHS/DVR services during their hospital treatment. The UWMC is designated as the only regional rehabilitation medicine center in the Pacific Northwest for the treatment of spinal cord injuries and other severe disabling medical conditions. Early introduction in the medical setting provides DSHS/DVR with comprehensive insight into patient needs and makes the referral process more efficient. This relationship provides UWMC patients with additional resources for education, support, and funding. The DSHS/DVR liaison works to coordinate DSHS/DVR orientation and intake procedures for individuals referred from UW Rehab Medicine; determines eligibility for DSHS/DVR services; provides information and referral; participates in UWMC team staffing to coordinate DSHS/DVR services with the interdisciplinary team treatment; upon release from the hospital, assists with transitioning the individual to a VR Counselor near their home; learns about extensive medical and other resources available through the UW Medical School; and shares resources with other DSHS/DVR counselors.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

DSHS/DVR does not have a formal written agreement with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP), the state program carrying out activities under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. However, DSHS/DVR does maintain a close collaborative relationship with WATAP, which includes DSHS/DVR representation on WATAP's Advisory Council.

DSHS/DVR customers will continue to have access to assistive technology devices, services, and consultations. DSHS/DVR counselors will assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address all customers' barriers to employment as part of DSHS/DVR's standardized vocational assessment process. Two full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) will continue to provide customers with specialized AT assessments, consult with staff and customers regarding a full spectrum of AT services and products, coordinate service delivery with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources about advancements in AT devices.

To ensure that DSHS/DVR staff is informed of ongoing developments in the AT field, assistive and rehabilitative technology will continue to be a core focus of the redesigned DSHS/DVR Rehab University curriculum.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

DSHS/DVR has not entered into agreements with programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

DSHS/DVR has not entered into cooperative agreements with noneducational entities not carrying out activities under the state workforce development system who serve out-of-school youth.

5. State use contracting programs.

DSHS/DVR has not entered into state use contract agreements.

D. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Introduction

The 2014 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 profoundly enhance expectations for coordination between DSHS/DVR and education officials to provide early job exploration and work-based learning opportunities for secondary students with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR has developed a long-range plan to develop and strengthen the education-vocational rehabilitation infrastructure for the coming four years.

Pre-employment Transition Services

With the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandate that state vocational rehabilitation programs allocate 15% of federal funds to provide five required Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to all students with disabilities, it is imperative that DSHS/DVR develops a strategic, thoughtful, and intentional plan to meet the needs of secondary students with disabilities statewide. These five required activities include 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) has expanded the population of students who receive services from DSHS/DVR. Secondary students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans who receive Pre-ETS may be either eligible for DSHS/DVR services or potentially eligible for services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities, or as individualized and intensive services for students with higher support needs.

For the provisions of Pre-Employment Transition Services, DVR has defined a "Student with a Disability" – as an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who:

- (A)(1) **Is not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services** under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII));
- (B)(1) Is **not older than 21 years of age**; or (2) If the State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), is not older than that maximum age; and
- (C)(1) Is **eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.); or (2) Is a student who is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504. (Authority: Sections 7(37) and 12(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 705(37) and 709(c))

WIOA CFRs specifically note that services may begin as early as age 14, if deemed appropriate by the student's IEP team. While not all students receiving Pre-ETS will apply for DSHS/DVR services, engagement with transition staff and students will start at the age of 16 in an effort to work toward alignment of IEP and High School and Beyond Plan goals.

Coordinated Services for Students and Youth: Goals & Objectives

Strengthen and enhance the DSHS/DVR and education agency partnership at state and local levels so that students receive a seamless continuum of transition services.

- Work with the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to improve communication regarding clarifying roles and responsibilities of each partner agency in coordinating activities that promote successful secondary transition services for students with disabilities.
- Follow the guidance given in the DSHS/DVR's Memorandum of Understanding with OSPI to help:
- Disseminate the agreement to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) including special education directors and 504 coordinators, and to VR staff, and encourage further dissemination to school counselors and principals.
- Promote outreach to identify potentially eligible students as early as possible, including students who are receiving special education services (who have an IEP), students receiving Section 504 accommodations, aids, and services (who have a 504 Plan), and students who have otherwise documented disabilities and may benefit from pre-employment transition services and/or transition services.
- Communicate regularly among state and local entities to identify and address gaps in services,
- Explore and identify the transition needs of students with disabilities at risk of drop-out or who have a history of incarceration, and integrate supports into existing state initiatives as applicable.
- Promote individualized and student-centered planning, with post-secondary goals consistent with student interests, strengths, preferences, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and informed choice.
- Promote transition planning between LEAs and VR to ensure seamless and coordinated services for students.

- Share training materials developed by the agencies or their agents and extend invitations to trainings using these materials to LEAS and VR staff.
- Collaborate to identify and implement high quality pre-employment transition and transition services service delivery models.
- Invite partner agencies to statewide meetings as needed for cross training or education.
- Support eligible students with disabilities to engage with the broadest transition team possible, and encourage LEAS to provide early invitations to VR staff for IEP consultation and technical assistance.

Increase student access to Pre-Employment Transition Services and individualized transition services from DSHS/DVR.

- Ensure every high school in the state is assigned a liaison VR counselor trained to provide outreach and comprehensive high school transition services.
- Ensure outreach is inclusive of all educational stakeholders including but not limited: Transition coordinators, Administrators, Guidance counselors/School Psychologists, 504 coordinators, School nurse, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Special education teaching staff, Alternative high school teachers, McKinney-Vento coordinator, and Career Technical Educators (CTE).
- Identify regularly scheduled check-ins with school staff.
- Lead collaboration with individual school districts to identify gaps in transition services
- Continue to develop interagency agreements and service contracts with organizations to provide Pre-ETS to potentially DSHS/DVR-eligible and DSHS/DVR-eligible students.
- Develop and maintain a DSHS/DVR student transition website that provides information for students and their families, DSHS/DVR staff, and school personnel.
- Provide ongoing transition best practices guidance, training and technical assistance to DSHS/DVR supervisors, counselors, and staff.
- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved disability populations, including those with 504 plans, those with emotional-behavioral challenges, students who are deaf or hearing, those who have specific learning disabilities, as well as other disability populations who often do not receive services.
- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved populations that include tribal youth, justice-involved youth, homeless youth, and students and youth receiving foster care.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

Consultation with Education

As part of the formal interagency agreement developed in 2017 between DSHS/DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and OSPI, DSHS/DVR consults with and provides technical assistance to staff at secondary schools and local educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This agreement

defines partners' roles in pre-employment transition services, collaborative training activities, and consultation and technical assistance which support educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities.

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

DSHS/DVR and Individualized Education Plans

DSHS/DVR has designated counselor liaisons which work closely with local education agencies statewide; every high school in Washington has a designated DSHS/DVR counselor liaison, including tribally operated secondary schools. DSHS/DVR liaisons maintain close collaborative relationships with students, families, educators, and stakeholders. Their activities include, but are not limited to:

- Build and maintains relationship with educational stakeholders
- Explain the scope of VR services
- Coordinates outreach and training activities for students and families
- Addresses organizational problems between school and DVR
- Maintains regular schedule at the school
- Provide individualized transition services (when appropriate)
- Participate in IEP planning and development
- Attends IEP meetings
- Ongoing consultation in the development of transition IEPs
- Dissemination of informational materials, to parents, students, and school staff

.

C. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

Financial Resources and Personnel

Financial Responsibilities

DSHS/DVR provides any financial resources and services needed to establish eligibility for students and youth with disabilities. In addition, funds are made available for students' activities primarily related to employment and pre-employment transition services. Activities primarily related to education are funded by educational agencies.

Personnel

DSHS/DVR, OSPI, and local education agencies maintain lists of DSHS/DVR liaisons on public-facing web sites. DSHS/DVR liaison counselors conduct outreach and ongoing consultation to teachers, students, families, and stakeholders.

D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Outreach and Identification Activities

The current agreement between DSHS/DVR, DSB, and OSPI identifies outreach activities to increase the number of students with disabilities who engage in DSHS/DVR and DSB services. In addition, this agreement specifies that DSHS/DVR services should be available to all students with transition IEPs well before students prepare to exit secondary education.

Outreach and engagement activities include:

- An OSPI representative is a member of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council
- DSHS/DVR counselors are assigned as liaisons to each high school in the state
- DSHS/DVR and OSPI share training and information materials for cross-program professional development
- DSHS/DVR provides outreach and education about DSHS/DVR services to underserved populations, including students with disabilities

E. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

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

Introduction

This section describes how DSHS/DVR contracts with private vocational rehabilitation (VR) service providers, Washington's Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), as well as the services these partners provide.

CRP Contract & Services

DSHS/DVR contracts with CRPs to provide assessment, placement, retention, and training services. The majority of CRPs are private nonprofit providers. However, in some instances, the CRP contract is with a government organization or private, for-profit businesses.

The State of Washington requires contracts, in lieu of cooperative agreements, for the purpose of procuring goods and services. These contracts meet requirements specified within CFR 361.31. DSHS/DVR's CRP contract is procured through an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and is renewed every two years. The RFQ defines the services, expected outcomes of service delivery, payment systems, uniform fees, and the qualifications prospective contractors must meet to be granted a CRP contract. DSHS/DVR does not currently limit the number of contractors who may respond to the RFQ and contractors choose which of the contracted services they provide. Currently, approximately 120 organizations have a CRP contract with DSHS/DVR.

The following services are defined, and provided to DSHS/DVR customers through, the CRP contract:

- Vocational Evaluation: Customers participate in one or more types of standardized vocational tests used to obtain objective information requested by a DSHS/DVR counselor regarding work-related strengths and limitations.

- Trial Work Experience: Customers' ability to benefit from DSHS/DVR services is assessed in a real work setting(s) arranged by the contractor. Results are used to determine eligibility based on clear and convincing evidence whether the individual's disability is too significant to benefit from services.
- Community Based Assessment: Customers' work interests, abilities, and employment barriers are assessed in realistic work settings arranged by the contractor. These assessments collect information and help identify the nature and extent of supports or accommodations needed for the customer to obtain and maintain competitive employment.
- Job Placement: Customers are placed into paid and integrated employment, arranged by the contractor, through mutual agreement between the DSHS/DVR counselor, customer, and contractor.
- Intensive Training (Supported Employment): Customers attain job stabilization with job supports, meet their employers' expected levels of work productivity, and transition to long-term Extended Services provided by an entity other than DSHS/DVR through one-on-one job skills training and support provided at the supported employment job site by the contractor.
- Job Retention: Customers learn the essential functions of a job, meet the employer's expected level of performance, and retain employment for ninety calendar days after placement through individualized training and support services provided by the contractor.
- Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services: Customers who have not disclosed their disabilities to their employers or customers whose employers prohibit access to the worksite receive regular therapeutic interaction. Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services enables customers to maintain satisfactory job performance and successful interactions with others at the workplace.
- Pre-employment Transition Services: Students with disabilities participate in pre-employment activities as appropriate, and in coordination with their schools. These services include 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning.

Trial Work Experience, Community Based Assessment, Job Placement, Intensive Training, and Job Retention are available at four levels of intensity. Customers' universal and unique barriers determine which intensity level, and commensurate support level, is needed; the fourth level is reserved for customers who are deaf/blind.

All contracted service payments are outcome based; delivery of the expected result or outcome is required to receive full payment. The expected outcome is specific to the service as indicated in the definition with a report detailing the activities associated with the provision of service and outcomes attained. Bonus payment incentives for employment outcomes under certain circumstances (e.g. employment which offers health insurance) are included in the contract.

Collaborative Activities

DSHS/DVR has established a workgroup of DSHS/DVR and CRP staff. This workgroup collaborates on a series of initiatives which will improve service quality, promote better outcomes, and improve DSHS/DVR and CRP partnerships.

Workgroup Initiatives include:

1. Reviewing the current contract model to determine needed improvements or modifications.

2. Developing guidance for DSHS/DVR and CRP staff to promote effective collaboration.

3. Disseminating best practice guidance to DSHS/DVR staff regarding communication and collaboration with local CRPs.

Beginning in FFY 2018, DSHS/DVR implemented quarterly state-level meetings between CRPs and DSHS/DVR staff. These quarterly meeting provide CRPs and DSHS/DVR staff with regular updates and information sharing opportunities, and improve communication and collaboration. DSHS/DVR will continue to conduct these state-level quarterly meetings to improve partnerships statewide between DSHS/DVR and CRPs.

F. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

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

Supported Employment Partners & Agreements

DSHS/DVR identifies and makes arrangements with private non-profits (community rehabilitation programs/CRPs) as identified in the response to Description (e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Organizations, to provide supported employment services for individuals with most significant disabilities including youth.

DSHS/DVR collaborates with state and local entities including, but not limited to the Developmental Disabilities Administration, Health Care Authority Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, Aging and Long Term Support Administration, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, workforce development system, business partners, local community behavioral health agencies, local education agencies, local county developmental disabilities employment providers, and FCS providers to provide competitive integrated supported employment services to eligible individuals.

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with behavioral health (mental health) disabilities. Of these customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA). DSHS/DVR and DDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018 for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving services from DSHS/DVR and DDA. This agreement provides staff of both divisions with referral, eligibility and funding criteria, case management guidelines and designates liaisons for ongoing coordination and

collaboration. DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR.

For individuals with behavioral health conditions (mental health or substance use disorder, or co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder) served by the Health Care Authority (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with behavioral health conditions, Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment Program is helping to address the employment resource needs of individuals with behavioral health conditions. DSHS/DVR and DBHR seek to increase the employment rate for individuals with behavioral health conditions. DSHS/DVR is in the process of completing an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with DBHR. The ILA's purpose is to provide a collaborative framework for both agencies to provide employment services to individuals with behavioral health conditions. The ILA identifies shared eligibility criteria and defines roles and responsibilities for DVR's Supported Employment Program and for DBHR's FCS Supported Program.

DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, behavioral health disability, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA) to explore the development cooperative agreement for individuals with physical health conditions with long term care needs such as individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities who require supported employment and are receiving services from both DSHS/ALTSA's FCS Supported Employment Program and DSHS/DVR's Supported Employment Program.

Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long term funding source for extended services.

DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services:

- Participate in an interagency service committee which supports initiatives and increased employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.
- Train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources.
- Provide staff training on the use of natural supports and other behavioral health treatment modalities that can be utilized for DSHS/DVR Supported Employment customers for extended services.
- Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies.
- Coordinate cross-agency program training opportunities on FCS Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Evidence-Based Supported Employment services and the DSHS/DVR HCA/DBHR Interlocal Agreement.
- Participate in the FCS Advisory Committee.

G. Coordination with Employers

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

1. VR services; and

Introduction

This section describes DSHS/DVR's contributions to coordinated business engagement activities. DSHS/DVR and its workforce development partners will embrace a dual—customer model, serving both Washington's businesses and Washingtonians living with disabilities.

Businesses will have unprecedented access to talented and highly skilled job seekers with disabilities, while enjoying DSHS/DVR's training and technical assistance supports. Concurrently, DSHS/DVR and its partners will provide Washingtonians living with disabilities with the full breadth of state-of-the-art rehabilitation, training, and employment services needed to thrive in Washington's workplaces and communities.

This dual-customer model will close skill gaps for businesses, promote the economic self-sufficiency of Washingtonians living with disabilities, and contribute to a more prosperous Washington.

Businesses & Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In coordination with workforce development partners at the state and local level, DSHS/DVR establishes the following business engagement objectives for PY 2020 - 2023:

- Define the role of the Business Relation Specialists (BRS's) and the role of the Business Relations Manager, including the Position Descriptions, Outcomes and Statewide Goals.
- Define the areas/counties/cities need BRS's and Job Coaches/Employment Specialists.
- Provide a 5 year Strategic Plan for Business Engagement. Include year by year details and implementation recommendations.
- Engage in the development and implementation of coordinated business engagement from a national level to a local level, participate in WorkSource industry sector strategies such as Healthcare and Manufacturing, and provide opportunities with career pathways programs throughout the state.
- Utilize DSHS/DVR Business Relation Specialists to assist with the recruitment and referral of qualified job seekers with disabilities to meet businesses' demands.
- Lead and coordinate Local Workforce Development Board/WorkSource engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to skilled job seekers with disabilities to help the business meet their utilization goal of hiring 7% (2019) PwD a.k.a. Section 503 of the Rehab Act.
- Create Marketing Tools to increase visibility through a methodical outreach and marketing plan. This also includes Business Relations Specialists to participate in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations such as SHRM and Local Chambers, representation at career and recruitment fairs, and provide businesses with training services such as Basic ADA and Disability Etiquette.

- Support and expand innovative partnerships, such as Microsoft's Autism, and the Amazon Sort, Prime, and Distribution Projects, which partners DSHS/DVR and Washington's businesses to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities in high-skill and high-demand occupations.

2. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

Businesses & Transition Services

Pre-employment transition services provide value to both students and businesses. In the dual-customer model, pre-employment transition services will engage Washington's businesses in actively molding the future workforce. By exposing students with disabilities to hands-on and realistic work experiences, these students will enter the workforce well-prepared to meet business' skill needs and expectations. As a result, business will experience higher productivity, better engagement, and reduced turnover.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with its workforce development, education, and community partners to:

- Build relationships with businesses who will work with students and youth by developing internships and on-the-job training programs.
- Develop business training and outreach materials which address hiring youth and students with disabilities.
- Promote the development and expansion of on-site job exploration and internship programs, such as Project Search, statewide.
- Partner with businesses, leveraging pre-employment experiences to prepare youth for the realities and expectations of the 21st Century workplace.

H. Interagency Cooperation

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

1. The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

Health Care Authority

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all DSHS/DVR customer recipients. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR developed a cooperative agreement with DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA contracts with Amerigroup, a Third-Party Administrator to administer the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment services. FCS Supported Employment services utilizes evidence-based practice known as Individual Placement and Support. HCA Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery

(DBHR) and the Department of Social and Health Services Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (ALTSA) support FCS network development and provider engagement.

HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HWD to assist qualified individuals in continuing to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

2. The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with employment service providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers.

- DSHS/DVR and DDA leadership meet on a regular basis, and are co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers and community rehabilitation programs that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DDA customers
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

3. The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

HCA Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)

DBHR merged with the HCA to provide whole-person care, integrates physical health with behavioral health. HCA is the designated state agency mental health authority. DBHR oversees community-based behavioral health services to HCA DBHR oversees behavioral health services to individuals with a behavioral health condition (mental health or substance use disorder, or co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder). DBHR contracts with counties to deliver outpatient substance use disorder treatment and directly contracts for residential treatment services. DBHR also contracts with regional entities, managed care organizations for the delivery of community behavioral health services. DBHR provides technical assistance and training on FCS Supported Employment to behavioral health agencies. Behavioral health agencies that have FCS programs provide the extended services for DSHS/DVR customers.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR leadership meet on a regular basis for ongoing coordination and collaboration between systems.
- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers at the local level that are funded through DBHR contracts with each county.
- DSHS/DVR has been collaborating with DBHR on a pilot project that provides extended services for joint supported employment customers, using Medicaid behavioral health funding.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR participate in the FCS Amerigroup Advisory Committee which includes the State Health Care Authority, DBHR, Aging and Long Term Support Administration and other FCS stakeholders.
- Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those behavioral health customers who require a supported employment model.
- DSHS/DVR has assigned liaison counselors that work itinerantly from several behavioral health agencies across the state. The counselor works from the behavioral health agency approximately one day per week, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for individuals with behavioral health conditions.

I. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

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

i. The number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

Personnel Data

DSHS/DVR employs a total of 244 field service personnel to serve approximately 20,000 individuals per year. Personnel providing direct services to customers are employed in eight distinct classifications. DSHS/DVR's direct service personnel are chiefly comprised of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) and Rehabilitation Technicians (RTs), representing DSHS/DVR's professional and paraprofessional personnel, respectively.

ii. The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Personnel Data & Vacancies

DSHS/DVR Personnel Levels and Vacancies by Classification, December 1, 2019

Classification	Personnel	Vacancies
VRC 1 In-training	13	2
VRC 2 In-Training	6	0
VRC 3 Journey	53	12
VRC 4 Lead	55	13
RT 1 Case Aide	74	6
RT 2 Benefits Tech	7	0
RT 2 Business Spec	15	3
VR Supervisor	25	5
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	2	0

iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Data & 2021 - 2025Projections

DSHS/DVR Projected New Staff Needs by Personnel Classification, 2021 – 2025

Personnel Classification	Projected Number of Positions to be Filled, 2021 – 2025
VRC 1 In-Training	20
VRC 2 In-Training	20
VRC 3 Journey	44
VRC 4 Lead	44
RT 1 Case Aide	40
RT 2 Benefits Technician & Business Tech	16
Supervisor	20
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	1

B. Personnel Development

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

i. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Higher Education Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Western Washington University (WWU) offers the only graduate program in Washington that directly prepares vocational rehabilitation professionals. Currently 32 students are enrolled in the Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling program. In FFY 2019, 10 graduates completed this program and attained the credentials for certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

ii. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

WWU Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Participants and Sponsorships, FFY 2020

Students Enrolled	32
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	10

iii. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Students Enrolled	32
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	6
Graduates	10
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	5

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Recruitment, Preparation, & Retention of Qualified Personnel

DSHS/DVR's FTE allotment is capped at 318.0 FTEs until June 30, 2021. The division is able to recruit all field service vacancies as they occur but may not exceed this FTE cap. Approval by the DSHS Secretary is required to fill any newly established exempt or program management positions, as part of ongoing budget savings policies.

Qualified Personnel Recruitment & Preparation Strategies

DSHS/DVR will maintain recruitment linkages and concentrated efforts with regional higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs. These include:

- Western Washington University
- Idaho State University
- Portland State University
- Western Oregon University
- San Diego State University
- Fresno State University
- Utah State University

DSHS/DVR will also continue to send recruitment announcements to higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs nationwide.

Recruiting qualified candidates in sufficient numbers to fill VRC positions is a continuing challenge. The national shortage of qualified VRC applicants has significantly affected DSHS/DVR's ability to fill vacancies in a timely manner, especially in rural and high-cost-0f-living locations. Counselor turnover in our most populous county, King County, results in frequent turnover and insufficient staffing levels to adequately meet customer needs.

In response to recruitment challenges, DSHS/DVR has broadened its list of qualifying master's degrees to include psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities). While the list of qualifying master's degrees has broadened, the required competencies that a VRC candidate must demonstrate have remained unchanged.

Per Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) revisions to Rehabilitation Act CSPD requirements, DSHS/DVR has incorporated the Bachelor's level education qualifications in to the VRC classification series. This has resulted in a broader recruitment pool and more timely appointments to vacant positions.

A consequence of hiring graduates without a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling is that it takes longer for these new staff members to master the work. New counselors without a Masters in Rehabilitation complete18 credit hours in rehabilitation counseling within their first two years with DVR. New counselors with a Bachelor's degree have two years to complete a Master's Degree. These counselors also carry fewer cases than journey-level counselors while completing the educational requirements and learning the job.

A particular focus of recruitment continues to be attracting candidates who identify as African-American, Latino, and American Indian, as these individuals are presently under-represented among DSHS/DVR personnel and in comparison to our caseload demographics. Targeted

recruitment will continue in collaboration with Latino community-based organizations, American Indian VR Programs and other Tribal organizations, as well as African-American community-based organizations.

Retention & Advancement

To ensure new employees have the support they need to be successful, DSHS/DVR continues to use a comprehensive employee onboarding program. This set of activities is used by supervisors when new employees are hired to ensure that individuals receive adequate orientation and training to perform their roles and responsibilities and serve customers well.

An activity to support new staff was implemented in one of DVR's regions this year. New VR counseling staff formed a cohort that met monthly with two senior DVR managers to discuss policy, practices and principles related to their vocational rehabilitation work. The sessions have proven to be valuable to new staff, and other areas of the state plan to implement similar approaches.

DSHS/DVR conducts an employee survey bi-annually, and uses the results to identify ways to improve employee job satisfaction.

J. Statewide Assessment

(Source: ***2019 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)***, WA DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.)

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

A. With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

Introduction

Washington DVR's 2019 CSNA, completed between May and November 2019, draws upon secondary data and reports, DVR service data, and survey and interview responses to assess vocational service needs. The following sources and data collection methods were used to complete the required components of the assessment:

- Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey data.
- Analysis of DVR service data for cases that closed in program years 2017 & 2018 (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019).
- Surveys of subject matter experts, existing research, and DVR service data information on supported employment needs and programs.
- Survey and interviews of stakeholders about unserved and underserved populations, undertaken by Washington State University, Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC).
- Interviews of Workforce Development Council (WDC) representatives and DVR liaisons to WDCs about people with disabilities served by other parts of the workforce system.

- Existing research and DVR service data about youth and students with disabilities.
- Survey of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and DVR data about services provided by CRPs.

Washingtonians Living with Disabilities

American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2017 indicate that 12.9% of Washington's residents --942,318 individuals – are living with a disability. The rate of disability for Washington's population has remained nearly constant over the past five years.

More than half of all people with disabilities are in their prime working years, between the ages of 18 to 64 years. For working age individuals with disabilities, 40.5% are employed, 5.4% are unemployed, and 54% are not in the labor force. Compared to people without disabilities, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is somewhat higher; however, those with disabilities are three times as frequently out of the labor force as people without disabilities. Although disability and illness are commonly cited reasons for not working, the need for vocational rehabilitation services well exceeds available resources.

DVR service numbers are significant when compared to the 26,096 unemployed working age adults with disabilities but represent a very small portion of the 259,784 individuals with disabilities who are out of the labor force. During program years 2017 and 2018, DVR closed cases for 9,503 customers who were participating in a service plan. Completion of services led to employment for 5,115 individuals.

Washingtonians with disabilities earn about one-third less and are twice as likely to live in poverty as people without disabilities. Lower earnings are attributable to both low hourly wages and less than full time work. Washingtonians with disabilities earn an average of $27,052 annually. DVR customers who obtained employment in program year 2018 had median earnings of $12 per hour and $19,682 annually.

Unemployment and low earnings are related to lower education levels and reflected in high rates of poverty. Compared to people without disabilities, Washingtonians with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to lack a high school diploma or equivalency and about half as likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher. Nearly 18% of Washingtonians with disabilities live below the federal poverty level, compared to a statewide rate of about 9%. More than 28% of people with disabilities have incomes below 150% of the poverty level.

DVR's service population in program years 2017 and 2018 was similar to that of working age people with disabilities statewide, with a few notable exceptions. DVR underserved females, in comparison to the gender make-up of working age adults with disabilities. Although minority groups were proportionately represented in DVR's service population, several groups had lower than average rehabilitation rates. Additionally, Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native populations are underrepresented in DVR's workforce.

County and regional comparisons show that DVR services were not provided in proportion to the population of working age people with disabilities in some counties. Regions 1 and 2 served a larger percentage of customers than would be expected from the population data, although cases

more frequently closed without a job in Region 1. Region 3 -- especially Pierce County -- and rural areas in regions 1 and 3 are underserved, compared to their share of working age individuals with disabilities.

Need for Supported Employment Services

DVR Service Data for Most Significantly Disabled and Supported Employment

DVR reviewed cases that closed during the two-year period July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018 and consulted with experts to assess service rates for individuals with most significant disabilities (MSD) and the need for and availability of supported employment services.

DVR implemented an Order of Selection on November 1, 2017 and prioritized services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Since that time, the proportion of active cases with MSD determination and needs for supported employment have grown.

Nearly two thirds of closed cases during the review period had MSD determinations, compared to about 50% prior to entering Order of Selection.

About half of MSD customers had supported employment needs identified on their IPE; 75% of these customers had a cognitive disability and 16% had a psychosocial disability.

DVR service data suggest that DVR has greater challenges assisting individuals with psychosocial, physical/mobility, and vision impairments to move from eligibility determination to plan development than individuals with cognitive disabilities. Since the need for supported employment is assessed in the plan development process, service needs are likely to be greater than indicated by the data for customers in plan.

Nearly half of MSD cases in which the primary disability was psychosocial, physical/mobility, or vision closed before plan; the rate for MSD individuals with cognitive or hearing disabilities was 36-37%.

When compared to individuals determined significantly disabled (SD) or not significantly disabled (NSD), MSD cases were equally likely to have an employment outcome but were much more likely to close before plan. MSD cases with supported employment needs were more successful in obtaining employment than cases overall.

Rehabilitation rates were 54% for all cases; 55% for MSD cases; and 68% for supported employment cases.

43% of cases with MSD determination closed before plan, twice as often as SD and NSD cases.

Supported Employment Services and Systems

Funding for supported employment services is segmented among DVR, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), and the Aging and Long-Term Services Administration (ALTSA). DBHR and ALTSA have program oversight responsibility for Foundational Community Supports (FCS), which provides

resources for supported employment. Coordination among these lead agencies is complicated and insufficient.

Ideally, DDA and FCS services are complementary to and braided with DVR's services, to enable individuals to access resources from both systems when needed and as appropriate to their needs.

DVR services are time-limited, whereas both DDA and FCS can be ongoing. DVR typically provides assessment, job placement, intensive training services, and support services needed by the individual to obtain a job and achieve stable job performance. DDA or FCS long-term supports begin when the customer reaches stabilization on the job. DDA and FCS can provide job placement services and short-term supports for customers ineligible for DVR services; however, the range of services is more limited than those available from DVR.

Supported employment resources have expanded statewide with the startup of FCS in 2018 but availability of long-term supports is insufficient to meet the need and is often a determining factor in access to VR services. DVR customers with behavioral health needs may not qualify for FCS or be connected to behavioral health services. Additionally, permanent adoption of FCS is not yet assured. DVR could also expand long-term supports by encouraging supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces.

Definitions and understanding of eligibility for services, readiness to participate, and long-term support differ among the three programs. To effectively serve customers, these differences need to be bridged and staff and providers need to be knowledgeable about the different systems and services. Additionally, customers and their families or advocates need better access to benefits planning and understanding of the impact of work on other benefits, to make an informed choice about pursuing employment.

DVR-DDA Collaboration

Services and interagency coordination are in place and function well, for the most part, for customers with intellectual and development disabilities. DVR and DDA work collaboratively with county agencies, employment service providers, and school districts to effectively coordinate transition and vocational rehabilitation services for mutual customers. Respective roles and responsibilities are defined by a memorandum of understanding. DDA and DVR both contract with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) to provide employment services to customers.

Shared customers of DVR and DDA are highly successful in getting jobs. According to a January 2019 report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), Washington leads the nation in helping DDA clients get jobs and 80% of DDA supported employment customers who use DVR services get a job. However, few earn a living wage and only 10% earn more than the federal poverty level. Earnings are below poverty level for 99% of individuals with high support needs, who work an average of 21 hours per month. Individuals with low support needs work an average of 88 hours per month and have higher earnings, though only 35% make more than the poverty level.

For shared DDA-DVR customers, service capacity and availability to those who qualify are not major impediments to accessing supported employment services. Challenges pertain to conflicts in service models and processes, lack of procedures for coordination in some offices, confusing communications, and inadequate access to benefits planners. The path to accessing services can be confusing to customers and their families or advocates, especially with recent changes to practice that require customers to apply to DVR first, which can also lead to a referral to WorkSource.

Sometimes DVR's "ability to benefit from services" criterion conflicts with DDA's philosophy that all people can work. DDA can determine a customer ready to search for work and DVR finds them ineligible for services. If a customer is ineligible for DVR services or placed on the waiting list, DDA can provide job placement services but the customer is delayed in their job search.

When a DDA customer comes to DVR and is already working, DVR needs to complete its processes for eligibility determination, vocational assessment, and individual plan for services. In the meantime, the customer is in need of intensive training services to support their success on the job. Sometimes, the vocational assessment or job goal developed through the service planning process conflicts with the existing job placement.

Coordination could be improved by clarifying roles in the transition process, agreement on readiness of referrals, joint participation in presentations to customers about services, engaging customers earlier, and holding each partner accountable for outcomes.

DVR-FCS Collaboration

Foundational Community Supports (FCS) is a Medicaid demonstration program that funds supported employment services for targeted populations, including people with behavioral health conditions, long-term care needs, or physical impairments that necessitate assistance with work activities. The demonstration program is intended to show that supported employment services reduce the overall healthcare costs of Medicaid-eligible individuals. During the demonstration phase, the number of customers that can be served is limited and the program is nearing that capacity.

FCS supported employment provides job placement and retention, with the expectation that participants will be connected to other needed health services, such as outpatient behavioral health and long-term care. Ongoing supported employment services can be provided for the individual to remain employed.

The State Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery and DSHS' Aging and Long-term Support Administration are responsible for developing and supporting the statewide provider network. FCS services are provided by community health, behavioral health, tribal, and social service agencies, which include community rehabilitation programs. Gaps arise when providers do not have policies and procedures for sharing information with other agencies, to access services provided by other agencies.

Coordination of services for customers shared by FCS and DVR is in early stages. DVR has established standard operating procedures for working with individuals who are eligible for FCS to support coordinated service delivery for mutual customers and is in the process of implementing an interlocal agreement with DBHR to provide a collaborative framework for serving people eligible for FCS.

The episodic nature of behavioral health conditions and differing philosophies about readiness for employment present challenges to coordinated service delivery. FCS draws upon the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment for individuals with long-term severe mental illness or substance use disorders. IPS emphasizes rapid job placement based on the job seeker's preference, rather than in-depth assessment or counseling. This approach differs from DVR's process of assessing customer strengths and barriers to employment and customer selection of a job goal consistent with the vocational assessment.

With the exception of CRPs, DVR has limited experience partnering with FCS providers to serve customers, particularly community health and behavioral health agencies. DVR staff and service providers lack knowledge about those service systems and how to work effectively with FCS customers. Additionally, when a customer receives FCS services from a provider that is not a DVR contractor, they cannot use the same provider for DVR services. Providers must be vendors for both FCS and DVR services for coordination to function optimally.

B. Who are minorities;

People who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native have the highest rate of disability in the State, with 17.5% reporting a disability, or about one out of every six individuals. Disability rates of 7.1% and 8.1% among Asian and Hispanic/Latino individuals are lower than the State's 12.9% rate of disability.

The diversity of DVR's service population is similar to that of working age people with disabilities. However, employment outcomes differed by race/ethnicity: all minority groups except Asians experienced lower than average rates of successful case closure.

See section C for further assessment.

C. Who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Service Needs and Barriers to Access

In July 2019, DVR contracted with Washington State University, Social and Economic Studies Research Center, to assess the needs of individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved, including racial and ethnic minorities. The two-part study included a web-based survey, completed by 33 stakeholders, and follow-up phone interviews with 23 of the survey completers. The survey was designed to identify service needs and barriers to accessing services by populations that are not well-served by DVR. Interviews were held to gain insight into barriers to employment and ways to improve DVR services to underserved groups. Stakeholders were also asked about the appropriate roles of DVR and Washington's broader workforce system in serving people with disabilities and ways to ensure DVR services are culturally competent and responsive to customers.

Stakeholders identified the populations they serve or represent, including disability types, racial and ethnic minorities, and groups with particular barriers to accessing services (BAS), including homeless individuals, ex-offenders, students and youth, older adults and veterans.

Service Needs: Core VR services of Job Placement, Job Retention, Transition Services for Youth, Job Exploration, and training or education ranked highest among the services most needed by unserved and underserved populations. The table below shows the top service needs, based on weighted rankings of stakeholders' selection of their top three priorities.

Service Needs	**Overall Rank**	**% Ranked #1**	**% Ranked #2**	**% Ranked #3**
Job Placement	1	34%	14%	20%
Job Retention	2	2%	25%	17%
Transition Services for Youth	3	13%	8%	9%
Job Exploration	4	7%	12%	11%
Technical/Vocational Training	5	10%	4%	5%
On-the-Job Supports or Coaching	6	3%	7%	18%
Internships/Apprenticeships	7	7%	8%	4%
Vocational Assessment	8	3%	11%	3%
Restoration/Rehabilitation	9	5%	2%	4%
Independent Living	10	3%	4%	4%
Literacy/Basic Education	11	4%	2%	2%
Assistive Technology	12	2%	2%	1%
Post-Secondary Education	13	0%	2%	3%

Barriers to Access: Transportation to services, awareness of/understanding of service availability, language or cultural factors, and wait time for services were most frequently selected.

Barriers to Access	**Overall Rank**	**% Ranked #1**	**% Ranked #2**	**% Ranked #3**
Transportation to Services	1	13%	14%	13%
Awareness/Understanding of Service Availability	2	15%	12%	13%
Wait Time for Services	3	10%	10%	13%
Language/Cultural Factors	4	12%	7%	8%
Provider Lack of Expertise Related to Needed Services	5	10%	8%	9%
Behavioral Health Factors	6	3%	14%	6%
Location of Services	7	8%	4%	9%
Provider Lack of Expertise Related to Disability Type	8	5%	6%	4%
Criminal History	9	5%	6%	4%
Homelessness/Housing Insecurity	9	4%	4%	5%

Physical Accessibility of Services	11	5%	3%	1%
Health Factors	12	3%	5%	3%
Literacy/Educational Level	13	1%	6%	4%
Assistive or Other Technology Needs	14	0%	3%	3%
Cost of Services	15	0%	2%	2%

Barriers to Employment

The following barriers to employment were most frequently identified by stakeholders:

Complexity of the Customer Context: A primary barrier to employment for groups that are not well-served is the inability of workforce system partners to recognize and address the complexity of the customer's life context. These circumstances are often social and economic in nature, experienced especially by homeless people and ex-offenders. Issues such as transportation, housing, mental or physical health, and substance abuse, make it much more difficult for them to access DVR services or maintain employment. These types of obstacles are not typically considered or well-assessed when evaluating barriers to employment and eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Order of selection restricts DVR's ability to serve these populations when the significance of their disability does not account for these types of limitations.

For racial and ethnic minorities, a general lack of cultural awareness among workforce system partners limits access to services. The system is designed to respond to people seeking assistance. However, some cultures rely more on families to care for people with disabilities and may not seek assistance. Stakeholders also identified a failure to recognize that diversity exists within cultures, for example subgroups within the Asian, African American, and the deaf community.

Accessing DVR: Access to DVR services was primarily described in terms of customer lack of awareness about services and DVR's limited capacity to take new customers, which is intensified by order of selection. The most frequently identified racial and ethnic groups who lack awareness of DVR services and would benefit from outreach included Native Americans, sub-cultures in the broader Asian community, and East Africans. Others thought that DVR needs to engage students and youth at younger ages, indicating that they lack an orientation to planning for their future and understanding their options. Veterans and people living in rural areas were also thought to be in need of greater DVR outreach. Although veterans have access to vocational rehabilitation services through the Veterans Administration, DVR could be more welcoming and do more to understand specific issues that impact them, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Order of selection was noted as a barrier to services since it excludes individuals whose disabilities are determined to be less severe. This has especially impacted deaf and deaf-blind populations and people with mental health disorders. Some conditions and limitations are not obvious and customers may not readily present them.

Timelines and Timeliness: Many stakeholders mentioned that more time is needed for some customers to be successful. For example, trusting relationships between ex-offenders and

employers take time to develop. For other populations, it can take additional time to engage the customer, fully understand their needs, recognize their potential, and figure out the right resources for the individual.

Issues were also noted in relation to cultural differences in perception of time and timeliness. Cultural differences can affect a customer's ability to keep to appointments and impact case progress timelines.

Interview questions also addressed the strengths and challenges of DVR and the broader workforce system in meeting the vocational rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities. Changes to workforce system programs have emphasized stronger relationships and coordination across programs, with the goal of establishing a seamless service delivery network that enhances customer access to services. All workforce development programs are expected to be accessible to people with disabilities. At the same time, DVR services are more focused on assisting people with the most significant disabilities and youth in transition from school to work.

DVR Successes and Challenges

Better Partnerships: Stakeholders commented that DVR has been successful in building stronger partnerships with groups such as the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, and Economic Security Administration programs. Additionally, DVR has improved communications with workforce system partners and provided expertise on disability-informed approaches and making programs accessible to people with disabilities.

Customer Focus: Customer relationships and focus on individual needs were also identified as areas of DVR strength. Developing staff skills to address specific service needs, providing multiple vendor options to customers, and finding a good fit between employer and customer were noted areas of improvement. Counselors have good relationships with their customers and work closely with them to understand their vocational goals. Communications with customers on the waiting list have improved.

Community Impact: Increased focus on serving people with the most significant disabilities and connections with underserved communities extends beyond customers. DVR has changed perceptions about people with disabilities working in a competitive setting, which has helped de-stigmatize disabilities.

Limited Capacity: Stakeholders identified Order of Selection and insufficient funding as the biggest challenges to DVR's ability to serve people with disabilities. In addition to Order of Selection, procedural bottlenecks (e.g., supervisor approval and data entry requirements), high caseloads, and understaffing contribute to long wait times for services and further restrict DVR's capacity to serve more people. However, orientation to timeliness can act against a client-centered approach, which requires flexibility in response to customer circumstances.

Other Challenges: Location of services and customer access to transportation were also mentioned as issues.

DVR Role in the Broader Workforce System

Subject Matter Expertise: DVR's expertise in working with people with disabilities, particularly people with significant disabilities, can be of benefit to all partners in the workforce system. This can happen at the customer level by coordinating a comprehensive, individualized approach to services with partners. DVR can also train partners on disability matters and available resources to improve services system-wide.

Partnership and Advocacy: DVR can be the connector for customers, workforce system partners, and employers to ensure that resources throughout the system are available to people with disabilities. DVR also has an advocacy role with respect to initiating partnerships at all levels of operations and educating employers about the contributions that people with disabilities can bring to the workplace.

Broader Workforce Successes and Challenges

Improved Collaboration: Communications and information sharing among workforce system partners have improved, although data sharing remains an issue. Efforts have also been made to coordinate client referrals, develop job and retention services for people who need additional support, and provide more individualized services. Some Workforce Development Councils actively work with DVR to develop plans to address barriers to access.

Changing Attitudes: The WIOA mandate to make services accessible and available to underserved groups has challenged the system to improve services for people with significant disabilities. DVR's outreach and education have fostered greater understanding about who can benefit from employment services. The combination of the policy directive and DVR's efforts have led to more positive attitudes about people with disabilities and brought greater focus to underserved groups in the workforce system.

Lack of Experience with Disabilities: The broader workforce system lacks understanding about disability and is not equipped to provide the individualized services needed by people with significant disabilities. The system is oriented to market needs and priorities.

Workforce System Design: WorkSource centers are locally designed and host a variety of employment assistance programs offered by different agencies, which do not always work well with DVR. DVR is unable to develop a standardized approach to collaborating with WorkSource, due to local variations in design and operations of the WorkSource centers. Adding to this challenge, the broader workforce system is not designed to offer individualized services, which are often essential for people with disabilities to obtain employment.

DVR Training Needs

Cultural Humility: Cultural humility training is needed for DVR staff to better understand cultural differences and the cultural context of people of color, Native Americans, and migrant communities. This type of training is needed at all levels of the organization. Connecting with groups that specialize in working with minority populations will better ensure that DVR decisions reflect the needs of their communities.

DVR can also help to ensure that services are culturally aware and responsive by hiring a diverse staff that reflects the populations served. As DVR' staff becomes more diverse, all staff will benefit from a broader range of experiences and perspectives of their colleagues. In combination with training, engagement with a more diverse workforce will increase cultural awareness throughout DVR. Dedicating staff to address cultural humility issues would also be beneficial.

Other Training: Awareness training was recommended in relation to several populations, including homeless individuals, ex-offenders, students and youth, older adults, and veterans. This training would provide insights into how to interact with and help customers access resources, identify assumptions that enter into interactions with customers, and gain greater understanding of social stratification and power dynamics that characterize counselor-customer relationships.

D. Who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

Washington's Workforce Development System

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is one of 6 core programs in Washington's workforce development system. Each program depends on the strengths of other partners to maximize the resources available to serve businesses and job seekers. Ten additional partners participate in the workforce system, bringing supplemental resources to the service delivery system.

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board is the state's federally-designated Workforce Investment Board, collaborating with business, labor organizations, state agencies and 12 Workforce Development Councils (WDC) and other program partners to develop the Combined State Plan. This plan identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system.

WDC's oversee the local one-stop service delivery system and coordinate with a broad range of local partners, including business, labor organizations, education, social services and government. One-stop partners, also known as WorkSource, administer separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers. There are 3 types of WorkSource centers: comprehensive center, affiliate, and connection sites.

Twenty-two Comprehensive centers are physical locations where job seeker and employer customers access programs, services, and activities of all required WorkSource partners. Twenty-four Affiliate sites provide access to one or more partner programs and the frequency of staff's physical presence is determined at the local level. Seventy-two Connection sites offer virtual resources and services of the WorkSource system.

WorkSource centers are aimed to assist a broad population of jobseekers secure employment. This system presumes that those it serves are coming to the job search with a base level of skills and the ability to utilize the tools and training opportunities the system provides, maintain a degree of self-direction in the job seeking process, understand and follow directions to report outcomes to the personnel, and pursue opportunities independently. The role of this program is not to craft a job to suit the particular skills and abilities of an individual jobseeker.

DVR serves a narrow constituency of jobseekers with significant disabilities who have barriers to employment. Customers interested in services must meet eligibility requirements and demonstrate they will benefit from services. A professionally trained Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will provide substantial counseling and guidance and develop an individualized plan to assist the customer to identify and overcome disability-related barriers to achieve their employment goal.

In 2015, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) developed "Shared Vision, Values & Principles of Collaboration between the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation & Washington Workforce Association" in effort to reflect commitments to be included in the WorkSource Memorandum of Understanding with each WDC. A primary emphasis of this agreement focuses on DVR's participation in a locally driven, fully integrated WorkSource service delivery system.

The challenge presented by participating in a federally mandated, locally driven system, is the difficulty for DVR to develop a statewide standard of practice for integration. Success in serving people with disabilities relies on the effective collaboration of local workforce partners.

WorkSource as a Resource for People with Disabilities

In July 2019, Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and DVR conducted an assessment of the employment services available to people with disabilities within the broader workforce system. WSRC interviewed contacts with expertise in barriers and access solutions for individuals seeking employment for 11 of the 12 WDCs. DVR Liaisons to WDC's and DVR stakeholders were also surveyed. From their feedback, the WSRC was able to gather insight into how the workforce system serves individuals with disabilities through the WorkSource one-stop centers.

The responses provided insight into how the greater workforce system views the responsibility for services for individuals with disabilities, both offered through the WorkSource one-stops and by DVR.

What's working well:

- Each WorkSource location has been identified as meeting ADA certification requirements for job seekers with disabilities.
- 14 of 22 comprehensive WorkSource centers and 2 of 24 WorkSource affiliates are co-located. An example of successful co-location is the WorkSource-imbedded DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors or Business Specialists, who work closely with one-stop system navigators to bolster partnerships within the workforce system.

What's not working well:

- Order of Selection has had impacts on job seekers and the workforce system, as more people with disabilities seek services from WorkSource one-stop centers and the centers lack sufficient resources and expertise to serve them. As DVR focuses on serving only individuals with the most significant disabilities, the one-stop centers step in to provide

services for individuals who qualify but are wait-listed for DVR services. At the same time demand for services has grown, funding for WorkSource services has been declining.

- One-stop locations offer employment training and job search assistance but are not experienced in assessing disability-related barriers to employment. In addition, they do not have the expertise to provide substantial counseling and guidance job seekers receive from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
- WDC partners identified training needs around disability etiquette and reasonable accommodation, basics of disability services, and recognizing disabilities, including those with behavioral health.
- The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board reports that 11% of customers served by the workforce system self-reported as having a disability; 4% of those customers receive services through the vocational rehabilitation programs and the balance are served by other workforce programs. The WorkSource standard intake process does not support the ability to identify all people with disabilities the system is serving. The disability data gathered is self-reported by the customer at time of intake. Without prior knowledge of services offered or eligibility requirements of various workforce programs, a customer is less likely to report their disability, thereby failing to access some types of vocational services.
- The current data tracking system for the WorkSource locations is unable to systematically track and report the percentage of job seekers with a disability. Only 5 of the 11 WDC partners were able to provide data on the number of people with disabilities they serve. Without reliable data, the WSRC was unable to determine how many people with disabilities are being served at one-stop centers.

Promising Practices

The following promising practices were mutually identified by both WDC's and DVR Liaisons:

- Benton-Franklin WDC/Columbia Basin WorkSource & Olympic WDC– Actively participating in cross training with DVR staff on supporting customers with disabilities.
- Spokane and South Central WDC – Each offer daily training opportunities for partners to provide center staff with a broader understanding of the each program.
- Pacific Mountain WDC/Tumwater WorkSource - The DVR open lab was created in collaboration with DVR for customers with disabilities who have an Individualized Plan for Employment. A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) is available every Wednesday for 2 hours providing hands on access to center resources, assistance to identify job leads and complete applications. In addition, the DVR Business Specialist is integrated into the centers business outreach team.
- Southwest WDC/Vancouver WorkSource - Business specialist acts as referral service for jobseekers with disabilities & provide consultation to WorkSource staff. Integrated service model includes 2 DVR staff to connecting WorkSource customers with services by providing referrals, training, supports and job development.

- Seattle-King WDC/North Seattle WorkSource – DVR staff facilitates jobseeker workshops in collaboration with WorkSource staff.
- Workforce Central WDC – DVR staff are included in all strategic planning, operational planning and day to day needs. The WorkSource front office staff meet quarterly with DVR staff so we can discuss strategies for referrals and brainstorm ideas for improvement. DVR staff are represented on core leadership groups designed to improve customer experience.
- Eastern WDC - Because of rural nature, coordination and collaboration is very strong between DVR and system partners. Utilize and leverage each other's resources appropriately.
- Northwest WDC - DVR staff considered Disability Specialists, regularly assisting WorkSource staff with questions and training resources.
- Workforce Snohomish WDC – DVR staff have regular office hours at the WorkSource Lynnwood affiliate location and the time is rotated among all the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Business Specialist and Supervisor, so that all VR staff are engaged in becoming familiar with services, programs and partner staff.

Most Significant Challenges

The workforce system in Washington State frequently faces challenges to providing employment services to people with disabilities. The Workforce Development System lacks expertise to provide or identify specialized training and support for individuals with significant disabilities. Examples include:

- Resource limitations with regard language access and high costs of interpreters is problematic across the state.
- Accessing transportation, especially in rural communities is difficult for non-drivers, who would benefit from expanded community infrastructure.
- Lack of awareness and expertise building disability awareness for employers and WorkSource system is a challenge.
- Insufficient funding creates limitations in services, which is compounded by Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) and DVR currently being in order of selection. The cost and training to provide assistive Technology access, is a barrier to assisting customers in their job search.
- Completing paperwork and providing supporting documentation to qualify for program services was identified as a burden for customers.

Partner Strengths

Both DVR and the broader workforce system can offer unique and specific services to benefit job seekers. Workforce partners indicate DVR can best provide benefits planning, job carving, disability-related training for WorkSource Staff, and accessibility/accommodation expertise. DVR is better prepared and trained to offer employment services for individuals with significant barriers to employment and long term employment support. DVR is best suited to offer substantial vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance for customers with disabilities.

The broader workforce system offers networking, jobseeker classes, job fairs, business partnerships, outreach, short-term employment opportunities, and can open up one-stop centers for co-location and collaboration. They can also step in to offer job search supports when funding limitations create situations like Order of Selection for DVR.

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

Need for Pre-Employment Transition Services

In 2017, DVR contracted with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) at Seattle University to conduct an assessment of student needs for the five required Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). CCTS used data from the State's Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) to identify the total number of students with disabilities age 15-21, who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. CEDARS maintains data used for federal reporting on students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA and students with a 504 plan.

The CCTS study reported 49,812 potentially eligible secondary school students with disabilities in Washington in the 2015-16 school year: 34,882 (70%) were receiving special education or related services and 14,930 (30%) had a 504 plan. Based on an analysis of the transition services already available to students, CCTS estimated that between 17,500 and 29,500 students need additional Pre-ETS. Needs data were provided for each school district and regional education service districts. The assessment did not investigate the number of potentially eligible students attending recognized education programs at institutions of higher education.

Updated enrollment data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) show the total number of students with disabilities in the 2018-19 school year is 47,743, a decrease of 4% since the CCTS study. Students receiving special education or related services decreased by 8% while those a 504 plan increased by 4%. Since the number of students estimated to be in need of transition services by the CCTS study was wide ranging, these changes are not expected to have a substantial impact on the statewide need for additional for Pre-ETS.

OSPI's 2018 Secondary Transition Planning Implementation Plan provides data on the student population expected to meet eligibility for services from the State's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDA), specifically students with Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Multiple Disabilities. In 2017, about 7,500 Washington students between the ages of 15 and 21 were eligible under those disability categories. Data from a 2015-16 post-school outcome survey shows that these groups are much less likely to be engaged in education, training, or employment after leaving school. While 27.8% of all students with disabilities were not engaged, comparable results were 51.5% of those with Intellectual Disability, 58.2% with Multiple Disabilities, and 37.3% with Autism.

DVR Services for Students and Youth

DVR serves students with disabilities through its Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program and general Vocational Rehabilitation program, which includes School to Work

projects. Pre-ETS services are available to students statewide who are in school and potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, based on having a documented disability. DVR Pre-ETS program participation data shows 3,199 students received group Pre-ETS services during the 2018-19 school year, which is 11% to 18% of the range of need identified by the CCTS study. Services were provided to students enrolled in 281 public, private, and tribal schools.

In DVR's general vocational rehabilitation program, 30% of customers with closed cases in program years 2017 and 2018 were youth; 1,681 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 obtained employment during that period. The rehabilitation rate of 56.5% for youth was about 4 points higher than for individuals age 25 and above. Nearly three-fourths of participating youth were 21 years of age or under.

An estimated 10 percent of youth receiving VR services participated through the School to Work Program, which serves students with intellectual and development disabilities in seven Washington counties. School to Work is a partnership between DVR, DDA, schools, and community agencies that connects students to vocational rehabilitation services while they are still in their high school transition programs, with the goal of obtaining employment prior to leaving school. Services are designed to fill the gap between transition services and employment and long-term support services. The interagency team approach, which supports the student and coordinates among system partners, is highly successful; 97% of School to Work participants in the 2018-2019 school year achieved an employment outcome.

Service Coordination and Priorities

The CCTS assessment also identified the relative need for each of the five required Pre-ETS, based on an assessment of the types of services most commonly available in students' schools and alignment with DVR Pre-ETS service categories. Workplace Readiness Training and Work Based Learning were the least available, followed by Instruction in Self-Advocacy. However, service needs vary considerably from one school district to another.

Preliminary results of recent DVR Pre-ETS statewide needs assessment indicate that work-based learning and self-advocacy/peer mentoring continue to be among the highest priorities. DVR's Pre-ETS program has focused on work-based learning and workplace readiness and has recently modified its program to make peer mentoring more accessible.

OSPI's transition plan addresses the transition-related skills that are most important for students with disabilities, based on a survey of stakeholders, including parents/family members, educators, service providers, state agency representatives and students. Preliminary results of the survey show that skills identified as "Very Important" in the stakeholder survey reinforce the service gaps identified in the CCTS study and subsequent assessment. Approximately three-fourths of respondents identified the following as the top three transition-related skill sets: 1) pre-employment training/skills; 2) job exploration, job shadowing/training, and competitive employment; 3) self-advocacy/peer mentoring skills for students to communicate about disability and related needs.

The following transition-related resources and services were rated as "Very Important" by survey respondents:

- Alignment of transition-related documentation;
- Cross-agency staff knowledge of requirements;
- Information on similarities and differences among transition support agencies; and
- A directory of contacts for schools, service providers, and DDA and DVR offices.

The Plan acknowledges the complexity of transition planning and navigating between OSPI, DVR, and DDA, for students, families, school staff, and agencies. Centralized information and a crosswalk to support understanding of differences in terminology and requirements of the three systems are recommended.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

Information on collaborative research, service delivery improvement, and training activities is described in detail in the Cooperative Agreements with Nonprofit Organization section of this State Plan.

Services Provided and Challenges Faced by CRPs

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) provide the vast majority of career services for DVR customers. For the two-year period from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018, CRPs provided 100% of paid job placement and short-term job support services, 87% of assessments, and 83% of supported employment services for customers who completed services. Two-thirds of customers with a successful employment outcome received services from CRPs.

DVR held contracts with 117 CRPs based in 23 of the State's 39 counties during this period. Since entering Order of Selection, DVR is serving fewer customers and a larger proportion of our customers are most significantly disabled. DVR has also implemented practice changes to maximize the use of in-house assessments and refer customers to WorkSource for job search and placement services, when appropriate. These changes have presented significant challenges for CRPs and impacted customer services. As of July 2019, DVR has 16 fewer CRP contracts and lost access to CRP services in two rural counties; however statewide providers are available to serve these communities.

In August 2019, in conjunction with DVR's quarterly CRP web conference, DVR and WSRC presented a questionnaire about customer access to services and ways they are adapting to changes in the vocational rehabilitation service environment. Of the 52 participating CRPs, 28% were from Region 1, the most rural region in Washington; 32% from Region 2, the most urban area of the State; 16% from Region 3, home to the State Capitol and most government entities; and 24% of providers were located in multiple regions. This forum allowed DVR to reach a broad representation of CRPs across the state to learn about the current challenges faced in serving DVR customers. CRPs were asked for their perspectives on the following questions:

1. What are the barriers to DVR customers being able to access services when needed?
2. Given the changes in DVR practice, how are CRPs adapting to meet customer needs that are not addressed by DVR resources?

3. What does WorkSource do well in providing services to people with disabilities?

Barriers to Service Access

Coordination and Service Integration between DDA and DVR: DDA and DVR have shared but distinct areas of responsibility for serving individuals with intellectual and development disabilities. As a provider for both agencies, CRPs help customers navigate the requirements and processes of each agency to access services. CRPs indicated that requiring DDA customers to access DVR services without sufficient braiding of DDA and DVR services results in burdensome approval processes, customer confusion, and delays in receiving services. They identified needs for more information sharing between DDA and DVR, expedited review and approval processes, seamless access to DVR services, and improved DVR-CRP liaison relationships. Recommendations ranged from allowing DDA customers to bypass DVR altogether and receive all services from DDA to establishing a common process to qualify customers for services for both programs at the same time.

Inadequate and Restricted Resources: Order of Selection, which has restricted services to only those with Most Significant Disabilities (MSD), creates the challenge of obtaining funding for other job seekers with disabilities. Accessing supported employment funding is a major source of frustration for CRPs. Challenges include when to access additional funds, unpaid staff hours while trying to allocate new funds for customers, and eligibly restrictions for available supported employment; for example, Foundational Community Supports (FCS) is only available for individuals with diagnosed behavioral health conditions who are also eligible for Medicaid. Transportation is also an often-noted challenge for CRP customers.

Customer Service Concerns with Timeliness and Responsiveness of Services: Timeliness of services provided by DVR was another challenge identified by CRPs. CRPs and their customers have experienced impediments to effective employment services due to lack of timeliness in each aspect of the vocational rehabilitation process – initial appointment, intake, eligibility determination, plan completion, and the time between appointments. Delays in processing service authorizations and payments were also mentioned. One CRP noted that, in their local DVR offices, the number of counselors are insufficient to address the needs of all individuals seeking jobs. Some noted concerns about timely response to phone calls.

Customer Participation Challenges: Customer lack of participation or willingness to engage in their own job search was noted as an additional barrier. Some CRPs indicated that customer skills and abilities are not well-matched to expectations for their participation and the job goal. Customers with mental health barriers are not getting sufficient support.

Adaptations to Meet Customer Needs

Communication with Customers about Changes in Service Access: DDA participants and their families are confused about the process for obtaining employment services and why they need to access DVR services. This is especially difficult for customers who have not received DVR services in recent years. CRPs have been working to provide correct and consistent information about the changes to participants and their families.

Reductions in CRP Staff and Operational Expenses: CRPs have had to adapt financially and operationally to the decline in referrals from DVR. CRPs have implemented hiring freezes or

staff reductions, eliminated raises, reduced operational costs, sought out additional funds, and made more referrals to community-based services to mitigate the losses.

Accessing Foundational Community Supports and Other Resources: To narrow the funding gap, CRPs report accessing other resources such as Foundational Community Supports (FCS), Ticket to Work, private pay, and county funding through Developmental Disabilities agencies. While FCS is a critical new resource, providers note that the program's services are insufficient in comparison to the range available from DVR. Furthermore, CRPs noted the need to refer customers to other community-based services that have capacity and funding to serve customers.

The Workforce System as Employment Services Partners

WorkSource an Ineffective Alternative for DVR Customers: When asked about WorkSource, CRPs stated that the greater workforce system, with its current capacity, is not effectively serving individuals with disabilities. WorkSource expects participants to demonstrate a high level of personal initiative, follow through, planning, and focus, whereas people with significant disabilities need individualized assistance. Customers referred to WorkSource report not knowing what to do when they go there.

CRPs agreed that local WorkSource centers lack the expertise to serve people with disabilities specifically and the one-on-one assistance needed by individuals with many barriers to meeting their employment goals.

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

See 1.e. above and Section D. Coordination with Education Officials.

K. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

Introduction

This section identifies estimated numbers of customers DSHS/DVR expects to serve and associated case service costs. Specific attention is given to the impact of order of selection implementation on customer volumes, costs, and outcomes.

Annual Estimates

DVR estimates the following services will be provided during FFY 2021 and annually for the duration of the State Plan.

Applications: 7,200

Eligibility Determinations: 7,000 individuals annually

Customers in an IPE: 4,800 new plans and 10,920 receiving services in a plan annually

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Programs

Service Delivery under an Order of Selection

VR Eligibility, Service Volume, Wait List, & Cost Projections

DSHS/DVR Eligibility, Wait List, Service, & Cost Projections: FFY 2021

FFY 2021	Eligibilities Determined	Wait List	New IPEs	Total IPEs	Total Case Service Costs
Priority Category 1	4,000	0	3,000	7,500	$18,630,000
Priority Category 2	1,500	1,500	1,800	3,400	$8,445,600
Priority Category 3	1,100	1,100	0	10	$24,840
Priority Category 4	350	350	0	5	$12,420
Priority Category 5	50	50	0	5	$12,420

Priority Category 1: Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

- Eligibilities Determined: 4,000
- Customers Placed on a Wait List: 0
- New IPEs: 3,000
- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 7,500
- Total Case Service Costs: $18,630,000

Priority Category 2: Individuals with Significant Disabilities

- Eligibilities Determined: 1,500
- Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,500
- New IPEs: 3,400
- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 3,400
- Total Case Service Costs: $8,445,600

Priority Category 3: Individuals with Disabilities

- Eligibilities Determined: 1,100
- Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,100
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 10
- Total Case Service Costs: $24,840

Priority Category 4: Individuals with Disabilities

- Eligibilities Determined: 350
- Customers Placed on a Wait List: 350
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- Total Case Service Costs: $12,420

Priority Category 5: Individuals with Disabilities

- Eligibilities Determined: 50
- Customers Placed on a Wait List: 50
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- Total Case Service Costs: $12,420

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

Supported Employment Estimates

DSHS/DVR provide supported employment services under the Title VI Supported Employment Grant. For program years 2020 - 2023, DSHS/DVR estimates 1,000 customers will receive supported employment services annually through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 600-700 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 4,000 supported employment IPEs and producing 2,500 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan.

DSHS/DVR aligns Supported Employment services and resources with Priority Category 1 customers; only individuals with the most significant disabilities receive Supported Employment services.

C. Each priority category, if under an order of selection;

Please see Section VI.K.2.A.

3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

Please see Section VI.K.2.A.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Please see Section VI.K.2.A.

L. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The goals and priorities established in this State Plan reflect DSHS/DVR's ongoing commitments to customer service, successful outcomes, staff development, organizational system improvement, strong partnerships, and business engagement. These goals and priorities were collaboratively developed by DSHS/DVR and leadership of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

Introduction

This section identifies the goals and priorities that DSHS/DVR intends to achieve throughout the planning cycle for program years 2020–2023. Activities described herein align with Washington's strategic plan for workforce development as well as the operational components of this Combined State Plan. This alignment is intended to realize the letter and intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), to implement a coordinated service delivery system which supports the long-term labor market engagement of individuals with disabilities and improves services to businesses.

These goals and priorities also reflect analyses of DSHS/DVR's performance as well as the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which examines the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington.

Goals & Priorities

Goal One: Customer Service and Outcomes are DVR's Highest Priority

Goal one reflects DSHS/DVR's focus on providing high-quality services that result in high-quality employment outcomes. Based on Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings and stakeholder input, this goal prioritizes the importance of supporting customers in high-quality employment which offers the pay and benefits that support financial security and stability.

<u>To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:</u>

1. Customers experience timely, continuous progress throughout the VR process.
2. DVR customers achieve employment in living wage jobs with benefits.
3. Students are better prepared to engage in VR services after high school.
4. Individuals with disabilities have equitable access to DVR services.

Goal Two: Motivate and Inspire High Performing Staff

Goal two priorities reflect CSNA results, internal case review results, staff and stakeholder input which challenge DSHS/DVR to provide DVR staff with clear performance expectations, training, and working conditions that support their success.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. DVR staff achieve mastery in their work
2. DVR excels in key performance indicators
3. DVR is an employer of choice

Goal Three: DVR Collaborates with Businesses and Partners that Deliver Benefits to DVR Customers

Goal three priorities will improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by Washington's workforce development system, as well as other agency partners and DVR service providers. As a core WIOA program, DSHS/DVR will contribute its value, expertise, and strengths to maximize outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These priorities align with the strategic and operational elements of this Combined State Plan and reflect the needs of individuals with disabilities served system-wide.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

4. Strengthen communication and collaboration with partners that deliver benefits to customers.
5. Formalize and implement targeted business engagement efforts.

Goal Four: DVR Operations and Infrastructure Support Our Work

Goal four reflects DSHS/DVR's commitment to improving the systems and practices that support DSHS/DVR staff and, in turn, affect customer service.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Establish a reporting framework that informs decisions and improvements at all levels.
2. DVR staff have modern, user friendly tools that streamline their work.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities are based on ongoing analyses of program performance, the results of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the feedback of customers and the Washington State Rehabilitation Council, findings of research activities, and preliminary evaluations of DSHS/DVR's performance under WIOA Section 116.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

The results of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and subsequent updates contained in the Statewide Assessment description of this State Plan guided the collaborative development of DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities. DSHS/DVR's emphases on

timely service delivery, high-quality employment outcomes, targeted outreach to unserved and underserved populations, and coordinated service delivery are directly based on CSNA findings.

B. The State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities align with the strategic vision and the operational elements of this Combined State Plan. These goals and priorities promote improved employment retention, increased earnings, and strengthened educational progress for Washingtonians living with disabilities. The role of DSHS/DVR staff in coordinated business engagement and industry sector strategies is woven throughout this plan. By pursuing these goals and priorities, DSHS/DVR will deliver high performance on the performance accountability standards identified in Section 116.

C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

These goals and priorities were established based on the full range of DSHS/DVR's evaluation and research activities. The activities include ongoing internal monitoring and case reviews, DSHS program performance reporting conducted by the Department of Social and Health Services, evaluation studies coordinated by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, ad hoc research and program evaluation activities, and customer forums and satisfaction surveys conducted by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

M. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement an order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

Introduction

This section describes DSHS/DVR's plans, policies, justifications, and projected service and outcome goals for serving individuals with disabilities under an order of selection. Additional information is provided describing how an order of selection may affect students with disabilities and Pre-employment Transition Services.

This section was developed in partnership and consultation with the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and the Client Assistance Program (CAP). In August of 2017, DSHS/DVR provided public notice of its intent to amend the State Plan to implement an Order of Selection. Customers, partners, and stakeholders were invited to provide input regarding the implementation of an Order of Selection and the draft amendments to the State Plan. DSHS/DVR and WSRC received public comment throughout the months of September and October 2017. Three State Plan Public Forums were held online and at in-person locations across Washington on September 18, 2017. DSHS/DVR customers, staff, partners, and stakeholders reviewed the draft Order of Selection amendment, asked questions, and provided input and

comment. The public comment process and resulting dialogue emphasized impacts on current DSHS/DVR customers, students with disabilities, and customers who need specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

Implementing an Order of Selection

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and its regulations, a designated state unit must implement an order of selection when there are insufficient resources to serve all eligible customers who apply for services.

Fiscal and case service studies project that DSHS/DVR will not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals who apply for services in FFY 2018 and FFY 2019. Therefore, DSHS/DVR implemented an order of selection on November 1, 2017.

By implementing an order of selection, DSHS/DVR will ensure resources and services are prioritized for individuals with disabilities who need them most.

Priority Categories & Order of Selection

As part of every customer's eligibility determination process, a qualified DSHS/DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will evaluate: 1) disability-related functional limitations; 2) anticipated number of needed services; and 3) whether services are anticipated to be needed over an extended period to time. The VRC will use these criteria to assign eligible customers to one of five priority categories, based on the severity of the customer's disability. Priority categories ensure that DSHS/DVR services are prioritized for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Priority Category 1: Individuals with a most significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 1 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in four or more of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and
- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 2: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 2 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in three of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and
- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 3: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 3 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in two of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and
- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 4: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 4 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in one of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and
- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 5: Individuals with Disabilities

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 5 if:

- The customer is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services but does not meet the criteria for Priority Categories 1-4.

Priority categories will be assigned consistently, objectively, and with customer rights to review and due process. Consistent with federal regulations, DSHS/DVR will not consider duration of residency in Washington State, type of disability, age, sex, race, color, national origin, type of expected employment outcome, source of referral, particular service needs or anticipated service costs, individual or family income level, when assigning a priority of service category. In addition, applicable State law and DSHS/DVR policies regarding anti-discrimination apply to eligible customers who are assigned a priority of service category.

Selecting Eligible Customers for Services

Per federal regulations, DSHS/DVR will provide the full range of uninterrupted VR services to all existing customers with Individualized Plans for Employment as of November 1, 2017, regardless of the priority category to which they are assigned.

Under an order of selection, when sufficient resources are not available to serve all new eligible customers, new customers may be placed on a wait list for services. This wait list will be statewide and based upon customers' priority categories and application dates. As resources become available for DSHS/DVR to serve additional individuals, DSHS/DVR selects names from the waiting list in the priority category being served at the time. Within a priority category, the date the individual applied for VR services determines the order in which they are released from the waiting list. Individuals placed on a wait list will receive information and guidance about other federal or state programs that offer services to help them meet their employment needs, if available.

Should sufficient resources be available to provide the full range of VR services to both existing and new customers, DSHS/DVR will serve eligible individuals assigned to Priority Category 1

first. This ensures that services are prioritized for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Customers in Priority Category 1 who have been placed on a wait list will be released based on the date they applied, with the oldest application dates being released first.

If resources are available after all existing customers and all new Priority Category 1 customers are assured the full range of VR services, DSHS/DVR will serve eligible individuals assigned to Priority Category 2. Customers in Priority Category 2 who have been placed on a wait list will be released based on the date they applied, with the oldest application dates being released first.

If additional resources are available after all existing customers and new customers in Priority Categories 1 and 2 are assured the full range of VR services, DSHS/DVR will serve eligible individuals assigned to Priority Category 3. Customers in Priority Category 3 who have been placed on a wait list will be released based on the date they applied, with the oldest application dates being released first.

If additional resources are available after all existing customers and new customers in Priority Categories 1, 2 and 3 are assured the full range of VR services, DSHS/DVR will serve eligible individuals assigned to Priority Category 4. Customers in Priority Category 4 who have been placed on a wait list will be released based on the date they applied, with the oldest application dates being released first.

If additional resources are available after all existing customers and new customers in Priority Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 are assured the full range of VR services, DSHS/DVR will serve eligible individuals assigned to Priority Category 5. Customers in Priority Category 5 who have been placed on a wait list will be released based on the date they applied, with the oldest application dates being released first.

Students with Disabilities & Pre-employment Transition Services

Students with disabilities can receive ongoing Pre-employment Transition Services while placed on an order of selection wait list, as long as they have participated in a Pre-employment Transition Service prior to eligibility determination for DSHS/DVR services. However, federal regulations prevent students with disabilities who apply first for DSHS/DVR services from subsequently receiving Pre-employment Transition Services while placed on an order of selection wait list. Therefore, students, families, advocates, and educators are advised to carefully consider the potential risks of applying to DSHS/DVR before participating in a Pre-employment Transition Service. If a student applies and is found eligible prior to receiving a Pre-Employment Transition Service, federal regulations allow for a student to close their case, participate in a Pre-Employment Transition Service, and re-apply for services. This process, however, would result in a disruption of services. Therefore, DSHS/DVR recommends students participate in a Pre-Employment Transition Service before applying for DSHS/DVR services, in the event they are placed on the DSHS/DVR wait list.

Potentially eligible students with disabilities (i.e. students who only receive Pre-employment Transition Services and who do not apply for DSHS/DVR services) will not be affected by order of selection and will continue to receive uninterrupted Pre-employment Transition Services.

B. The justification for the order.

Beginning in FFY 2016, DSHS/DVR experienced a significant increase in the number of customers served under and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPEs). This rapid increase occurred after the drafting of the DSHS/DVR 2016 - 2020 State Plan. By the end of federal fiscal year 2017, the number of IPEs had increased by 13%.

Increased service volumes led to corresponding increases in case service expenditures. Monthly average purchased service expenditures increased steadily from about $2.4 million in FFY 15 to $2.8 millio in FFY 2017.

While service volumes and costs increased, DSHS/DVR's funds did not increase to meet the demand. Because revenue streams remained consistent, DSHS/DVR directed carry-over funds to meet increasing service demands and costs. Consequently, carry-over funds rapidly diminished. DSHS/DVR carried over $34,366,000 into FFY 2015, $29,052,638 into FFY 2016, $20,302,559 into FFY 2017 and $14,391,272 into FFY 2018.

Had DSHS/DVR continued to expand services and costs at its former rate, DSHS/DVR would have overspent all revenue sources by late FFY 2018. Therefore, an order of selection was necessary to ensure services remained available for all customers with IPEs, without overspending available funds. In addition, DSHS/DVR projected that implementation on November 1, 2017 would allow Priority Category 1 to remain open, ensuring individuals with the most significant disabilities access to services without a wait list.

Current case service and budget projections indicate that DSHS/DVR can sustain a purchased case services budget of approximately $27,000,000 annually. FFY 2019 projections indicate this budget is sufficient to serve existing customers with IPEs, new Priority Category 1 customers, and Priority Category 2 customers released from the waiting list on a monthly basis.

The FFY 2021 costs of serving existing IPE customers, new Priority Category 1 customers, and an estimated 3,600 Priority 2 customers released from the waiting list is projected to be $27,125,280. DSHS/DVR continues to closely monitor the impact of order of selection and release customers on the waiting list as soon as resources are available.

C. The service and outcome goals.

Projected Service & Outcome Goals for FFY 2021

Projected Service & Outcomes Goals: FFY 2021

FFY 2021	Total IPEs	New IPEs	Total Case Service Costs	IPE Cases Closed	Rehabilitated Cases	Wait List
Category 1	7,500	3,000	$18,630,000	2,800	1,600	0
Category 2	3,400	1,800	$8,445,600	1,200	700	1,500
Category 3	10	0	$24,840	8	7	1,100

FFY 2021	Total IPEs	New IPEs	Total Case Service Costs	IPE Cases Closed	Rehabilitated Cases	Wait List
Category 4	5	0	$12,420	4	3	350
Category 5	5	0	$12,420	4	3	50

Priority Category 1: Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 7,500
- New IPEs: 3,000
- Total Priority Category 1 Case Service Costs: $18,630,000
- IPE Cases Closed: 2,800
- Rehabilitated Cases: 1,600
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 0

Priority Category 2: Individuals with Significant Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 3,400
- New IPEs: 1,800
- Total Priority Category 2 Case Service Costs: $8,445,600
- IPE Cases Closed: 1,794
- Rehabilitated Cases: 984
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,500

Priority Category 3: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 10
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $24,840
- IPE Cases Closed: 8
- Rehabilitated Cases: 7
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,100

Priority Category 4: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $12,420
- IPE Cases Closed:4
- Rehabilitated Cases: 3
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 350

Priority Category 5: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- New IPEs: 0
- Average Annual Cost Per IPE: $2,850
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $12,420
- IPE Cases Closed: 4
- Rehabilitated Cases: 3
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 50

FFY 2022	Total IPEs	New IPEs	Total Case Service Costs	IPE Cases Closed	Rehabilitated Cases	Wait List
Category 1	7,500	3,000	$18,630,000	2,800	1,600	0
Category 2	3,400	1,800	$8,445,600	1,200	700	1,500
Category 3	10	0	$24,840	8	7	1,100
Category 4	5	0	$12,420	4	3	350
Category 5	5	0	$12,420	4	3	50

Priority Category 1: Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 7,500
- New IPEs: 3,000
- Total Priority Category 1 Case Service Costs: $18,630,000
- IPE Cases Closed: 2,800
- Rehabilitated Cases: 1,600
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 0

Priority Category 2: Individuals with Significant Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 3,400
- New IPEs: 1,800
- Total Priority Category 2 Case Service Costs: $8,445,600
- IPE Cases Closed: 1,794
- Rehabilitated Cases: 984
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,500

Priority Category 3: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 10
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $24,840
- IPE Cases Closed: 8
- Rehabilitated Cases: 7
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 1,100

Priority Category 4: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- New IPEs: 0
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $12,420
- IPE Cases Closed:4
- Rehabilitated Cases: 3
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 350

Priority Category 5: Individuals with Disabilities

- Total Customers Served under an IPE: 5
- New IPEs: 0
- Average Annual Cost Per IPE: $2,850
- Total Priority Category 3 Case Service Costs: $12,420
- IPE Cases Closed: 4
- Rehabilitated Cases: 3
- Total Customers Placed on a Wait List: 50

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

Please see section VI.M.1.C.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Please see section VI.M.1.A.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

In consultation with the Washington State Rehabilitation Council and the Client Assistance Program, DSHS/DVR has elected to serve eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment, regardless of an established order of selection. These

services may be provided, without requiring the customer to wait for services per order of selection, if:

- The individual is at immediate risk of losing their job in a competitive integrated setting for reasons related to the individual's disability; and
- The individual requires specific services or equipment in the very near future that will enable the individual to keep their job.

N. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

Supported Employment Goals & Title VI Funds

For 2020-2023, DSHS/DVR estimates about 1,000 customers will receive supported employment services annually through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 600-700 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 4,000 supported employment IPEs and producing 2,600 supported employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows designated state units to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services up to 48 months. DSHS/DVR will fund extended services for youth with most significant disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

B. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported Employment Services

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often scarce in comparison to needs.

The State of Washington was approved in 2017 for the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration Foundational Community Supports Supported Employment benefits. FCS Supported Employment is funded as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with ALTSA to explore the development of a cooperative agreement for individuals with significant disabilities and long term care needs receiving ALTSA's FCS Supported Employment Program and DVR's Supported Employment Program to leverage resources and provide quality, coordinated services.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able to expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

O. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Introduction

DSHS/DVR has established four goals to assure that high-quality services are provided to both job seekers with disabilities and to Washington's businesses. The methods by which these services will be provided, and maximized within available resources, are described in this section.

These strategies reflect in-depth analyses of DSHS/DVR customer service data, statewide demographic data, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings, research conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), and the ongoing input and recommendations from the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC).

Duplication of activities, strategies, and methods in the sections which follow is intentional; the coordinated efforts of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs to improve services to job seekers with disabilities and Washington's business community are not mutually exclusive. As an active core partner, DSHS/DVR will fully leverage all available resources to maximize the labor market engagement, self-sufficiency, and independence of all Washingtonians with disabilities.

Strategies to Achieve Goals & Priorities

Goal One: Customer Services and Outcomes are our Highest Priority

Goal One, Priority One

Customers experience timely, continuous progress throughout the VR process

Goal One, Priority One: Strategies

- Identify and address barriers to timely services and continuous progress for customers throughout the VR process.
- Establish an approach for reducing the impact to customers' case progress when staff transitions and vacancies occur.
- Integrate customer contact and response standards as performance measures for VR counseling staff.

Goal One, Priority Two

DVR Customers achieve employment in living wage jobs with benefits.

Goal One, Priority Two: Strategies

- Increase rate of customers with IPEs that include job goals that lead to self-sufficiency/financial security (at least 200% FPL or greater, based on job type, wages, hours worked per week).
- Identify career pathways and increase the rate of customers with IPEs that include post-secondary training that results in employment in their field of study.
- Develop effective job search and job placement assistance and/or services that are readily available to all customers at the time they are job ready.

Goal One, Priority Three

Students are better prepared to engage in VR services after high school.

Goal One, Priority Three: Strategies

- Pre-ETS are available in all areas based on statewide needs assessment, school demographics, and contract mapping data.
- Lead collaboration with individual school districts to identify gaps in services and CTE opportunities.
- Engage with transition staff and students earlier and work toward alignment of IEP and High School and Beyond Plan goals.

Goal One, Priority Four

Individuals with disabilities have equitable access to DVR services.

Goal One, Priority Four: Strategies

- Improve access to DVR services through the use of technology, mobile service locations, translation and interpreter services, transportation services, or other accommodations.
- Develop a DVR outreach plan targeting under-represented populations in local communities who may lack awareness or understanding of DVR services.
- Strengthen information and referral for those who need basic services and support to engage effectively with DVR and to facilitate access to workforce development programs.

Goal Two: Motivate and Inspire High Performing Staff

Goal Two, Priority One

DVR staff achieve mastery in their work.

Goal Two, Priority One: Strategies

- Deliver core training in basic rehabilitation practices for field staff through VR Institute and regional trainers.
- Expand new VRC cohort program to all regions to reinforce VR counseling principles and practices among newer counseling staff.

- Strengthen DVR knowledge and application of transition planning and practices that support positive outcomes.

Goal Two, Priority Two

DVR excels in key performance indicators.

Goal Two, Priority Two: Strategies

- Establish, track and monitor key performance measures for all levels of the agency using reports/dashboards easily accessible to staff at all levels.
- Evaluate, monitor, and coach staff using performance reports.
- Build capacity and skills throughout DVR for continuous improvement and innovation.

Goal Two, Priority Three

DVR is an employer of choice.

Goal Two, Priority Three: Strategies

- Develop a recruitment and retention plan to address staff patterns, turnover, and recruitment of under-represented groups among staff. Plan will acquaint managers with targeted recruitment strategies, reasonable accommodations, training and cultural competencies that foster a diverse and inclusive work environment.
- Increase options for telework, flexible work schedules, and part-time.
- Adopt and implement a staff recognition approach.

Goal Three: DVR Collaborates with Businesses and Partners that Deliver Benefits to Customers

Goal Three, Priority One

Goal Three, Priority One: Strategies

- Collaborate with CRP partners to establish an approach for orienting staff of contracted CRPs to DVR practices, customer service expectations, progress reporting invoicing requirements, communication, etc.

- Collaborate with CRPs on contract changes that incent/reward higher quality outcomes based on established outcome measures.
- Increase collaboration with and understanding of services available to DVR-Community Service Office mutual customers.
- Collaborate with DBHR to fully implement FCS inter-local agreement statewide.
- Collaborate with WorkSource leadership to increase WorkSource staff capacity and effectiveness in assisting people with disabilities with job search activities.

Goal Three, Priority Two

Formalize and implement targeted business engagement efforts

Goal Three, Priority Two: Strategies

- Define business engagement staff roles and responsibilities for education, training and outreach to employers.
- Develop statewide plan establishing expectations and measure outcomes for the business engagement program.
- Provide technical assistance to employers on the use of natural supports in the workplace.

Goal Four: Improve DSHS/DVR's Systems & Performance

Goal Four, Priority One

Establish a reporting framework that informs decisions and improvements at all levels

Goal Four, Priority One: Strategies

- Build reports/dashboards for DVR managers with easy access to performance data at the statewide, regional, unit, and office levels.
- Develop a reporting framework and database for overall agency reporting
- Full implementation of DVR customer satisfaction survey

Goal Four, Priority Two

DVR Staff have modern, user friendly tools that streamline their work.

Goal Four, Priority Two: Strategies

- Modernize DVR's electronic case management system.
- Update and enhance the content and usability of the iDVR website to provide staff with easy access to clear, up-to-date program, policy, and administrative information.
- Implement new Pre-ETS student and consent tracking application.
- Establish a formal IT portfolio management process to include a dashboard that allows staff to see how IT projects are prioritized.

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

Throughout the rehabilitation process, DSHS/DVR counselors assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address customers' barriers to employment. DSHS/DVR brochures and Customer Service Handbook provide in-depth information on AT services and devices. Full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) provide specialized AT assessment, consult with staff and customers, coordinate with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

DSHS/DVR continues to maintain active organizational relationships with a wide range of agencies and community groups that serve minority populations, and has formal liaison relationships to assure an ongoing referral stream of individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. Individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities are consistently represented within the DSHS/DVR population at rates at or above respective representation within the statewide population of individuals with disabilities. An in-depth analysis of this representation is provided in the Statewide Assessment section of this plan.

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

DSHS/DVR has developed a Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with DSB and Washington's state education agency to promote communication and collaboration with state and local education agencies; outreach to identify potentially eligible students who may benefit from Pre-employment Transition Services; coordinated transition planning and services between local education agencies and DSHS/DVR; assessment of service gaps; and shared training materials and events. DSHS/DVR provides Pre-employment Transition Services to potentially eligible youth directly and through contracts and partnerships with CRPs, educational agencies, community colleges, and workforce agencies. The services provide a continuum of services between school and adult life, providing students with disabilities the services and experiences necessary to enjoy meaningful employment, independence, and quality of life. Policy and guidance revisions, as well as new staff training, support these services. An in-depth description

of the significant changes to DSHS/DVR's services to students with disabilities is described in the Coordination with Education section of this plan.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

DSHS/DVR sponsors a workgroup of DSHS/DVR staff and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives to focus on improving service delivery partnerships. Emphasis is placed on strengthening communication and coordination between local DSHS/DVR offices and CRPs and developing strategies to inform CRPs of changes or updates in DSHS/DVR policies and procedures which affect service delivery. A full description of DSHS/DVR's plans to improve its CRP partnerships is included in the Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations section of this plan.

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

DSHS/DVR will employ strategies to improve customers' employment retention, long-term labor market engagement, earned wages, education credential attainment, and vocational skill progress. Additional strategies will target improved services to businesses, as DSHS/DVR implements a dual-customer model, serving Washington's businesses as well as job seekers with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR will implement the following strategies to improve performance under WIOA Performance Accountability:

- Support customers in developing vocational goals and training objectives which align with labor market demand as well as customers' skills, abilities, interests, and informed choice.
- Leverage the labor market exchange, labor market research tools, and industry sector strategies to ensure that customers' vocational goals are aligned with in-demand occupations to the greatest extent possible.
- Integrate and align DSHS/DVR services and career pathways programs.
- Increase use of Post-Employment Services to support customers in maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment through better communicating these services and their benefits.
- Provide training and technical assistance to businesses on best practices for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Support apprenticeships, paid internships, and on-the-job training opportunities to enhance customers' employability, in partnership with LWDBs and the business community.
- Utilize the results of the new comprehensive vocational assessment to evaluate customers' skills, abilities, interests, as well as potential barriers to successful participation in, or completion of, training programs.
- Complete required meetings at the end of every post-secondary term to review grades, progress, and support needs of customers participating in associate's, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs.

DSHS/DVR will utilize the following strategies to improve its services to businesses:

- Engage Business Specialists in the development and implementation of LWDB industry sector strategies and cross-program business engagement activities.
- Collaborate with LWDBs to provide services to federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to the skilled job seekers with disabilities they seek.
- Provide training for business on how to recruit, hire, retrain, and advance skilled workers with disabilities.
- Increase visibility in Washington's business community through a methodical outreach and marketing plan which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations (e.g. the Society for Human Resource Management), representation at career and recruitment fairs, and the provision of business training (e.g. Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodation trainings).

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR plays significant roles on the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and local workforce development boards which contribute to strategies and activities that assist partners in serving individuals with disabilities. These roles will strengthen under WIOA. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) have created and signed a Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The goals, priorities, and strategies outlined in this Combined State Plan align with both the findings of DSHS/DVR's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and the strategic vision of Washington's workforce development system. Within the description of each goal, and the priorities and strategies which support it, is a description of supporting CSNA findings.

B. Support innovation and expansion activities; and

DSHS/DVR will continue to fund the following innovation and expansion activities:

- Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) operations.

C. Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

DSHS/DVR has identified Goal One, Priority Two strategies and activities to specifically target equitable access for unserved and underserved populations. The activities include, but are not limited to: enhanced outreach to students with disabilities in partnership with OSPI, the Center for Change in Transition Services, and local education agencies; collaboration with other DSHS programs to improve access to services and supports for customers; and new business partnerships which provide career pathways for highly skilled adults living with an autism spectrum disorder in Washington's technology industry. When served, these populations will experience equitable access to services and resources, including Supported Employment services, needed to achieve competitive employment outcomes within integrated settings.

P. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Introduction

This section provides an evaluation of DSHS/DVR's implementation of the goals and priorities established in the previous state plan, the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan. This evaluation includes data analysis, performance and activity summaries, and descriptions of performance challenges and their effects on DSHS/DVR progress. Special consideration is given to Supported Employment services. Lastly, a description of funded innovation and expansion activities is included.

FFY 2018-2019 Evaluation: Goals, Strategies, & Barriers

DSHS/DVR services rehabilitated 2,750 customers in FFY 2018 and 2,038 in FFY 2019, supporting these individuals with disabilities in achieving gainful employment.

Annual applications for DSHS/DVR services in FFY 18 and FFY 19 decreased from the previous year: from 11,173 in FFY 2017 to 9,523 in FFY 2018 and 7,218 in FFY 2019. This led to a similar growth trend in the number of individuals determined eligible for services, which decreased from 10,014 in FFY 2017 to 9,018 in FFY 2018 and 7,020 in FFY 2019.

In FFY 17, DSHS/DVR completed nearly 6,000 new IPEs and served more than 12,500 customers in an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). This level of service was unsustainable and led to the need to prioritize services per an order of selection, which went into effect on November 1, 2017. Since that time, DSHS/DVR has focused on achieving service levels that are supportable with annual revenues. Consequently, the number of customers completing plans for services declined by about 30 percent for two consecutive years and more than 6,000 individuals

were placed on a waiting list. In FFY 2019, 2,933 IPEs were completed, compared to 4,235 in FFY 2018 and 5,979 in FFY 2017.

DSHS/DVR began to release Priority 2 customers from the waiting list in September 2019, at a rate of approximately 200 per month, and expects to be able to continue releases through FFY 2020 and 2021. Based on case service and expenditure projections, service levels are expected to reach maximum capacity by the end of FFY 2021. DSHS/DVR will continue to closely monitor its fiscal resources and improve practices to ensure maximum case service capacity is maintained.

The average cost of a rehabilitation closure increased by 5.0% from FFY 2017 to FFY 2018 and by an additional 5.8% from FFY 2018 to FFY 2019. The increase in average rehabilitation costs has been a consistent trend for most of the past five years, although at higher rates in the past two years. Since FFY 2015, average costs per closed-rehabilitated case have risen by $947, an increase of 13.7%.

DSHS/DVR Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs: FFY 2015 - FFY 2019

FFY	Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs	Percent Change from Prior Year
2015	$6,910	3.2%
2016	$6,890	-.3%
2017	$7,073	2.7%
2018	$7,429	5.0%
2019	$7,857	5.8%

Goal One: Improve Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities

Priorities & Evaluation

Goal One Priority One

Strengthen vocational assessment practices as the foundation for comprehensive services which meet customer needs, identify and address barriers to employment, and maximize outcomes.

Evaluation:

- Offered refresher training in FFY 2016 on use of the vocational assessment screen and WIOA changes.
- Developed apprenticeship programs and services for youth to expand skilled career options.
- Started including the VRC's vocational assessment report in Community Rehabilitation Program referrals. CRP staff use the information in this report to individualize the services to be provided.
- DVR training staff researched vocational assessment tools and resources and published links on DVR's Sharepoint training site.

- DVR added a new feature in its electronic case management system to capture the results of the comprehensive vocational evaluation in narrative format.
- DVR provided training to staff on the use of this new vocational assessment tool.
- On-line training was added to the Rehabilitation University series of courses.
- In 2018, DVR's internal case review results showed signs of improvement from the previous review.
- Contract with WATAP. Need to make training mandatory. Lack sufficient capacity. Reestablishing a position.

Goal One Priority Two

Heighten outreach efforts to potential customers and coordinate and collaborate with system partners and other stakeholders, to ensure that all Washingtonians with disabilities have access to services and supports needed to prepare for and obtain employment.

Evaluation:

- Established Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) contracts with community colleges, workforce development councils, and educational service districts for potentially eligible students and contracts with CRPs for Pre-ETS for eligible customers.
- Held three forums with stakeholders regarding an outreach process for students and families.
- Conducted extensive outreach and coordination with the State's Juvenile Justice Program to provide information to potential applicants in the detention system and obtain referrals and applications for DSHS/DVR services prior to offender exiting incarceration.
- Hired transition consultants to increase capacity to provide Pre-ETS services directly and through coordination and collaboration with community partners.
- Continued coordination with Center for Change in Transition Services to coordinate DSHS/DVR and school-based transition services.
- Continued school-to-work contracts with county developmental disabilities programs.
- Continued to participate in outreach activities that increase representation of underserved or unserved populations. Offices throughout the state have dedicated tribal liaisons who collaborate with tribal VR programs and work with Juvenile Rehabilitation to serve justice-involved youth. DSHS/DVR worked with DSHS Community Service Division to implement a "warm hand-off" process to improve access to TANF and Workfirst programs.
- Increased representation in local WorkSource offices and maintained marketing materials to offer VR services to individuals who are seeking employment or have exhausted unemployment benefits.
- **VRC staff in WorkSource have easy access to extensive labor market information for their local region.**
- **WorkSource WA website has made labor market information from regional experts readily available and accessible.**
- **DVR identified service gaps and focused efforts to secure service providers in those areas. DVR is now p**roviding group and individualized Employment Transition Services statewide.

- Designated DVR staff directly deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services to eligible and potentially eligible students.
- DVR substantially redesigned its Pre-Employment Transition Services program.
- DVR revised its contract design with Pre-Employment Transition Services to align with program goals and resources.
- DVR has established or updated memorandums of understanding and/or inter-agency agreements for coordinating services with the DSHS Community Services Division (public assistance programs) and state Behavioral Health program.
- DVR has designated high school transition consultants in each region.
- DVR partners with the state's juvenile rehabilitation agency on My-Jobs, an employment support program for youth transitioning from custodial programs.
- DVR partners in a number of pilot projects based on the IPS employment model.
- DVR raises awareness of its services on Spanish radio stations.

Goal One Priority Three

Increase business engagement to improve employment for individuals with disabilities, in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards.

Evaluation:

- DSHS/DVR is involved with Microsoft's Autism Project, Amazon's Sort Center and Amazon Prime projects and is expanding into Microsoft Corporation, Amazon Corporation, Starbucks, and Boeing.
- Made strides in job placements with Wells Fargo, HomeStreet Bank, and Lowes, many in cooperation with WorkSource centers, particularly the Veteran representatives.
- Held three reverse job fairs with WorkSource that led to successful hires.
- Improved collaboration with local workforce development boards.
- DSHS/DVR business specialists have joined the Society for Human Resource Management and chambers of commerce in their area.
- Revised business specialist job description to align with the priority of outreach and services to businesses.
- Created a monthly productivity report and an Excel tool to track business engagement activities.

Goal One Priority Four

Ensure DSHS/DVR customers get optimal benefit from the workforce development system by educating customers about other workforce development programs.

Evaluation:

- DSHS/DVR's co-located WorkSource liaisons are offering the full scope of DSHS/DVR services, as well as assisting other WorkSource staff to provide services to individuals with disabilities.
- Co-located staff also provides resources and information to DSHS/DVR staff regarding workforce development programs in their local areas.

- DVR is providing information and referral to individuals who are on a waiting list for services due to Order of Selection.
- Each DVR office has an inventory of local community resources and referral options that are shared with customers at intake.

Goal Two: Improve the Quality of Customer Services

Priorities & Evaluation

Goal Two Priority One

Improve timeliness of service and ensure adherence to policy and quality assurance standards.

Evaluation:

- Eligibility determination and IPE timeliness reports and performance targets have been implemented and communicated throughout the organization.
- Monthly case reviews and case management reviews are completed by supervisors to ensure quality services are provided to customers and according to policies and procedures. These tools are used by supervisors to provide coaching and support to vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs). A case management review tool, used to coach VRCs and counseling staff, has improved case movement and documentation of procedures for moving cases in a timely manner, consistent with WIOA guidelines. Timeliness reports indicate improvement in this area.
- DVR updated performance measures to include standards for timely eligibility determinations and IPE development.

Goal Two Priority Two

Provide high-quality training and support, ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Evaluation:

- Developed more than 20 classes for DSHS/DVRs new training program, Rehab University. The multi-modal training approach provides online foundational training and face-to-face cohort training with practice scenarios. 20 additional courses are planned for development in the next 6 months.
- Revised policies related to staff completion of required training, tuition reimbursement, and developing new or updated training modules.
- Submitted 12 courses to the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification for CEUs.
- 7 staff completed trainings in Lean tools and techniques.
- Contracted with Washington Assistive Technology Assistance Program (WATAP) to deliver training related to assistive technology. A series of three AT courses are offered to service delivery staff.
- DVR is recruiting for a newly-established Assistive Technology position to add capacity and expertise in this area.

Goal Two Priority Three

Build an organizational culture of quality.

Evaluation:

- Changes in organizational structure have elevated local office and Regional Administrator (RA) participation in problem-solving and decision-making. For example, supervisors provide input in setting the agenda for management meetings and RA's facilitate the meetings.
- Planning, Performance, and Policy unit staff completed Lean Learner training.
- Case management tool and timeliness tools are in the process of being redesigned.

Goal Three: Promote DSHS/DVR's Role in advancing effective services for people with disabilities, as a leader in the Workforce Development System

Priorities & Evaluation

Goal Three Priority One

Work with local and statewide partners, to ensure the workforce development system is both accessible and beneficial for all individuals with disabilities.

Evaluation:

- Each Workforce Development Area (WDA) developed a local advisory group to provide recommendations, solutions, and identification of barriers that prevent targeted populations (including individuals with disabilities) from accessing the full range of services provided in their local WDA. DSHS/DVR staff is taking leadership roles in many of the 12 local advisory groups.
- DSHS/DVR now has a representative on the Board of each of the 12 Workforce Development Councils to advocate for individuals with disabilities to access resources throughout the workforce development system. DSHS/DVR also established IFAs to support co-location of 18 staff in WorkSource offices.
- DVR is leveraging relationships with community rehabilitation programs to support training programs that prepare individuals for jobs with large employers, including Amazon and Microsoft.
- DVR's Business Relations Manager reaches out to the business community regularly to raise awareness about DVR services. The Manager collaborates with WorkSource core partners to engage businesses.
- DVR established a new tracking tool to document Business Specialist engagement activities and outcomes.
- DVR has increased the number of sites where it is co-located in WorkSource Centers. DVR now has staff who work at least part-time in most Centers.
- DVR conducted research with WorkSource Center managers in 2019 to learn practices around the state as part of its comprehensive statewide needs assessment. A number of promising practices were identified and are being shared with DVR and WorkSource staff.
- DVR's Business Specialists are members of WorkSource business teams.

- DVR's Business Specialists serve as the experts and are a resource to WorkSource staff on employment of people with disabilities with federal contractors.
- Business Specialists deliver training to employers in their respective service areas on how to recruit, hire, retain and advance skilled workers with disabilities.

Goal Three Priority Two

Participate in the development of cross-program staff training, as experts in areas such as accessibility, disability culture and awareness, and vocational rehabilitation services.

Evaluation:

- This priority will be addressed in the remaining two years of the Plan.

Goal Three Priority Three

Develop and implement integrated service delivery models in collaboration with WIOA core programs.

Evaluation:

- Continued to collaborate with system partners to develop a common intake process.
- Co-located 16 staff in WorkSource locations to increase availability of VR services through the statewide system.
- Committed resources through IFAs to support co-location of services.

Goal Four: Improve DSHS/DVR's Systems & Performance

Priorities & Evaluation

Goal Four Priority One

Develop and implement a communication plan to provide consistent internal standards and methods for professional communication within DSHS/DVR.

Evaluation:

- Developed communication plans for specific initiatives, such as order of selection, and designated internal communications liaisons.
- Increased video tele-conferencing capabilities by adding VTC systems to three additional offices. This has reduced the need for staff to travel to meetings and increased their availability for meetings and trainings.
- Updated video phone capability for deaf and hard of hearing staff. All DSHS/DVR state cell phones are video capable.
- Video conferencing system has allowed for DSHS/DVR to provide more distance learning opportunities. DSHS has made Lynda.com available for online training, which has the potential to improve staff capacity to use information systems, project management tools, and effective business practices.

Goal Four Priority Two

Redesign data management systems and output reports to support WIOA implementation, leverage workforce development data, and strengthen data-driven decision making.

Evaluation:

- Initiated report redesign and dashboard development for performance monitoring and management.
- Prepared projections and expenditures analyses to inform decision-making regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services and Order of Selection implementation.
- Hired new staff devoted to performance management and other data analyses.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Performance Barriers:

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Supported Employment Evaluation: Goals, Strategies, & Barriers

Priorities & Evaluation

DSHS/DVR's goal was to serve approximately 1,500 customers in supported employment and to achieve 300-400 successful rehabilitations annually. This goal was exceeded by achieving 1,277 supported employment rehabilitations in FFY 2018 and 1,060 in FFY 2019.

Effective Strategies

- Continued use of a model of service delivery in partnership with county developmental disability programs and community rehabilitation programs
- Continued active marketing of customers to local businesses
- Continued regional Basics of DVR Supported Employment Trainings for new DSHS/DVR staff and offer them multiple times a year
- Continued use of the Basics of DVR Supported Employment online course for new DSHS/DVR staff

Evaluation

- DSHS/DVR and DSHS/DDA signed a MOU in 2018 for jointly serving customers with developmental and intellectual disabilities
- DSHS/DVR and DSHS/DDA provided three cross-agency WebEx trainings on the MOU to DSHS/DVR staff, DSHS/DDA staff and DD county employment providers

- Provided one post DSHS/DVR DSHS/DDA MOU implementation question and answer technical assistance WebEx session
- Provided one post statewide Basics of DVR Supported Employment Training question and answer technical assistance WebEx session to DSHS/DVR staff and DSHS/DDA staff.
- DSHS/DVR developed and implemented in 2019 an online foundational DVR Supported Employment course for VR counselors and VR supervisors that was a prerequisite to attending one of three regional statewide foundational trainings on DVR Supported Employment

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Performance Barriers

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving these goals and priorities.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

DSHS/DVR Performance on WIOA Indicators

DSHS/DVR is providing baseline data to RSA on WIOA performance measures, through quarterly case service reports. Data are available, beginning in PY 2017, for Measurable Skills and, beginning in PY 2018, for Employment Two Quarters after Exit and Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit.

DSHS/DVR Performance on WIOA Section 116 Performance Accountability Indicators

WIOA Measure	PY 2017	PY 2018
Employment Two Quarters after Exit	*unavailable*	
Employment Four Quarters after Exit	*unavailable*	*unavailable*
Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit	*unavailable*	
Credential Attainment	*unavailable*	*unavailable*
Measurable Skill Gains	72.2%	
Business Engagement	*unavailable*	*unavailable*

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Funded Innovation and Expansion Activities

During FFY 18 and FFY 19, DSHS/DVR reserved funds for the Washington State Rehabilitation Council and Washington State Independent Living Council. Additional innovation and expansion activities included the following:

- Continued support for tools widely used by staff around the state that help customers select suitable vocational goals. These include WOIS and World of Work assessment tools and WorkStrides career exploration workshops.
- Contracted with the University of Washington to provide technical assistance to field staff in assistive technology.

Q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported employment services are unduplicated services needed to support and maintain eligible customers with the most significant disabilities to enter, retain or work toward competitive employment. Supported employment services consist of:

1. Time-limited "ongoing" support services and other vocational rehabilitation services provided by DVR;
2. Extended services provided by the long-term service provider when the customer's performance is stabilized on the job and the services DVR provides have ended.

Time-limited support services are provided by DVR under an IPE to assist customers eligible for supported employment to get a job and achieve stabilization on the job.

Supported employment services are provided according to DSHS/DVR's policies and procedures and in accordance with cooperative agreements developed between DVR and State, public or private organizations which fund and/or provide extended services following the termination of DVR time-limited services. Examples of extended services partners/ providers include, but are not limited: to:

- County Developmental Disabilities;
- Mental Health agencies;
- Foundational Community Supports;
- Social Security Work Incentives;
- Trust fund; and
- Family
- Natural supports co-workers, employers

Supported Employment Partners & Agreements

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS/Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR. DSHS/DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DDA signed in 2018. The agreement describes criteria and process for the DSHS/DVR and DDA to provide seamless and consistent supported employment services statewide to mutual customers. It formalizes the referral procedures, has assigned liaison counselors in each DVR office, and coordinates services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

For individuals with behavioral health conditions served by the Health Care Authority (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with behavioral health conditions, Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment Program is helping to address the employment resource needs of individuals with behavioral health conditions. DSHS/DVR is in the process of completing an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with DBHR. The ILA provides a collaborative framework for both agencies to provide employment services to individuals with behavioral health conditions. The ILA identifies shared eligibility criteria and defines roles and responsibilities for DVR's Supported Employment Program and for DBHR's FCS Supported Employment Program.

Supported Employment Goals & Title VI Funds

DSHS/DVR will increase competitive integrated employment outcomes and supports for adults and youth with most significant disabilities receiving supported employment including those who are underserved.

DSHS/DVR for 2020 – 2023, estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund an estimated 1,000 customers annually who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 600-700 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 4,000 supported employment IPEs and producing 2,600 supported employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan.

Supported Employment Services

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce.

The State of Washington Health Care Authority was approved for the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration Foundational Community Supports Supported Employment in 2017. FCS funds supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able to expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

DSHS/DVR customers receiving supported employment services transition from time-limited ongoing support services to extended services when stable, satisfactory job performance is achieved. The timeframe for this transition is within 24 months of customers beginning employment, unless a longer timeframe has been specified in the IPE. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act amends the Rehabilitation Act to permit DSHS/DVR to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years. DSHS/DVR will fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities on a case-by-case basis.