



***Wisconsin Department of Workforce
Development, Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation and Lac Courte Oreilles
Vocational Rehabilitation***

Cooperative Agreement

Introduction:

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

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

Joint Agreement

The Parties Mutually Agree:

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

- I. That individuals served by DVR and LCO VR shall be informed about their right to make informed choices. Individuals who require or request assistance in exercising informed choice shall be offered support services to assist them in this process.
- J. DVR and LCO VR will develop and participate in joint training, will participate in cooperative statewide studies and needs assessments, and will work collaboratively in efforts to improve the provision of services to American Indians with disabilities.

DVR Agrees to:

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

LCO VR Agrees to:

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

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

For DVR:

DVR Administrator: DocuSigned by: Delora Newton 3683GE609AC6443 Date: 10/17/2022

For DWD:

Deputy Secretary: DocuSigned by: Pamela McGillivray 236276D77EED448 Date: 10/19/2022

For LCO VR:

LCO VR Program Director: Margaret Bennett Date: 10/19/22

LCO Tribal Chair: [Signature] Date: 12-29-22