

Wisconsin DVR State Plan Final 2016-2020

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.

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 Supported Employment programs.

This is a description of the strategies intended to improve the number of employment outcomes, the percent of individuals achieving an employment outcome; the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome at or above minimum wage; the service rate to individuals with the most significant disabilities; the service rate for minority individuals; and the employment outcome rate for minority individuals.

Based on the themes of the DVR and WRC needs assessment activities and the DVR annual goals and priorities, these strategies are intended to improve the performance of the DVR with respect to the VR program evaluation standards and performance indicators established in section 106 of the Act.

The DVR is primarily responsible for assuring that services within the Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (34 CFR 361.48) are available to assist eligible individuals with an individualized plan for employment (IPE) in achieving their employment goals.

As needed to assure the timely and continuous provision of IPE services, the agency's financial priority is to expend Title I-B operational and discretionary case aid funds to assure the timely and continuous availability and delivery of services to DVR program participants over the anticipated term of their service plans.

DVR manages its funding, resources and waitlist through a projection model that weighs each of these factors. A Reports Team then reviews the projection table on a monthly basis and determines the amount of individuals that will be invited off the waitlist. DVR's target employment plan goal is 16,500.

The case aids budget is dedicated to the continuous and timely support of IPE services and to develop and activate employment plans for eligible individuals with most significant and significant disabilities in a timely manner from the DVR wait list.

DVR is shifting its focus to a student, youth and supported employment model to ensure that the populations targeted for WIOA outreach have access to VR services. To do so, DVR has reviewed its current FFY 15 cases aids expenditures and will be proposing changes to its fee structure for existing businesses and transportation guidance.

Annually, the DVR utilizes a portion of funds for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Under WIOA, DVR will focus on innovations and expansions that target students, youth and supported employment populations.

After the Division is assured that eligible individuals are adequately supported in their employment plan costs, and that Title I–B funds have been used to activate individuals with the most significant and significant disabilities from the OOS wait list in a timely manner, up to 2% of Title I–B case aids funds may be used for other allowable purposes, including innovation and expansion services. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is currently focusing on programs that expand financial literacy, job development, youth services, and underserved tribal populations. Each program was created to address specific local needs in respective WDAs. Topics include: banking basics, car purchases, budgeting, understanding credit, employment barriers, online applications, social skills, temporary work experiences, self–advocacy, and obtaining gainful employment. Throughout the year, quarterly reports are due to DVR for review of progress and scope. It is anticipated for these services to transition from I&E funding to fee–for–service agreements upon successful effective completion.

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.

One of the major needs in the area of assistive technology is to disseminate comprehensive information to VR consumers and staff about techniques, devices and services that have been effective in helping consumers achieve employment outcomes. Following a recent statewide AT survey, a staff guidance piece was issued to clarify common assistive technology language, to reiterate the WDVR’s policy that assistive technology should be used throughout the VR process, and to review the method of proper AT purchase and access to AT resources and references.

The current policy states the need for assistive technology is assessed and provided throughout the VR process. At intake consumers routinely, provide information on accommodation needs. At eligibility and order of selection determination, the Functional Assessment Rating includes the impact of existing assistive technology and the need for assistive technology as a "requires services" issue. Information gathered at intake and during eligibility/OOS, determination is updated and discussed in the development of the IPE. Unanticipated needs for assistive technology, particularly when the consumer obtains employment, are addressed with IPE amendments. Ensuring that assistive technology is available to VR consumers is a top priority and a vital link to successful employment outcomes.

DVR has engaged Independent Living Centers (ILCs) with innovation and expansion projects to expand assistive technology resources to locations in the state needing a neutral resource for these assessments. The goal of the projects is to increase the availability of qualified AT assessment providers and resources, providing additional assistive technology options without having to rely on an in–house technology provider also conducting the assessment. The timeframe for the expansion of this service is anticipated to be three years, and the two projects will continue into a fee for service when the expansion phase is completed.

Information gathered from the projects will be shared with the other six independent living centers to determine whether the availability of neutral assistive technology assessments and services can be made available statewide through the ILC network.

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.

The DVR will continue to make this target group a priority for outreach and service delivery. In addition, DVR data as calculated by RSA indicates that the success rate for this group of consumers currently lags behind the success of non-minorities. There is an acknowledged discrepancy in the numbers calculated by RSA and the numbers calculated by WIDVR. The DVR will work with RSA to make a determination about the accuracy of the currently used calculation to determine the level of minority consumers in the WI DVR system. To increase the service delivery rate and successful employment outcomes for DVR minority consumers served, the DVR will use the following strategies:

Increased emphasis in the identification, referral and provision of effective vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who are also a member of a minority group in the following geographic areas: Milwaukee, Madison, Wausau, and the Native American tribal communities. These areas represent significant population concentrations of individuals with disabilities who are African American, Hispanic, Hmong and Native Americans.

The DVR will maintain a focus on multicultural service and training and linguistic access to DVR information and services. The DVR has identified its vital documents and these are available in Spanish and Hmong, as well as alternate formats, including large print, audio tape and Braille. The DVR has a contract with a vendor that can provide translation of documents and program information into many languages (i.e. Russian, Albanian, Italian, etc.) The DVR continues to monitor its publications and other information to ensure that the list of vital documents remains current and that information that is needed to access services is available in other languages and in alternate formats. Training of DVR Counselors in trauma-informed care will also help with minority populations to succeed in employment by better customizing sequencing of services.

DVR will continue to provide revenue identified in the State budget to the Great Lakes Intertribal Council (GLITC) under a memorandum of understanding for the improvement of VR services to Native Americans with disabilities in Wisconsin. The agreement will identify the activities and services supported by the funding as well as outline the collaborative partnership parameters between WIDVR and the Section 121 programs for serving Native American tribal members who are eligible for VR services. IPE's may be jointly developed with the input of the consumer, Native American workers and DVR staff. The DVR employs staffs who are Native American tribal members including one manager in the Northern Wisconsin counties a consumer case coordinator in Milwaukee County and a VR Program Specialist in the Central Office.

The DVR has undertaken initiatives to serve the state's rapidly increasing Latino/Hispanic populations. In Milwaukee, the DVR is co-located in a job center operated by United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), a Latino human service organization. The DVR and UMOS staffs collaborate in areas of service provision to welfare-to-work recipients with disabilities and on disability related access issues to the unique services provided by each agency. Other DVR offices have hired bilingual counselors. These efforts are aimed at increasing and improving outreach and service delivery in three of the largest Latino/Hispanic communities in Wisconsin. When the DVR does not have access to a staff member who is fluent in the native language of the consumer, the DVR also utilizes language translation services. Key applicant and participant information brochures and frequently asked questions posting are available in Spanish and Hmong through print and website publications.

The DVR agrees that language barriers pose a challenge to the delivery of DVR services and that staff must take the time and make the effort to surmount language barriers and achieve a full understanding of the DVR process. The DVR uses the Spanish version of the Client Assistance Program DVR process chart to assist consumers in understanding the DVR processes and where their responsibilities lie.

The DVR acknowledges the requirements of the General Education Provision (GEPA) Section 47 and the need to have equitable access and participation in the DVR program service delivery system for individuals with special needs. In addition, the DSA has a statewide work group with representation from the DVR to provide services to Limited English Speaking individuals who are often unserved or underserved due to language barriers.

The DVR will continue to strengthen employment linkages for high school students in Milwaukee by continuing the local employment-focused collaboration between the Milwaukee Public School District, the local workforce investment system, private sector employers and community rehabilitation programs. This collaboration was a former innovation and expansion project that has converted to a fee-for-service arrangement. Milwaukee is the highest population center in Wisconsin and also the highest population center of minority groups a high number of minority high school students with disabilities have been served in this project.

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).

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

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

In FFY 2015 WI DVR is anticipated to spend \$6 million to serve approximately 3000 high school age students 18–21. Under WIOA, WDVR will allocate \$9.6 million in FFY 2015 on high school students to provide PETS services. To achieve the expenditure goal of 15% of our allocation, each WDA was given an expenditure target. They each developed a plan to reach their individual goal. In order to reach those goals each WDA is ensuring they have a strong relationship with the local school districts and the local Work Force Development Boards. Summer work experiences, work place readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and other work based learning experiences have been implemented and will continue to expand as the population of high school students we serve increases.

Per WI DVR policy youth with disabilities are recommended to apply for DVR services at least two years prior to graduation. The plan for employment should be developed as soon as possible, but the time shall not exceed 90 days after the enrollment. DVR staff will use rapid engagement and motivational interviewing techniques when working with this population. DVR in collaboration the

local education agency will provide services to assist the student in developing and successfully achieving their Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) goal.

Financial responsibilities between DVR and the DPI

When there is overlap of educational goals and employment/rehabilitation goals and services, a cost sharing arrangement may be negotiated between DVR, the school district, and Long-Term Care and/or Mental Health programs. The Transition Action Guide (TAG) is the tool that is used to help make those braided funding decisions. To know who will pay for a service, all parties must be involved in transition planning in order to make a determination about appropriate services.

Staff of all three potential funding sources (i.e., DVR, DPI and DHS) are trained in the use of this decision making process outlined in the TAG. The details of the TAG are listed under (b) below.

Wisconsin Community of Practice on Transition

The Wisconsin Community of Practice on Transition is an interagency collaboration that includes partners from DVR, Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of Health Services (DHS), and Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD), Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Supports (WI FACETS), Wisconsin State Parent Education Initiative (WSPEI), UW Waisman Center, WI Technical Colleges and Parents. The mission of the collaboration is to bring stakeholders together to impact policies, practices and outcomes for youth with disabilities in transition to adult life. The strategic plan for 2015–2016 includes a focus on the County Communities on Transition (CCoT's) to create local relationships between schools, DVR service providers and employers to improve the outcomes of youth with disabilities transitioning from high school to employment.

Wisconsin Promise

The PROMISE initiative is a research and demonstration project that is intended to improve services for youth SSI (Social Security Supplemental Security Income) recipients and their families. The services help youth recipients achieve better outcomes, including graduating from high school ready for college and a career, completing postsecondary education and job training, and obtaining competitive employment in an integrated setting. As a result, these youth SSI recipients can achieve long-term reductions in reliance on SSI. Wisconsin is one of six sites participating in the demonstration.

DVR has hired counselors that have a caseload that consists of Promise youth exclusively. These counselors are using specific evidence based practices and rapid engagement services to most effectively serve youth in transition starting at age 14. WI DVR is already using the lessons learned from WI Promise to improve the transition services we offer to our youth.

Wisconsin Promise will help youth and their families meet their school and work goals in order to better their income and financial stability, reducing poverty. Find out more about Wisconsin Promise services.

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

The DVR actively works with community rehabilitation programs to identify new services, new patterns of services, and efficient methods of payment. Based on feedback from the Wisconsin

Rehabilitation Council, VR counselors, service providers and consumers, the DVR has identified a need to improve the provision of effective job development services for consumers with the most significant disabilities and multiple barriers to placement. These individuals are considered "the most difficult to successfully place into employment".

The DVR continues to utilize technical specifications and fee schedules in the provision of services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs including: job development, supported employment, job coaching, benefits analysis, and vocational evaluation. In addition, the DVR conducts regular meetings with vendors of these services for feedback, clarification and ongoing compliance and improvement of services.

DVR will continue to provide an OJT affirmative hiring initiative to assist employers with the initial cost of training a hired DVR job seeker. DVR area managers train CRP job-placement staff on the use of the OJT initiative. CRP job placement staff is encouraged to use the OJT initiative when they speak to employers about hiring DVR job seekers.

The DVR senior management meets with management representatives of the CRP community at least twice a year to provide updates and to discuss ways to improve the DVR/CRP service delivery relationship.

The Department of Health Services has invested in a rebalancing initiative to assist community rehabilitation programs to expand opportunities for integrated competitive work for those with the most significant disabilities. DVR continues to provide referral and service funding support for expansion of employment opportunities for this population in partnership with the community rehabilitation programs.

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

- The Quality Assurance Unit developed a coding manual for use as a desk reference and will provide coding training to staff to ensure that they have a good understanding of when to select the code for personal income as the primary source of support at application and at case closure.
- The Quality Assurance Unit complete a case file review to assist in monitoring compliance with indicator 1.6 and determine additional training needed.
- The Quality Assurance Unit will also review cases and will pursue a partnership with UW School of Public Policy to ensure equitable service delivery to all consumers.

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

To assure that individuals with disabilities have access to the full range of services provided by the other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners, the DVR has identified strengthening WIOA partnerships as a major goal. DVR is collocated as a partner in 19 Comprehensive One Stop Job Centers in the state. Collocation operating agreements exist with WIOA partners. In addition to the 19 comprehensive One Stop Job Centers, DVR has 23 additional service locations throughout Wisconsin. The DVR provides training and technical assistance to One-Stop Job Center partners in serving individuals with disabilities and developing a greater awareness of programmatic and access needs.

The DVR has been an active partner in the launch of a Department of Workforce Development website for job seekers called the Job Center of Wisconsin. The DVR has provided expertise on the use of the website for people with disabilities including website accessibility. DVR has encouraged consumers in job ready status to register with the job-seeker website and to utilize its many job search resources. Additionally DVR has a link from the Job Center of Wisconsin website to the DVR website for job seekers with disabilities who may also be interested in DVR services.

The DVR actively participates with the DWD Division of Employment and Training (DET) in implementing the state's Workforce Investment Grant Wisconsin and DET has been a national leader in developing Job Center accessibility assessments and resolutions to accessibility issues.

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) enters into a uniform Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the entities that are partners in the One-Stop Service Delivery System under Title 1 of the Workforce Development Act. The DWD uniform template agreement is used throughout Wisconsin in cooperation with 11 local Workforce Investment Development Boards. The DVR also enters into an MOU and One Stop Job Center Operating Agreement with each of the 11 Local Workforce Investment Boards in Wisconsin. The DVR's MOU addresses operation of the One-Stop service delivery system including a description of services and methods for referrals. The DVR works collaboratively with One-Stop partners on common intake, interagency referrals, business development, and to facilitate job placement with employers.

Through the DWD statewide and local MOUs with the One-Stop Partners and Job Center network and the DVR Workforce Investment Board MOUs, the requirements of 34 CFR Part 361.23(b) are satisfied. DVR also has an agreement with the Department of Labor (DOL) funded Veterans services program to coordinate services for common customers and to deliver quality services for disabled veterans.

DVR has a data sharing agreement with the DOL-Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) program administered by the DWD. The agreement allows DVR to validate DVR-served employees as WOTC program eligible so that their employer may claim the tax credit. DVR and WOTC staff will conduct routine joint training to enhance use of the tax credit with job placement service providers and employers.

Local DVR directors have been working jointly with local Workforce Development Area staff and Department of Corrections' staff to design local "pipeline" programs to assist correctional institution residents to make the transition to the world of work. These activities, partially funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, are intended to smooth the return to the community and reduce recidivism. Together DVR and DET staff are working to expand the "Schedule A" hiring program. Wisconsin has had some success with the Schedule A program and feels there are additional opportunities to be developed.

Twice monthly, the local DVR managers join with the local Job Service directors to give an assessment of the local economy and how the local job centers are meeting the demand. These conference call meetings instruct DET about new hiring events, plant closures, training program wait times, success stories, case closures, progress on employment plan development and the general atmosphere of the job center. Summaries of the report outs are sent to the Governor's Office to keep them informed of the workforce systems progress in meeting the needs of all of Wisconsin's citizens.

Finally, DVR Workforce Development Area Directors are appointed members of the Workforce Development Boards and are directly involved in Workforce Development Board program planning.

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 DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in effect between DVR and the W-2 program in the Milwaukee Workforce Development Area. The purpose of the MOU is to establish collaborative efforts regarding services and to develop a common understanding of each agency's roles, policies, and procedures to better serve individuals with disabilities who may benefit from services from both programs. A goal for both the DVR and the W-2 programs included in the MOU is to increase services to individuals with disabilities who are minorities.

An MOU is in effect with the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) to establish collaborative efforts to better serve Native Americans living on or near reservations as well as in urban areas such as Milwaukee and Madison. The DVR also hired a project consumer case coordinator to conduct outreach activities in the Milwaukee area to identify Native Americans with disabilities that may benefit from VR services. In addition, the DVR has VRC staffs who serve as liaisons with each of the Section 121 Tribal VR Programs including GLITC, Oneida, Lac Courte Oreilles, and College of Menominee Nations. The liaisons provide onsite technical assistance to tribal programs regarding the State VR program and collaborate with the tribal programs in providing services. Our liaisons and WDA staff meet regularly with the tribal programs to address issues common to each program.

On a statewide level, DVR engages in hiring practices that promote diversity in the workforce and that are representative of the diverse groups of people we serve.

DVR developed with WDA 2 an innovative practice for wrap around services for those individuals with unstable housing and support services, ensuring that they receive the wrap-around services they need to succeed in their employment goal. WDA 2 believes that this effort will help to serve a more diverse population.

DVR entered into an agreement with the Department of Health Services to pilot a new comprehensive approach for the provision of supported employment to individuals with chronic and persistent mental illness called individual placement and support (IPS). The Wisconsin IPS system change grant partnership with Dartmouth College Community Mental Health Program provides funds for mental health care employment service expansion and technical assistance. As part of the 3-year initiative, DVR counselors and job development and placement, providers will be trained in the new methodology that incorporates employment into mental health service delivery. If successful, this new methodology will be deployed statewide, expanding as counties have the resources to serve this population.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

See Above.

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.

See Above.