Memorandum of Understanding
Among the

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Division of Employment and Training
Office of Veteran Services

and

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Milwaukee Regional Office
Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Division

October 26, 2015

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DWD
Department of Workforce Development

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DWD/DVR), Division of Employment and Training- Office of Veterans Services (DET/OVS), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Milwaukee VA Regional Office, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment division (VA/VR&E) is to ensure seamless, coordinated, and effective vocational rehabilitation services to Wisconsin's Veterans with disabilities by improving cooperation and collaboration among the three agencies, avoiding duplication of services, improving inter-agency communication, and establishing staff cross-training opportunities.

Objective

To improve and increase quality employment outcomes for Veterans with disabilities through a collaborative relationship among each "Party" and, collectively, "Parties" to include the State of Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Office of Veteran Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment division (VR&E).

Authority and Scope

DVR Authority and Scope

The purpose of DVR is to assist individuals with disabilities to successfully prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment. DVR provides a variety of services pursuant to this purpose.

DVR, under the authority granted by the Rehabilitation Act, may provide services necessary for an eligible consumer to achieve the employment goal stated in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Funding may be limited by state and federal purchasing regulations, availability of comparable benefits, and DVR policies.

OVS Authority and Scope

The Mission of OVS is to advance veterans into the workforce through targeted business engagement and effective employment services.

The Mission of OVS is to establish networks with employers who understand the value of Veterans and are committed to hiring those who have served our nation and Veterans who are prepared to enter the workforce.

OVS exists through a grant provided by the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training and consists of staff that is stationed within Wisconsin Job Centers. The

staff is categorized in two groups, Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Employment Program (DVOP).

The LVERs develop networks of employers and promote veterans employment. The DVOPs provide intensive services necessary to assist Veterans with significant barriers to employment gain employment.

OVS works closely with Job Service and other Job Center partners to ensure Veterans receive priority of service within the job center.

VR&E Authority and Scope

The Mission of VR&E (aka Chapter 31) is to provide services and assistance necessary to enable Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap to become employable and obtain and maintain suitable employment, and to the maximum extent possible, achieve independence in daily living. VR&E also provides vocational and educational counseling to eligible Service members, Veterans, and dependents.

VR&E retains the authority to enter into MOU agreements with state agencies pursuant to M28R.I.A.3 and 38 U.S.C. 3116 (authorizing VA to promote the development and establishment of employment opportunities through coordination with federal, state, and local governmental agencies and appropriate nongovernmental organizations. VR&E is a federally funded program. Chapter 31 U.S.C. 1341(a)(1)(A) and 1341(a)(1)(B), commonly referred to as the Anti-Deficiency Act, prohibits all federal officers and employees from making or authorizing expenditures or obligations exceeding appropriated funding and from obligating payment of money before it is appropriated. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) authorize services and expenditures for entitled Veterans and their dependents, as allowed under 38 USC Chapters 31, 35, 36, and 18.

Joint Commitments

DVR, OVS, and VR&E jointly agree to the following commitments as permitted by each Party's legal authority:

1. Provide information, dissemination, outreach, and participation in staff development activities to increase staff knowledge and mutual understanding of each agency's program and its pertaining policies.

2. Provide technical assistance for individuals with disabilities who are not currently enrolled.

3. Advise applicants who have potential rights and benefits under any of the programs to inquire about services. Self-referrals can occur at any time.

4. Refer Veterans with disabilities to the other's program(s) when:
    a. The individual is interested in having a referral occur,
    b. It appears they may meet the eligibility criteria of the program, and
    c. The individual could benefit from their services.
    d. When it is unclear if a referral is appropriate, contact the agency to consult.

5. For joint cases, following each agencies policies:
    a. Invite representatives from each agency for staffings when appropriate.
    b. Attend staffings when invited and available.
    c. Align the individual's employment goals for each agency, as much as possible.
    d. Collaborate on and coordinate service provision in an effort to ensure that there is no duplication or overlapping of services.
    e. Provide documentation and follow-up reports on a monthly basis.

6. Support efforts to improve statewide consistency in providing collaborative case management services.

7. Collaborate and share information on business outreach efforts, experience concerning employer hiring practices, workforce development opportunities, and employment trends and opportunities.

Exchange of Information

DVR, OVS, and VR&E are responsible for ensuring their agencies confidentiality standards and policies are followed.

To assist in the facilitation of a referral and coordination of services, the referring agency and the receiving agency should obtain the written consent of the individual, following their agencies policies, allowing them to release information that is necessary for the purpose at hand. Agencies will ensure that the referral source receives follow-up communication regarding the outcome of the referral and the agencies will exchange documentation necessary for an eligibility determination or for the provision of services.

The individual should be informed of their rights related to confidentiality, as well as the limits of it.

Referrals

With written consent following the agencies policies, the agencies will ensure that the referral source receives follow-up communication regarding the outcome of the referral and the agencies will exchange documentation necessary for an eligibility determination or for the provision of services

When referring veterans with disabilities to the other agencies the following process should be followed:

Referrals to DVR:
Referrals for DVR are made to the local DVR offices. A referral form for DVR services can be requested by calling or visiting a local DVR office or is available online at https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/DVRApply/Presentation/Eligibility/DVRMission.aspx . Referring agencies should not attempt to determine who might be eligible for services. The individual can indicate on the referral form the other agencies they are working with and/or who is referring them for services to allow DVR to follow-up with the referring agency as needed.

Following a referral to DVR, the individual will be contacted and provided with additional information about DVR and DVR services. Eligibility for DVR services will be completed by a DVR Counselor.

If there are any concerns or issues that arise related to referrals for DVR, the Bureau of Consumer Services- Assistant Director can be contacted.

Referrals to OVS:
The Office of Veterans Services will accept referrals of veterans with barriers to employment that apply at the Job Center or via the online portal. These referrals will be sent to the OVS Supervisor who will assign the veterans as appropriate. There are various criteria used to determine eligibility for DVOP Services. Referring agencies should not attempt to determine who might be eligible for services. Criteria can include specialized veteran populations. Some criteria that may be used for eligibility would include; age, homeless status, caregiver status, low-income veterans, offenders, transition from recent deployment and DVR status.

Referrals to VR&E:
A Veteran with a service-connected disability can make a self-referral for federal veterans rehabilitation services. Referring agencies should not attempt to determine who might be eligible for or entitled to services. Referrals for VR&E services are made by contacting the Supervisory Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Milwaukee, WI. VA Form 28-1900 is the official application for Chapter 31 services, which can be found at: http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-28-1900-ARE.pdf. The application for Chapter 31 can, alternatively, be completed and submitted electronically through ebenefits at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vonapp.

Applications for other services may only be submitted via mail, fax, or hand-delivered:
Chapter 36 can be found at: http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-28-8832-ARE.pdf
Chapter 35 can be found at: http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-5490-ARE.pdf
Chapter 18 can be found at: http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0304-ARE.pdf

5400 W National Avenue
Milwaukee WI 53214
414-902-5725
414-902-9413 (fax)

Terms of Agreement

The terms of this MOU among the DVR, OVS, and VR&E shall begin on the date of signatures and continue until replaced by a new agreement, terminated upon mutual agreement, or upon written request of any party. Any modifications to the agreement must be made by mutual agreement of all Parties in writing.

Resolution of Conflicts

Attempts will be made to resolve the issue at the lowest level of disagreement. lowest level being VA counselor /DVR Counselor or VA Counselor / DVOP. The next level would be at the Supervisory VRC level /Supervisory DVR counselor or Supervisory VRC/Region Supervisor level and finally, VR& E Officer/Office of Veteran Services Director. Informal resolution will be the first step in dealing with any disagreements relative to this agreement. When an issue cannot be resolved at the lowest level, it should be referred to the next level as a formal dispute. Formal disputes under these procedures are to be submitted in writing at the appropriate local or state level. The materials presented will include the regulation or requirement related to the dispute; the specific issue needing resolution; the prior steps taken to resolve the issue and any additional information that may be relevant to the dispute. Utilizing the information presented, a good faith effort will be made to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. Efforts must be made at each level for resolution in a timely manner.

Signatures

State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development

Scott Jansen _____ Date 11-2-2015
Administrator, Division of Employment and Training

Gary M Meyer _____ Date 10/26/15
Director, Office of Veteran Services

Delora Newton _____ Date 10/30/2015
Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

US Department of Veterans Affairs

Duane A. Honeycutt VBAMIWDIR _____ Date _____
Director, Department of Veterans Affairs, Milwaukee Regional Office