

## **EVALUATION AND REPORT OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING IDENTIFIED GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES**

The DVR utilizes several strategies for evaluating and reporting the achievement of its goals and priorities and outcomes of Innovation and Expansion (I & E) activities.

The DVR continues to use the VR program evaluation standards found in 34 CFR 361.82 and the performance indicators found in 34 CFR 361.84. Since these evaluation standards remain constant over time, they were chosen for measurement of our goals and priorities. These two federal standards allow the DVR to track its program performance year-by-year using a consistent tracking methodology. Since the program evaluation standards found in 34 CFR 361.82, are included in the performance indicators found in 34 CFR 361.84, they will not be addressed separately. The DVR has also established other service and quality related priorities described separately.

In addition, the DVR seeks program evaluation and monitoring assistance from the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC). The WRC regularly solicits input on VR services and priorities through public comment and hearings, and from WRC members and expert panels of consumers and stakeholders invited to WRC meetings. The WRC Evaluation Committee analyzes the performance of the DVR in serving specific groups and types of disability by requesting direct input from those consumers and reviewing VR service data, patterns and outcomes. The DVR complies with requests from the WRC for specific and intensive evaluation reports on services and outcomes for specific disability groups that the Council wishes to review as potentially unserved or underserved. The WRC further reviews consumer satisfaction with VR service delivery by interacting with consumers and studying the results of the DVR's Consumer Satisfaction Survey. In addition to the WRC, other disability specific state councils, such as the Statutory Council on Blindness, regularly request and review DVR reports on service delivery to specific groups of persons with disabilities and provide feedback to the DVR.

The WRC/DVR partnership is intended to improve the performance of the DVR with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established in the Act. The WRC issues an annual report reviewing the activities and performance of the DVR as well as offering WRC advice on goals and priorities in the State Plan. The DVR and WRC jointly submit the report to RSA. Input from the WRC is an important component of the DVR's comprehensive Needs Assessment and annual updates to the assessment.

### ***VR Program Performance indicators***

**Performance Indicator 1.1** The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

The DVR sets an annual goal each year to increase the total number of individuals who achieve a successful employment outcome.

The DVR continues to meet this federal performance standard. We will continue to monitor efforts to meet and exceed this indicator. For additional detail on continued efforts see section 4.11(d) of the state plan.

**Performance Indicator 1.2** Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage that are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

The Federal performance standard is 55.8%. Despite WI DVR being in Order of Selection, DVR has continued to improve in this measure and has now been able to achieve it. DVR will continue to use its daily dashboard tracking to best inform managers of their progress for ensuring success.

Progress and plans for continued efforts towards maintaining this indicator include:

- DVR continues to provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) affirmative hiring incentives to private sector employers who hire and provide temporary as well as permanent work opportunities to DVR consumers. The DVR also supports paid OJT internships within state agencies willing to hire and provide temporary as well as permanent employment opportunities to DVR consumers. The goal of the OJT affirmative hiring and paid internship initiatives is to increase on-the-job training hires and resume building opportunities in the private as well as public employment sectors. Another purpose is to affirmatively target and increase the number of qualified candidates with significant disabilities in the employer's pool for permanent hires.
- DVR will continue to dedicate staff to work with state government agencies to explain the benefits of hiring employees with disabilities. Dedicated staff identifies positions and distribute state government employment opportunities on a statewide basis to DVR participants.
- DVR will continue to strengthen employment linkages for high school students by developing local employment-focused collaborations between the school district, the local workforce investment system, private sector employers and community rehabilitation programs. DVR has recently partnered with other state agencies and the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities on a federal grant for transition students entitled "Let's Get to Work". DVR has committed to braided funding, especially work experience services, to help transition students attach to the workforce prior to completing their high school experience. Additionally, DVR has established a Youth OJT, promoting work experience for transition student while still in high school.
- DVR will continue to utilize service delivery teams for a review of all cases in job ready status (20). This review identifies strategies for reengaging consumers in the job search process. Depending on the individual additional work-related training might be supported to increase marketable skills or a modified approach to the job search process may be implemented. DVR is partnered with the state's Wagner Peyser program to develop tools

for labor attachment that are connected with their on-line job posting and job search application. DVR consumers can now upload their resume to the State's electronic job posting board, allowing greater exposure to hiring employers.

- DVR established 20 business service consultant project positions to expand business services and address business needs for hiring of people with disabilities. The 20 staff is located throughout the state and will serve as point of contacts for the CSAVR National Employment Team (NET) and will liaison with workforce partners to promote and identify DVR job seekers to meet area business talent needs.
- Continuing DVR Policy for service delivery teams to make regular, and at least monthly, contact with DVR consumers. Regular DVR contact supports progress throughout the case process. A workgroup has identified a variety of strategies that teams can utilize to increase consumer engagement towards a successful rehabilitation outcome. DVR supervisors regularly review consumer contact frequency and consumer progress. DVR recently developed a "cold case unit" to help reengage consumers and provide augmented assistance to the field for consumers who may have moved without forwarding their new information to their counselor.

Staff guidance was provided in FFY09 to encourage use of temporary work for DVR consumers. This guidance was updated in 2012 to reflect the addition of temporary work to the statewide technical specifications as a standardized statewide offered service. Use of temporary work allows consumers to gather valuable employment experience and information and gain current, marketable skills to support their search for permanent employment. Participants are able to obtain a work reference, examine various career goals, increase their work tolerance and develop good work habits. DVR has significantly increased the use of temporary work to assist consumers toward achieving their employment goals.

DVR uses strategic interventions when a possible unsuccessful placement, especially those with a "failure to cooperate" case closure reason, has been identified. Prior to closing these cases, DVR staff is cross checking consumer information with unemployment insurance employment data to make a determination about possible unknown attachment to employment. This strategy allows focused follow-up and possible reengagement with a consumer who has failed to maintain communication with us. DVR expects this activity to increase successful closures by identifying those individuals who believe they no longer need DVR services because they are employed, but who have failed to communicate their success in employment to us. We anticipate that this strategy will positively impact our rehabilitation rate.

**Performance Indicator 1.3** Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exits the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

DVR continues to exceed the federal performance standard of 72.6%.

**Performance Indicator 1.4** Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

DVR continues to exceed the federal performance standard of 62.4%.

**Performance Indicator 1.5** The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year).

DVR continues to exceed the federal performance standard of 52%.

**Performance Indicator 1.6** Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage that report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

The DVR successfully completed a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) with RSA to improve this indicator. Strategies outlined in the PIP are listed below will continue to be a high priority focus. For additional detail on continued efforts please see section 4.11(d) of the state plan.

- DVR completed additional training and assistance for IPE development and implementation with a focus on a specific employment goal and use of comprehensive assessment to refine the goal to align with consumer informed choice. Staff training focused on helping consumers identify their income needs; ability to work towards self-sufficiency, and appropriate employment goals to attain greater self sufficiency.
- DVR staff continues to authorize and provide benefits analysis and counseling to individuals receiving SSI/SSDI cash benefits who are interested in earnings that will eliminate their reliance on SSA cash benefits. DVR has an established network of benefits advisement providers and this service is readily available. For those consumers who are interested in earnings which may reduce, but not eliminate, their SSI/SSDI cash benefits, DVR staff provides a list of no cost work incentives benefits counseling resources. Options for benefits advisement will continue to be emphasized.

**Performance Indicator 2.1** The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minorities individuals with disabilities.

The federal performance standard is a ratio of 80%.

The DVR conducted analyses of the current calculation method for service rate impact and found that a calculation that divided a percent by a percent was affected by lower minority

population numbers overall. Wisconsin has a low minority population rate (15%) as compared to many other states.

DVR will continue to make this standard a high priority focus and continues to develop ideas and strategies for improvement. Progress and plans for continued efforts towards meeting this indicator include:

- 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.
- 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 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.

**DVR Priority #1: The DVR shall assist eligible individuals, including individuals with a significant disability, to obtain, maintain, or regain high quality employment.**

Strategies that the DVR believes contribute to the achievement of employment outcomes, including supported employment outcomes include:

1. DVR immediately serves and develops employment plans for eligible applicants with the most significant disabilities, (Category 1). Applicants with significant disabilities (Category 2) experienced a wait of no more than 6 months. Applicants with other disabilities, (Category 3), are not currently served.
2. The DVR requires at least monthly staff contact with consumers unless a different timeframe for contact is specified in their employment plan. Increased consumer contact is a strategy to both improve services and employment outcomes.
3. The DVR uses a performance and outcome-based fee schedule for job placement activities that pays vendors for a consumer's success in finding and retaining a competitive job.
5. The DVR focused increased time and attention and will continue to improve VR services in for consumers in need of supported employment and long term support services. The DVR is an active member of a multiagency effort to identify and deploy new strategies to increase employment outcomes for persons in need of long term employment supports. DVR is also developing data sharing agreements with the

Department of Health Services to be identifying common customers and improve joint planning.

6. DVR will use Title I-B funds to continue to provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) affirmative hiring opportunities to private sector employers who hire and provide temporary as well as permanent work opportunities to DVR consumers. The DVR will also support paid OJT internships within state agencies willing to hire and provide temporary as well as permanent employment opportunities to DVR consumers. The goal of the OJT affirmative hiring and paid internship initiatives is to increase on-the-job training hires and resume building opportunities in the private as well as public employment sectors. Another purpose is to affirmatively target and increase the number of qualified candidates with significant disabilities in the employer's pool for permanent hires.
7. The DVR is committed to developing and implementing an eligible high school student's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) as early as possible during the transition from high school planning process. The DVR will develop a student's IPE prior to graduation. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the DVR and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the DVR will maintain contact with students and education agencies, attend transition meetings to provide transition planning consultation and technical assistance. It is the mission of the DVR to provide outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible so transition service needs can be identified and addressed prior to graduation.

**DVR Priority #2: To initiate employment plan services in a timely manner following eligibility determination for persons with the most significant disabilities and those with significant disabilities.**

The DVR continues to implement a plan to stabilize the OOS wait list time with the FFY13 goal of maintaining immediate activation of employment plans for persons determined to have the most significant disabilities (Category 1) and maintaining the wait to begin employment plan development to no longer than 6 months for persons determined to have significant disabilities (Category 2). This will also help the DVR achieve goals 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1.

Target 1: No more than 6 months in OOS wait list for eligible individuals that have significant disabilities (OOS Category 2).

Target 2: 80% of consumers will have their IPE developed and IPE services initiated within 90 days of eligibility determination or activation from OOS Wait List, whichever is latest.

**DVR Priority #3: To increase employment opportunities for consumers needing supported employment.**

Strategies that support this goal include the commitment of the DVR to interface supported employment services with the Medicaid Waiver Family Care long term employment support services as these services are expanded throughout Wisconsin.

The DVR will continue to develop and implement activities leading to increased supported employment activities. The DVR implemented activities leading to increased supported employment opportunities as described in attachments 4.11(c)(4) and 6.3.

1. The DVR conducted several needs assessment activities including a key informant survey, non-DVR employer, DVR employer and consumer focus groups, in addition to a service provider stakeholder session to identify service needs for the state plan.
2. Establish a baseline of available supported employment resources by type and county: DVR worked cooperatively with the Department of Health and Family Services as they implemented the statewide managed care system. DVR interfaced supported employment services with Family Care long-term support services in a successful effort to expand supported employment services. Statewide Family Care implementation was delayed in some counties due to state budget issues. DVR continues to develop local partnerships with the managed care entities, promoting closer collaboration and improved transition services.
3. Develop and implement a plan to increase available supported employment resources. The DVR plan is to increase coordination with other funding sources such as Wisconsin's county-based Family Care long term funding and services, and increase the number of supported employment providers in targeted areas of the state. The BPDD pilot "Let's Get to Work" for transition students also holds great promise as a template for adult braided services and further collaboration with the state's long-term care program.

### **WRC Annual Report on DVR activities and progress in meeting annual goals and priorities**

As required under section 101(a)(15)(E)(ii) of the Act, the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) and the DVR annually jointly prepare and submit to the RSA Commissioner a report on the activities and progress of the DVR in meeting its goals and priorities. This report is known as the annual Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council report.

The report is available on line and, upon request, from either the WRC or the DVR in print and alternative formats. The DVR uses funds to support the operation and activities of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, and as consistent with the state plan prepared under section 705(e) (1), also uses funds to support the operation of the State Independent Living Council.

## USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I & E) ACTIVITIES

The following table and narrative highlights the innovation and expansion activity supported by DVR funds in FFY15. Innovation and expansion activities are generally funded in accordance with DVR's state fiscal year (i.e., July 1 – June 30) but may be conducted on a federal fiscal year if applicable.

Contract / Agreement	Start/End	DVR funds	Fiscal Arrangement and Type
8 local I and E projects with CIL's	7/1/2010-6/30/13	\$15,000 each location annually	Each CIL worked with the local WDA Director to develop new patterns of services to be provided to DVR Consumers. Projects include: Assistive Technology work evaluation services, peer assisted job search instruction, financial literacy training and youth job groups.
REDI Walgreen's	4/1/12-6/30/13	\$18,600 for site creation. Case service funds for direct consumer services.	Intensive retail training with supports and competency based certification for potential hire with corporate partners.
Let's Get to Work	2/1/12-6/30/15	Case Service funds via Youth OJT	DVR has committed and created a youth transition OJT to attach youth with disabilities to competitive employment prior to HS completion.
Vocational Futures Planning Services	10/1/12 - 9/30/15	Case Service funds	Collaborative effort with long term care and other providers to provider individualized-based services, including case management services, to people with significant physical disabilities that are in need of long term care.
Milwaukee Wrap Around Pilot	6/1/2013 2013 – 9/30/2015	\$350,500 annually	Mentor program to establish resources and services to assist in employment.