

FFY 2015 DVR STATE PLAN WRC RECOMMENDATIONS

WRC Recommendation #1:

We recommend that the DVR Administrator provide updates to our council and the state independent living council on the status of its Maintenance of Effort (MOE) commitment and other budget items that affect DVR funding.

DSU Response:

The DVR Administrator will continue to provide quarterly updates to the Council and, through its DVR liaison, will continue to provide updates to the state independent living council on the status of the MOE commitment and other budget items that affect DVR funding, including any third party proposals.

WRC Recommendation #2:

We request that the DVR Administrator provide our council with quarterly updates on the wait list numbers, staff vacancies, and VR Counselor caseload numbers by Workforce Development Area. We want to gain a better understanding of workload issues between rural and urban DVR offices.

DSU Response:

The DVR Administrator will continue to provide the Council with quarterly updates on the wait list numbers, staff vacancy numbers and the continued operation of the Order of Selection procedure. The resources of the vocational rehabilitation directly impact the quality and effectiveness of the program and believe these updates help to improve VR services.

WRC Recommendation #3:

The Business Service Consultants have increased employment outcomes as well as increasing the business community's awareness of DVR. We recommend that DVR move to make these positions permanent so DVR will have a consistent point of contact in each Workforce Development Area.

DSU Response:

Employment outcomes are the top priority and WDVR appreciates the WRC's partnership in seeking improvements and solutions. DVR agrees to keep the Council updated on strategies used to positively impact employment outcomes, including the progress of the new 20 project positions who will serve as Employment Specialist. Along with the sharing of their progress and success, WDVR will share their observations and any labor market or business trends.

We also will request that these positions become permanent within the state budget process.

WRC Recommendation #4:

We recommend continued training for DVR Counselors on job development techniques so counselors can assist consumers in selecting the appropriate type of job development service and identify when job development services are not meeting the needs of the individual.

DSU Response:

WDVR agrees with this staff training recommendation and will continue to work with our state agency partners to expand employment options as well as to train WDVR on those options.

With the impending consumer report card, WDVR will also train staff to best identify successful job development techniques and approaches and how to best share that knowledge with DVR consumers through the informed consent process and through motivational interviewing techniques.

WRC Recommendation #5:

DVR consumers and parents report they are dissatisfied with job development services, including wait lists, fewer providers in rural areas, and a lack of access to a customized job development approach. The state long term support agency used grant funding to offer free training for job developers for several years and continues to offer training.

We recommend that DVR bring together a state workgroup on job development services to estimate the current and future capacity needed, the training needed to prepare job developers in a variety of methods, the training mechanism (ex. current training methods vs. a technical college curriculum), and the funding mechanism that would pay based on the service need rather than the funding source.

DSU Response:

WDVR agrees with this recommendation and will convene this important group to identify best practices, share possible protocol techniques and ways to ensure consistency and adequate training for the service providers.

WRC Recommendation #6:

Our council has received feedback that offices in our state's larger urban areas have higher staff turnover. Turnover leads to more time spent on interviewing, training, and results in less experienced counselors working in the areas with higher caseloads.

We recommend that DVR consider independent methods to gather feedback from staff. A recent recommendation suggested independent exit interviews of staff to learn what factors have more or less significance.

DSU Response:

WDVR agrees with this recommendation and will work with departmental human resource specialists to review compensation, retention tools and techniques, employee engagement, and workplace and life balances to reflect generational motivational efforts. WDVR is also reviewing new approaches to reduce management time during the recruitment effort.

WRC Recommendation #7

We recommend including information and updates on the minority service rate by Workforce Development Area at each quarterly meeting. Evaluation sub-committee will seek additional information to look for trends and best practices.

DSU Response

DVR agrees that equal opportunity is a cornerstone of our program and must ensure that all DVR services are equally accessible to all our potential customers. DVR will work closely with the WRC and our stakeholders on cultural competency techniques and outreach efforts to ensure that DVR staff best meets the needs of all our consumers, regardless of race.

WRC Recommendation #8

We request updates on the PROMISE grant at our quarterly meetings to learn and share best practices on working with youth with disabilities.

DSU Response

DVR very much looks forward to sharing with the council the progress of all pilots and projects and steps taken by DVR to improve our services and outcomes.

Throughout the year, the Rehabilitation Council has also provided advice and consultation to DVR. This past year, DVR switched to a new hearings and appeals process that was guided and agreed to by the Council. In the past, DVR individually contracted with qualified personnel to conduct the appeals hearings. This year, DVR contracted with the Department of Administration's Hearing and Appeals Division, a division of administrative law judges and staff that expertly hold appeals hearings for the state's TANF, Medicaid, Public Instruction, Special Education and Probation and Parole, among others. The use of this staff will ensure consistency in the conduct of hearings and a more professional decision process.