

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(1)The Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) conducts an annual update to the statewide assessment of the rehabilitation (and other) needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the state. The comprehensive statewide assessment process also includes an annual review of Wisconsin disability statistics, DVR customer and service federal report data, and public comment and input provided to the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) throughout the year.

DVR also receives input during public hearings conducted by DVR and WRC on a quarterly basis for service delivery or as part of the State Plan efforts. DVR has instituted a broader public hearing process, utilizing video conferencing equipment available throughout the 11 regions of Wisconsin. Residents throughout the state would be within easy travel distance to the 11 sites to provide testimony in person, via video conferencing equipment, connecting to the central site located in the Wisconsin capital city. This has provided broader input from service providers, consumers and family members to comment and provide feedback on DVR services and policies.

The DVR and the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) will continue to work cooperatively in this process. The identified rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities are discussed with the full council. The DVR and WRC identify and prioritize the rehabilitation needs and develop DVR systemic and service delivery goals to address the needs.

The WRC also continues to use feedback received from the customer satisfaction survey conducted every 2 years of individuals closed in the previous calendar year and information from previous focus groups for process improvements and quality assurance.

Since FFY 08 and continuing through FFY 16, individuals with a "most significant disability" received service immediately upon their eligibility. Since January of 2015, there has been no wait for individuals with a "significant disability". With the new federally required emphasis on youth and the requirement to engage in outreach to individuals in center-based services, DVR will continue to monitor the Order of Selection waiting list to insure that already active DVR job seekers have access to the DVR services that will assist them in reaching their employment goals.

Due to the expanded availability of Medicaid-funded long-term employment support services and the updated Wisconsin Medicaid Waiver policies emphasizing integrated community employment opportunities, the DVR anticipates a continued increase in demand during for supported employment referrals, placements and services. The DVR supported employment, long-term employment supports service planning, and coordination efforts are described in state plan attachments describing supported employment services and funding.

Wisconsin DVR continues to address the needs identified in the previous plan and have maintained them as priorities for this State Plan period. They are:

(A) Rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities include their need for supported employment services.

- Long-term support for people who do not qualify for these supports based on IQ – for example, people diagnosed with autism or mental illness.
- Improved job coaching so that coaching can fade in a reasonable and timely way.
- Development of a mentor system for work place role models
- Ability to address basic needs before or during rehabilitation e.g. food shelter, basic medical care.
- Improved use of appropriate work skills evaluation tools
- Support of business community for developing a work environment friendly to individuals with disabilities, e.g. need for part time employment, preservation of benefits, flexibility, volunteer work.
- Support of wrap around services not just on the job, e.g. transportation.
- Need to change the long term support system to a managed care approach to retain and expand funding for long-term supported employment services
- Need to orient the long term care system toward a “money follows the person” approach
- Development of natural supports, in lieu of funded long-term extended services
- Expansion of peer support specialists for individuals with mental illness.
- Informational services regarding various options and programs for families.
- More and better targeted career information to address the attitude that there are no jobs that persons with disabilities can do
- Increased need for soft skill preparation to expand employment opportunities
- Increased education for business community re: the business benefits of hiring our consumers
- Expanded work incentives and increased access to benefits advisement
- Need for expanded work incentive demonstrations to more fully address the number of consumers experiencing disincentive to full employment (e.g., SSDI \$2/\$1 benefit offset and “Making Work Pay” cost-share demonstration)
- DVR Administrator to continue to provide quarterly updates on the wait list numbers to the Council as recommended.

- DVR develop methods to increase consumer awareness of work incentives and Partnership Plus options and evaluate the impact on outcomes for SSI/DI recipients as the WRC recommended through their observation that employment outcomes for SSI/DI recipients appear to have lower earnings and hours than the general VR population.

(B) Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities.

Specific needs identified include:

- Provide training to all VR staff in multicultural awareness;
- Increase VRC expertise to address cross cultural needs;
- Develop awareness in staff of socio-economic issues that are interfering with a person's ability to stay engaged;
- Develop better methods to identify issues preventing involvement and make appropriate referrals to community resources to consider these issues to increase engagement of individuals in the VR process;
- Culturally competent mental health counseling;
- More Spanish speaking VR and employment and training staff;
- Develop common protocols for employers to address language barriers;
- Develop cooperative programming with the Welfare-to-Work (W-2) staff to address individuals with disabilities (usually in the W-2 Transition program) in the W-2 system – the majority of which are individuals of African-American heritage;
- Transportation to jobs in suburbs;
- Skills training to prepare for specific occupations ;
- Increased outreach and availability of VR services in areas of the state with the largest concentrations of African-Americans;
- Conduct outreach to recruit potential eligible consumers – e.g. Hmong, Native American;
- For individuals who are Hmong, develop closer working relationships with their clan system to educate clan leaders regarding the VR program, eligibility requirements and services (need permissions for many things: medical evaluations, type of work, etc.);
- Address learning the job through job coaching provided by a Hmong person;

- Build better understanding between employer and employee through mentoring provided by a Hmong person;
- Increase coordination of VR services between the tribal VR agency and DVR, targeting Native Americans not living on or near reservations;
- Develop mentoring services related to crime/poverty to support employment efforts e.g. African American, Native American, Hmong (with specific beliefs or different tribes), and Hmong with their clan structure; and,
- Increase the service rate for minorities as it does not meet the national standard.

(C) Rehabilitation needs of individuals who are un-served or underserved.

Under the new federal law, DVR is developing outreach strategies to combine the needs of students with disabilities and those that might have been previously referred from schools to center-based services, rather than to DVR for career and employment needs. DVR believes this new focus will dramatically change the consumers served moving forward into the near future.

DVR, working with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the DWD-Equal Rights Division who administers the subminimum wage licenses and reviewing federal reports has identified the following targeted opportunities for DVR outreach:

- In-school Youth: Approximately 35,000 students
- Subminimum Wage: 9000 individuals
- Subminimum Wage and Child Labor Permit (under 18 yrs): 1000 youth

With this new targeted information, DVR will work with education and long term care agencies to operationalize new federally mandated requirements to engage in direct outreach to these individuals.

- Individuals on OOS Waiting List - DVR has addressed the wait list so that in FFY 15 individuals with a most significant disability will continue to be immediately activated. DVR anticipates that individuals with a significant disability will also have no wait for FFY 2015, assuming that our current funding and staffing levels remain the same and that the cost of services change remains at 2% over FFY 2015.
- Reduce the wait list.
- Felons with disabilities.
- Transition students and their families do not recognize the importance of early DVR involvement.
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- Transient or homeless population – inability to contact if no phone or home.

- Long-term support for individuals with mental illness.
- People with AODA issues.
- Study job retention – 1, 2, years out.
- Transportation – public and private.
- Caregiver reimbursement.
- People unemployed or laid-off due to recession.
- Older adult workers.
- Minority populations in general.

(D) Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

- Increase partnerships with the statewide workforce investment system to develop innovative programs to serve common customers. With the economic downturn, there has been increased funding for dislocated workers and other general workforce populations.
- Ongoing training of job center staff on disability sensitivity issues. The elimination of the Navigator program will affect DVR's need to provide ongoing training to job center staff.
- Continued efforts to coordinate the efforts of different government agencies with very different rules and expectations for participation. An individual facing parenting responsibilities, poverty, and disability issues needs to work with agencies that can coordinate their efforts.
- Cooperation with job center network is valuable to consumers who can work on certain aspects of their job search independently.
- Need for basic computer skills by consumers to use all resources available. This need has been identified as well in the workforce system. Individuals engaged in manufacturing throughout their career and now attempt to change careers are faced with a skill deficit in use of computers.
- Job readiness classes that focus on how to communicate skills and address their disability to the employer.
- Improve work needs assessment before referring to general programs for employment search.

- Increase job openings on the system
- Continue to expand partnerships and encourage coordination of services
- Development of new ways to provide for job creation or to incentivize employers
- Work cooperatively to remove stigmas in the workplace.
- Use of Customized Employment when appropriate.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

In Wisconsin, the VR program works with many service providers including community rehabilitation programs. WI VR will continue work in the following areas to improve services to consumers in partnership with all DVR providers:

- Development of more community-based work alternatives.
- Focus on integration and an alternative to center-based services
- DVR should develop expertise locally of how to best utilize CRP services.
- Enhance current programs to be more culturally sensitive before developing more programs.
- Work with providers and CRP to help them increase their capacity to develop new types of services.
- Develop community outreach to other local and neighborhood agencies, centers, clinics, union centers, schools, employers, other social service agencies as potential providers.
- Tracking satisfaction and outcome of VR vendors and service providers, as recommended by WRC

With Wisconsin's USDOE Promise Grant, many of the resources mapped out for family services will now be available for DVR staff to also use for referral to other service that address the non-DVR needs of consumers. This important effort will be on going throughout the life of the grant but will be maintained by DVR staff upon the grant's completion.

The DVR is collaborating with the Board for People with Development Disabilities to pursue expansion of service providers, especially those that focus on youth, supported employment and job development for increased service provider capacity. Additionally, DVR has reached out to the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association to encourage training development for increased service provider capacity.

(3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

DVR has identified 35,000 students in the Wisconsin public school systems that are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Additionally, through the Promise Grant we know that over 6,000 youth between the ages of 14-16 are receiving SSI and may or may not have an active IEP. Wisconsin, through its Promise Grant and supported employment experience, believes that targeting outreach to SSI and individuals with the most significant disabilities will allow for strategic niche for needed VR services and collaboration with the schools. DVR will continue to collaborate through the TAG and the active coordination of services with education and long-term care services.