

Vocational Rehabilitation Portion of the State of Oregon

Workforce System Unified State Plan

2016-2019



DRAFT

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### Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

- (1) A local public agency will provide the non-federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;
- (2) The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
- (3) Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) requests a continuation of its waiver of state-wideness for its Youth Transition Program (YTP). Through this program, transition age youth with disabilities are provided with enhanced activities and services that lead to employment or career-related postsecondary education or training.

YTP has two distinct but interconnected goals. The first is to improve post-school transition outcomes for youth with disabilities by preparing them for employment, postsecondary education or training, and independent living. The second is to increase capacity and foster positive systems change in schools and other agencies in assisting youth with disabilities in moving from school to work.

YTP's enhanced transition activities, services, and supports are initiated with youth while they are in high school and continue until one year after post-employment or until one year after youth exit YTP. Services and activities are coordinated by a collaborative team comprised of a school transition specialist, a VR vocational rehabilitation counselor, and students and their families. YTP activities, services and supports have included:

- Individualized planning with a focus on post-school goals and employment.
- Instruction on vocational, independent living and social skills.
- Career development activities.
- Collaboration with the local VR office to arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities, in need of such services, without regard to the type of disability.
- Exposure and connections to paid employment.
- Information and referral to VR and other sources of vocational assistance.
- Follow-up support for one year after leaving the program.
- Refining the processes that schools use to provide VR with information about students in order to determine their eligibility and assist VR in identifying and addressing students' vocational goals and supports.

- YTP will be administered and overseen by VR’s YTP Coordinator.
- The University of Oregon, College of Education, under a separate agreement with VR, will operate a team that provides training and technical assistance to participating school staff and VR field staff.
- The Oregon Department of Education also provides support and advice through its Secondary Transition Specialist.

#### YTP Cooperative Agreements for 2015 – 2017

Fifty-eight cooperative agreements have been executed with local school districts and educational service districts (representing 112 school districts, consortia of districts, and educational service districts). These agreements will operate local YTP for the July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017 period. All of the proposed services outlined in these cooperative agreements have been approved by VR.

In instances involving multiple districts, the districts involved will additionally be required to have agreements with each other in order to ensure that the YTP program is appropriately and effectively carried out. A list of all districts that intend to participate in YTP can be found at the bottom of this Attachment.

Under the terms of the 2015-2017 YTP Cooperative Agreements, districts participating in YTP will be responsible for providing the Core YTP and other activities, services, and supports described above. Provision of these activities, services, and supports will be subject to VR’s approval prior to implementation and any and all applicable requirements of VR’s State Plan. In addition, the 2015-2017 YTP Cooperative Agreements will:

- Specify that participating districts are to provide matching funds equal to one-third (1/3) of the grant awarded by VR to a district for carrying out the agreement. Moreover, the match must be from a district’s cash funds; and, neither federal nor “in-kind” district resources, including donations or contributions of property or services, may be applied towards the match.
- Require that services provided pursuant to agreements will be provided in accord with the Order of Selection under which VR operates, as long as the Order remains in effect.

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS, CONSORTIA AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICTS  
THAT INTEND TO OPERATE YTP IN 2015-2017**

Greater Albany Public School District  
718 7th Ave  
Albany, OR 97321

Baker School District  
Also representing: North Powder, Imbler, Union, Cove, and Elgin School Districts  
2090 4th St.  
Baker City, OR 97814

Bandon School District  
455 9th St. SW  
Bandon, OR 97411

Bend-La Pine Schools  
520 NW Wall St.  
Bend, OR 97701

Bethel School District  
4640 Barger Drive  
Eugene, OR 97402

Brookings Harbor School District  
629 Easy St.  
Brookings, OR 97415

Canby School District  
1130 S Ivy Street  
Canby, OR 97013

Central Linn School District  
331 E. Blakely Ave.  
Brownsville, OR 97327

Coquille School District  
1366 N Gould  
Coquille, OR 97423

Corvallis School District  
1555 S.W. 35<sup>th</sup> St.  
Corvallis, OR 97333

Dallas School District  
111 SW Ash St.  
Dallas, OR 97338

Douglas County School District 34  
P.O. Box 390/749 W. River Drive  
Elkton, OR 97436

Eugene School District  
200 N. Monroe St.  
Eugene, OR 97402

Gladstone School District  
17789 Webster Rd.  
Gladstone, OR 97027

Grant Union School District  
401 N. Canyon City Blvd.  
Canyon City, OR 97820

Harney School District  
550 N. Court  
Burns, Oregon 97720

Grants Pass School District  
830 NE 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Grants Pass, OR 97526

Hillsboro School District  
3083 NE 49<sup>th</sup> Place  
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Hood River School District  
1011 Eugene St.  
Hood River, OR 97031

Jackson County School District #6  
300 Ash St.  
Central Point, OR 97503

Jefferson School District  
Also representing: Crook County School District, Culver and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
445 SE Bluff St  
Madras, OR 97741

La Grande School District  
1305 Willow St.  
La Grande, OR 97850

Lane Education Service District  
Representing: Cottage Grove, Crow-Applegate-Lorane, Fern Ridge, Lowell, Marcola, McKenzie,  
Oakridge, Pleasant Hill, Junction City, Siuslaw and Creswell School Districts.  
1200 Highway 99 N.  
Eugene, OR 97402

Lebanon Community School District  
485 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lebanon, OR 97355

Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District  
Representing: Alsea, Harrisburg, Monroe, Santiam Canyon and Scio School Districts  
905 SE 4th Ave,  
Albany, OR 97321

Malheur Education Service District  
Representing: Adrian, Harper, Huntington, Jordon Valley, Nyssa, Ontario and Vale School Districts  
363 "A" Street West  
Vale, OR 97918

Molalla River School District  
412 S. Sweigle Ave.  
Molalla, OR 97038

Myrtle Point School District  
413 C St.  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458

North Clackamas School District  
4444 SE Lake Rd  
Milwaukie, OR 97222

North Santiam School District  
757 W. Locust St.  
Stayton, OR 97383

North Wasco School District  
3632 W 10th St,  
The Dalles, OR 97058

Northwest Regional Education Service District  
Representing: Astoria, Jewell, Knappa, Seaside, and Warrenton-Hammond School Districts  
3194 Marine Dr.  
Astoria, OR 97103

Oregon City School District  
14268 S Maple Ln Ct,  
Oregon City, OR 97045

Portland Public Schools  
6801 SE 60<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97206

Philomath School District  
535 S. 19th St.  
Philomath, OR 97370

Rainier School District  
28168 Old Rainier Rd.  
Rainier, OR 97048

Redmond School District  
145 SE Salmon Dr.  
Redmond, OR 97756

Reynolds School District  
1204 NE 201st Ave  
Fairview, OR 97024

Salem/Keizer School District  
2450 Lancaster Dr. NE 100,  
Salem, OR 97305

Sweet Home School District  
1920 Long St.  
Sweet Home, OR 97386

Oregon Trail School District  
36525 SE Industrial Way  
P.O. Box 547  
Sandy, OR 97055

Sherwood School District  
23295 SW Main St,  
Sherwood, OR 97140

Silver Falls School District  
802 Schlador St.  
Silverton, OR 97381

South Coast Regional Education Service District  
Representing: Gold Beach, Marshfield, North Bend, and Pacific City School Districts  
1350 Teakwood Avenue  
Coos Bay, OR 97420

Southern Oregon Education Service District  
Representing: Ashland, Armadillo Technical Institute, Butte Falls, Eagle Point, Medford, Prospect and  
Rogue River School Districts  
101 North Grape Street  
Medford, OR 97501

Springfield School District  
525 Mill Street  
Springfield, OR 97477

St Helens School District  
474 North 16th St.  
St Helens, OR 97051

Three Rivers School District  
8550 New Hope Rd.  
Grants Pass, OR 97527

Tigard/Tualatin School District  
6960 S.W. Sandburg St.  
Tigard, OR 97223

Tillamook School District  
Also Representing: Neah-Kah-Nie and Nestucca School Districts  
2510 1st Street  
Tillamook, OR 97141

Umatilla School District  
1001 Sixth St.  
Umatilla, OR 97882

Vernonia School District  
1000 Missouri  
Vernonia, OR 97064

Wallowa Education Service District  
Representing: Enterprise, Joseph and Wallowa School Districts  
107 S.W. First St.  
Enterprise, OR 97828

West Linn/Wilsonville School District  
22210 SW Stafford Rd  
Tualatin, OR 97062

Willamette Education Service District  
Representing: Amity, Dayton, Sheridan, Willamina, and Yamhill Carlton School Districts  
2611 Pringle Rd SE,  
Salem, OR 97302

Woodburn School District  
965 N. Boones Ferry Rd.  
Woodburn, OR 97071

Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

- (1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;
- (2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;
- (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;
- (4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and
- (5) State use contracting programs.

The Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) has developed and maintains cooperative agreements and cooperative relationships where necessary with federal and state agencies not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. This cooperation includes, but is not limited to the Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Oregon Developmental Disability Services (ODDS), local I/DD brokerages, county service providers, Oregon's Mental Health Programs (including programs that serve out of school youth), the Client Assistance Program (CAP), Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation 121 Programs, Oregon Department of Education (ODE), local school districts, community colleges, Access Technologies Inc. (ATI), and local agencies providing services to our clients.

VR strives to have cooperative relationships that that streamline referral and service delivery, including joint planning, leverages funds, provide coordinated and non-duplicated services, and maximize the use of wrap around services to ensure success. VR's goal is to simplify, streamline, and expedite services to clients while maximizing access to services that will help with their success.

VR has no cooperative agreements or cooperative relationships with programs currently being carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture.

## Coordination with Education Officials

### Describe:

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Oregon VR has third party cooperative agreements with over 110 school districts in the state to run the Youth Transition Program (YTP) which constitutes more than 3/4ths of the high schools in Oregon. Performance benchmarks for YTP are in place within the cooperative agreements to ensure the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the participating students.

VR actively works in coordination with state and local education officials to assist eligible and potentially eligible students in pursuit of their employment goals and to facilitate their transition from school to employment, higher education or vocational training. This occurs on a regular and continuing basis as part of delivery of individualized vocational rehabilitation services to youth now including the provision of pre-employment transition services.

It necessarily includes development and approval of individualized plans for employment as early as possible during the transition planning process, but at the latest 90 days after the student is determined eligible for VR services (or in the event VR is subject to an Order of Selection and a waitlist for services is being utilized, before each eligible student able to be served leaves the school setting).

(A) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The Oregon Department of Education and VR have executed an agreement and MOU to coordinate transition services leading to successful transition for students with disabilities from a free and appropriate public education to postsecondary career-related training and employment activities.

VR and the Oregon Department of Education additionally have developed another agreement to co-fund eight regional Transition Network Facilitators (TNFs) who cover the entire state. The role of the TNFs is to coordinate transition services between every LEA and the local VR offices throughout the state. The TNFs are working with every LEA to ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services are available to all students with disabilities in need of such services.

### VR Transition Staff

VR has a full-time YTP/Transition Coordinator. This position is responsible for leading and coordinating YTP and more generally VR's transition efforts, including serving as VR's liaison

to the Oregon Department of Education, the State Advisory Council on Special Education and its Transition Advisory Committee; the Oregon university system; and the state's secondary education system and schools on transition issues. The coordinator and other VR staff work closely with Oregon's community colleges and foster care, youth, and workforce programs on transition and related service coordination issues. On a related basis, the Department of Education has a secondary Transition Specialist and this position is a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, VR's policy-making partner. The YTP Coordinator, Department of Education Transition Specialist, and the University of Oregon YTP T/A Team, together comprise the cross-agency YTP administrative team.

In addition, VR and its YTP partners:

- Maintain a YTP website. The site ([www.ytporegon.org](http://www.ytporegon.org)) provides information on transition, YTP, special education and related services, research, training, and links. The intended audience is school and VR personnel, youth and adults with disabilities, parents and other supporters of such individuals, and the public at large. The website is also used to transmit and report on YTP performance data.
- Jointly sponsor and organize two statewide transition conferences, provide training on a regional basis throughout Oregon about transition, IDEA, modified diploma standards, and the VR process.
- Serve as liaison to the Oregon Association of Vocational and Special Needs Personnel's Board of Directors; and U of O and ODE representatives serve on the State Rehabilitation Council, VR's policy-making partner.

(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

#### Plan Development

YTP Transition Specialists, TNFs, and school transition staff members partner with local VR offices and VR Counselors to coordinate the development and implementation of individualized education programs. When a student is determined eligible for VR services, he or she works with a school transition specialist and a vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that reflects the interests, strengths, and abilities of the student, and which addresses the barriers to training or employment outcomes for the student. However, VR remains in an Order of Selection. At the present, VR is serving all eligible individuals and is not utilizing an Order of Selection waitlist. But should it be necessary for VR to reinstitute a waitlist, the scope of VR services and expected employment outcomes for all individuals served by VR, including YTP students, will be modified to comply with VR's Order of Selection. For more on this, see "YTP and Order of Selection" below and Attachment 4.11.c.3, Order of Selection.

(C) Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

Under YTP, VR is responsible for:

- Administering and coordinating YTP.

- Entering into YTP cooperative agreements (referred to as intergovernmental agreements in Oregon) with school districts that wish to participate in YTP and that are selected through a competitive process. The agreements provide districts with the funding needed for the staff that deliver a district's YTP activities, services, and supports.
- Working with school district staff at the VR field/school level to provide YTP activities and services, and providing needed technical assistance and support.

VR and the Department of Education also co-funds eight regional TNFs who cover the entire state.

(D) Procedures for outreach to, and identification of, students with disabilities who need transition services.

Eight regional TNFs work with every high school in the state to educate school staff, families, and other provider agencies to perform outreach and identification of students with disabilities in need of transition services.

One hundred twelve school districts in the state run the Youth Transition Program (YTP) which constitutes more than three-fourths of the high schools in Oregon.

VR has a Statewide Transition Coordinator that works with the Oregon Department of Education to develop trainings that help school's identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

VR has entered into a contract with Family & Community Together (FACT) Oregon the statewide Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) to train, inform parents, and provide outreach to identify students with disabilities that need transition services.

VR counselors regularly attend functions (back to school nights, job clubs, vocational classes, etc.) at high schools to educate youth, families, and school staff about VR services. In many cases VR staff collaborate with districts to provide pre-employment transition services which leads to identification of students that can benefit from VR services.

## Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to establish relationships with private non-profit and for profit entities that are community rehabilitation providers, medical services providers, and providers of other services and supports that are required by VR clients to achieve the goals in their Individualized Plans for Employment. VR staff develop relationships in the community to meet the needs of their client and to provide choice of providers to their clients.

Services provided by the community rehabilitation providers, contractors, and vendors include medical and psychological assessments and services, job development and employer services, job coaching and facilitation, accommodations and ergonomics, independent living services to support employment goals, follow up services, and other services especially for individuals with significant disabilities. The cooperative relationship vary from information and referral relationships to fee-for-service and pay for performance relationships.

VR follows State of Oregon contractual processes when establishing contracts for services.

VR works with and establishes relationships with non-profit organizations to fully utilize the benefits provided through the SSA TTW program.

In January 2010, Oregon VR initiated a Ticket to Work shared payment agreement pilot with ten community mental health programs that provide evidence-based mental health supported employment services. These mental health agencies are governed by the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE). These agreements allow Oregon VR to be the Employment Network of record with SSA, partner with the mental health agency to provide dual services to an individual. Once the VR case is closed, the mental health agency continues to support the individual until the support is no longer needed. If the individual works and reaches the SSA TTW wage thresholds, Oregon VR receives TTW payments which in turn are split with the mental health agencies. This pilot evolved into a project that has strengthened the relationship between VR and these participating agencies by providing additional TTW dollars for additional program funding. As of July 2015 we have sixteen agreements in place.

## Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

VR works closely with other State agencies whose populations benefit from VR Supported Employment (SE) Services. VR, the Department of Education, and the Office of Developmental Disability Services work together with the State's Employment First program to ensure that individuals who experience Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities receive coordinated and sequenced services that meet their employment needs. This multi-agency collaboration operates under the guidance of Executive Order 15-01 and actively works to ensure that policies and services are aligned in a way that makes sense for transition age students as well as adults seeking services.

VR has a close relationships with Addictions and Mental Health programs and providers to ensure that individuals who access VR's services who are also working with Mental Health Programs across the state get access to quality Individualized placement and Support (IPS) Services. VR continues our collaboration with the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) who oversees the fidelity of the 33 programs that currently offer these services throughout the state. VR continues to work with OSECE to expand the availability of these services across the state.

In addition to aligning policies and service sequences, VR is working with AMH and ODDS to ensure that our certification requirements for service providers are in alignment. VR initiated a new Job Placement Services contract in 2015. Now, joint certification and coordinated training makes it easier for providers of Job Placement and Support Services who are funded by VR to continue to provide employment support services to clients when hand-offs occur between agencies. VR currently has more than 180 providers under contract in our new Job Placement Services Contract.

VR is establishing a system to identify areas of the state where capacity issues exist. Recruit of providers in these areas will be a priority moving forward. Additionally, VR is working with several community colleges to explore the possibility of a career pathway program that will train future service providers in a curriculum jointly developed with these community colleges.

## Coordination with Employers

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and
2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities

VR knows that given the needs of our clients, a robust employer engagement model is required to be successful. VR continues to use Job Placement contractors to identify individual employment, assessment, and training opportunities for those who require those services to become employed. Additionally, VR strives to expand the base of employers who work with our clients who do not require individualized outreach to employers. By leveraging opportunities with other workforce partners, VR believes that it can increase employment opportunities for Oregonians with disabilities and begin to change perceptions associated with individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

VR will:

- partner with the local Employment Department Business Teams to coordinate employment services,
- partner with the local workforce development boards (LWDB) to coordinate employer engagement activities,
- partner with local mental health providers in coordinating employment services
- continue to partner with Oregon Commission of the Blind on employment services,
- participate and coordinate local employer recruitment events and job fairs,
- contract with providers to provide local employer engagement events and activities for individuals with disabilities,
- contract with providers to and other providers
- provide Employment Outcome Professional II (EOP II) training to contracted job placement and partner providers,
- establish local MOU's with federal business contractors.
- provide local trainings and resources on disability awareness and accommodations,
- establish partnerships with local nonprofits that provide employment services,
- participate in in local area business events to enhance disability awareness,
- Promote and develop local area internships for individuals with disabilities.

Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities:

- VR's Youth Transition Program Transition (YTP) is operating in over 115 school districts across the state to provide pre-employment transition services (PETS) which includes "work experience" and "career counseling."
- YTP Transition Specialists work directly with employers to:
  - Perform worksite assessments before student placement
  - Train students in workplace readiness
  - Provide screening and referral of appropriate youth
  - Identification of appropriate worksites and task
  - Provide counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive training opportunities to meet the desired qualification of employers
- In the Portland Metro area VR staff are working with health providers Legacy and Providence Health to pilot training and streamlined hiring program for students with disabilities. Students placed in competitive integrated employment with these employers are supported with 12 months of follow along services to ensure stable employment.
- VR Contractors are working with business and schools regarding employer engagement models to offer competitive, integrated employment and career exploration opportunities. These trainings include:
  - Pre-employment trainings with school staff to meet employer needs
  - Interest inventories with students
  - Trainings on developing partnership agreements
  - Trainings on job needs analysis
  - Marketing school based programs
  - Pre and post training evaluations for students involved in work experiences

### Interagency Cooperation.

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

- (1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;
- (2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and
- (3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

In Oregon the Oregon Health Authority is the agency that administers the State Medicaid Program. Through a series of Inter-Governmental Agreements and Memorandums of Understandings the Department of Human Services is established as the agency that operates the Medicaid programs and waivers. VR has not entered into separate agreements with OHA outside of our parent agencies agreement. VR does collaborate with the individual programs that administer the waivers.

VR and Oregon Department of Developmental Disability Services have refocused their work together over the last couple of years to achieve the outcomes set forth in Executive order 13-04, which was updated in Executive Order 15-01. These Executive Orders push with more clarity the State's Employment First Policy. Additionally, the State of Oregon has recently settled a lawsuit that calls for increased integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. VR, ODDS, and the I/DD service delivery system have a working relationship that shares information, leverages and braids funding, and encourages the joint case management of joint clients. Moving forward VR will continue to work with ODDS and I/DD service delivery system as well as the department of education to increase our collaboration to maximize funding, streamline processes, and meet the competitive and integrated employment goals of joint clients.

Over the last year VR and ODDS have:

- Staff specialists in serving individuals with DD were hired by each agency. Those three groups of regional staff meet regularly; co-train other agency staff; and, co-develop tools and strategies to provide services that are consistent and reflect best practices
- Collaborative training established consistency and quality in curricula used for VR, ODDS and ODE staff throughout Oregon; accomplished through:
  - Agency conferences (VR In-Service, DD Case Management Conference, and ODE Regional Transition Conferences) used mixed groups of staff and cross training techniques to further collaborative training goals
  - VR, DD, and school transition (ODE) staff training on varied topics, presented regionally to groups consisting of staff from all three agencies
  - Staff are consistently co-trained by specialists from the three agencies
- Ongoing and regularly scheduled meetings lead to collaborative actions by Office of Developmental Disabilities (ODDS), VR and Oregon Department of Education (ODE):

- Employment First Steering Committee meetings direct the overall work of the following collaborative meetings. This committee is co-led by VR and ODDS Administrators
- Policy and Innovation meetings are co-led by VR staff and DD Staff to facilitate these collaborative actions:
  - The three agencies review and discuss all new or newly revised policy to assure alignment across agencies
  - Each agency sends policy transmittals to their regional and community staff when another of them adopts new or newly revised policy
- Education and Transition meetings discuss pertinent issues for students who have transition plans including those receiving Pre-Vocational Services; facilitating these collaborative actions:
  - A jointly held goal of seamless transition for: students with transition plans, students in transition programs, and post high school students
  - Examination of agency procedures, leading to: development of tools and strategies for use by field staff; and referral to the Policy Work Stream for potential policy revision or development
- Training and Technical Assistance meetings address issues of staff and vendor training to facilitate:
  - Increased numbers of vendors shared across agencies
  - Increased knowledge and skill (competency) of agency staff and vendors
- Quality Assurance is a cross-agency group that evaluates collaborative outcomes providing a means to assess collaborative efforts

A primary effort of VR and Addictions and Mental Health has been development expansion of evidence-based supported employment services by increasing the number of county mental health organizations providing such services and meeting fidelity standards. VR continues to partner with and utilize the Oregon Supported Center Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) in developing and refining evidence-based supported employment services. As of the end of federal year 2015, 33 community mental health programs in 31 counties were providing such services. With the inclusion of IPS into Oregon's CCOs, evidence-based supported employment services continue to expand across Oregon.

Additionally, VR supports and collaborates with the Early Assessment and Support Alliance in assisting young people with psychiatric disabilities by assisting them in obtaining or maintaining employment (an evidence-based practice, which is effective in reducing the onset and symptoms of mental illness). In partnership with Portland State University, VR helped create a center for excellence that provides ongoing technical assistance to EASA programs throughout the state.

Going forward, VR will increase its focus supported employment outcomes, the quality of the outcomes, the skills of employment service providers and the capacity of community rehabilitation programs and providers.

## Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

### (1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

(i) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

(ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

(iii) projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The Oregon Legislature has the sole authority to establish the type and number of state government positions, including VR positions. Over the last two biennium the legislature approved 14 new VRC positions to help support statewide Employment First initiatives. The chart below indicates the type and number of positions allocated by the legislature for the State 2015-17 biennium (7/1/15-6/30/17), and the type and number of vacancies and projected vacancies over the next five years.

In the pool of 129 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs), VR has 16 VRC specialist positions. The counselors in these positions provide training, technical assistance, and caseload support to other field staff on a given area of focus, in addition to carrying a general caseload. The areas of focus include: autism, deaf and hard of hearing services, developmental disabilities, mental health, motivational intervention, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injury, and workers' compensation.

All VR field staff are provided with supervision necessary to ensure the delivery of quality VR services. In addition to direct supervisory practices, a minimum of 20 hours of training per VR employee per year has been established as a staff development performance benchmark. Managers meet annually with staff to address professional development needs for the upcoming year.

In 2016 VR will be evaluating the VR programs training needs, the current delivery system for training, and the alignment of the overall training system with policy and regulatory concerns. The results of this evaluation will lead to recommendations regarding the restructuring of the VR training unit and will result in the development of an updated, responsive, and aligned training system.

In FFY 2015 VR served 15,754 Oregonians with disabilities; in FFY 2014, VR served 15,589 Oregonians with disabilities; In FFY 2014, the ratio of VRCs to clients served was 1 to 125; in FFY 2015, the ratio was 1 to 124.

The present and projected staffing level and configuration meet currently identified needs.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	129	10	37
2	Human Service Assistants/Office Assistants	69	5	19
3	Field Services Managers	12	1	5

(B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

(iii) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Oregon has two institutions of higher education with graduate programs in Rehabilitation Counseling: Western Oregon University (WOU) and Portland State University (PSU). PSU also offers a post-graduate certification in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

Western Oregon University has two Rehabilitation Counseling degree options: The Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD) is one of only three deafness specialty programs in the United States, and the Rehabilitation Counselor (RC), which was authorized by the Oregon University system in 1991.

Portland State University (PSU) offers a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling. Graduates are eligible to seek national certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors or state licensure by the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists.

University	Current Enrollees	2015 Graduates	CRC and or LPC Upon Graduation
Western Oregon University	RC 23 RSD 7	RC 11 RCD 0	9
Portland State University	RC 36	RC 11	11

Two other university rehabilitation programs exist in the northwest region:

Western Washington University (WWU). Washington has one institution of higher education that offers graduate education in rehabilitation counseling, Western Washington University (WWU).

Additionally, the University of Idaho Counseling Program offers a program of study leading to either a Master of Education or a Master of Science in Counseling and Human Services, with an emphasis in Rehabilitation Counseling.

## Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel.

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

VR continues to work closely with the graduate rehabilitation counseling programs at WOU, PSU and elsewhere in order to increase recruitment of qualified applicants to work in the field. Part of this work consists of reaching out and working with graduate programs to provide practicum and internship sites for students working their way through the program. In 2015 VR hosted four practicum students and six interns.

This last year, the VR executive team approved the reinstatement of the VR Director's Stipend Program. This program is designed to attract and support interns, as well as develop a rich and diverse pool of applicants for VRC positions in the Oregon VR program. Cooperative Agreements between VR and public universities (referred to as Interagency Agreements in Oregon) offering graduate degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling are developed and implemented prior to disbursement of stipend funds. For the 2015–2016 school year, we are forecasting a stipend cost of approximately \$80,356 for WOU students in the program.

VR staff members continue to serve on Rehabilitation Counselor Education Advisory Councils for programs in the region (WWU, PSU, and WOU). An increasing number of VR managers and VRCs are participating in the classes at the graduate level coursework and in the mock interviews conducted with students.

VR managers engage local partners in their recruitment process and are encouraged to consider the demographics of their community and client base when making hiring decisions.

**Personnel Standards.** Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- (1) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or – recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and
- (2) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of

the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

VR continues to utilize an established set of standards to evaluate and select Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. These standards are based on a modified version of standards utilized by the Workers' Compensation Division (WCD). The State of Oregon's VRC classification is shared by WCD, the Oregon State Hospital, the Oregon Commission for the Blind, and VR. It requires that VRCs possess:

- A Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; or be certified by either the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), the Certified Insurance Rehabilitation Specialist (CIRS), or the Certification of Disability Management Specialists Commission as a Certified Disability Management Specialist D (CDMS), and six months full-time work experience providing vocational rehabilitation-related services; OR
- A Master's degree in psychology, counseling, or a field related to Vocational Rehabilitation (such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities) and 12 months full-time work experience providing vocational rehabilitation-related services, OR
- A Bachelor's degree in a related field, such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities, and three years of full-time work experience providing vocational rehabilitation-related services to individuals with disabilities. There is no direct experience substitute for a Bachelor's degree.

VR has had and continues to have a goal that all employees classified as VRCs will hold a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related field. VR will continue to seek counseling staff with Master's degrees, but VRC candidates with an appropriate Bachelor's degrees and related work experience may be hired.

VR continues to expect that all staff participate in appropriate professional development activities. This includes keeping up with the most recent advances and best practices when working with individuals with specific disabilities, staying up to date with best practices overall, and maintaining an updated understanding of the evolving labor market in their area. Relationships are being developed with Regional Economists and Workforce Analysts who are employed by the Oregon Employment Departments Research Department to ensure that staff have the information and the cross training they need to understand the labor markets in their area. VR is establishing robust relationships with LWDBs so that VR, in partnership with them, has an understanding of their local sector strategies.

Staff Development. Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

- (A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
- (B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

VR is committed to offering a comprehensive system of staff development and training. The goal is to ensure staff development for VR personnel in areas essential to the effective management of VR's program of VR services. VR will no longer have the support of the RSA In-service training grants, inclusive of the Basic and Quality Award Grants, as these programs were eliminated with the end of the five-year grant in September 2015. Nevertheless, VR will continue to provide for the training and development of personnel necessary to improve their ability to provide VR services leading to employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities.

In 2016 VR will be undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the programs training structure, delivery system, and training needs. The results of this evaluation will lead to recommendations of training unit restructure and the development of an updated training system. A plan will be developed and implemented.

VR will continue with our Enhancing Employment Outcomes Professional II training that is provided to our job placement vendors and our staff. This training focuses on a skills-based job placement process that looks at placement from a business perspective. VR will also prioritize training focused on best practices for working with specific disability populations, vocational assessment, transition, motivational interviewing practice, rehabilitation technology, assistive technology, effective case management, and understanding the labor market.

VR will continue to coordinate training opportunities with other partners and partner staff. We believe that joint training opportunities foster a greater understanding of the service system as a whole, increase opportunities for better levels of partnership, and create common goals and understandings.

## Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

VR continued to hire and retain staff capable of communicating with diverse populations. Currently VR has staff who are bilingual in the following languages: Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian and American Sign Language. In specific geographic areas and for specific caseloads, VR engages in targeted recruiting for job applicants with specific language skills.

VR staff who are not fluent in the native language of an applicant or a client have access to, and training in, the use of AT&T's language service and access to qualified interpreters. In addition, the office has developed and utilizes outreach and application materials in alternate language formats, including Spanish and Russian.

VR continues to contract and collaborate with the Latino Connection in reaching out to and providing specialized job placements services to native Spanish-speaking individuals with disabilities. The focus of these services has been in Portland, Clackamas, Salem, and Woodburn which have large Latino communities.

VR continued to develop and utilize training materials in alternate formats, including new counselor training materials, to meet the accommodation needs of VRCs who are blind or deaf. The training unit assists staff and consumers who need accommodations for training events with assistive listening devices and qualified interpreters.

In light of demographic changes due to immigration and refugee issues, the VR North Portland office is working with the Immigration and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). This has allowed access to additional interpretation and translations services as needed.

## Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

VR, the Oregon Department of Education, and local school districts have robust relationships that include many opportunities for partnering, joint planning, and cross training. Under WIOA and the new requirement for Pre-Employment and Transitions Services (PETS) this relationship

will continue to grow. This commitment was demonstrated in 2015 when VR provided the following opportunities:

1. In the summer of 2015 VR and ODE conducted eight regional training's across the state for school staff, VR staff, community members and providers. These training's covered services available through VR (including changes in the WIOA) and IDEA services in Transition. ODE and VR intend to continue this series of professional development opportunities.
2. VR co-funds eight regional Transition Network Facilitators whose role is to cross train VR and school staff in the implementation of IDEA, the Rehab Act, and the Executive Order 01-15.
3. VR staff sit on the Department of Education's State Advisory Committee for Special Education (SACSE) to coordinate services, provide trainings, and policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State etc.
4. VR staff sit on the Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Transition (ACT) in an advisory capacity on issues related to determining transition priorities for documents, web information and development and other issues that may arise. The ACT considers the services and postsecondary outcomes for students and informs the department on strategies and plans to improve transition for students beginning at age 14 and continuing through age 21.
5. VR has a contract with the University of Oregon to provide Technical Assistance to VR and school staff in the implementation of the Youth Transition Program (YTP). This contract funds five regional Technical Assistance providers who coordinate services and develop best practices in collaboration between VR and Schools including IDEA funded services.

## Annual Estimates

### Describe:

- (1) The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.
- (2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:
  - (A) The VR Program;
  - (B) The Supported Employment Program; and
  - (C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- (3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and
- (4) The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES

According to the 2014 American Community Survey there are 316,222 individuals who experience disabilities in the State of Oregon who are 16 or older. It is projected that Oregon VR will serve 15,378 of those individuals during the next year.

Oregon VR's Title VI funds are \$277,083 for FFY 2016. At a current cost per case of approximately \$3,155 we will provide services to approximately 87 clients using these funds. The number of individuals getting Supported Employment Services is much larger than this number and is supported through the use of Title I funds.

## State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

- (1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.
- (3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
  - (A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
  - (B) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and
  - (C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

VR and the State Rehabilitation Council have had opportunities over the last year to work together on several aspects of the VR program, policies, procedures, and service delivery. Additionally, VR and SRC worked to jointly develop our State's goals, priorities and strategies looking forward. The SRC will continue to work with VR to revise this current draft of the plan and will approve the final version of the plan that will be submitted in March 2016.

A comprehensive needs assessment was completed September 23, 2013, a survey was completed by the SRC April 2015 in regards to the VR programs Job Placement Services process and contract, regular case reviews are conducted by the Business and Finance Manager as well as Branch Managers. The results of these reports and activities were taken into account in the development of these goals, priorities, and strategies. The performance measures as defined by the WIOA, and activities necessary to meet the expected outcomes were also taken in to consideration.

In addition to working toward the goals and strategies set forth for the entire Oregon Workforce System in the earlier sections of Unified Plan, listed below are a series of VR program specific goals, priorities, and strategies.

VR Goals/Priorities/Strategies:

1. Increase quality employment outcomes for all Oregonians with disabilities
  - a. Support and accelerate the customer experience to be empowering, effective, and efficient
    - i. Promote earlier engagement with Workforce partners for VR clients in the application process
    - ii. Streamline referral and data collection from common referral agencies

- iii. Work with VR staff to streamline the Individual Plan for Employment process in order to get clients into plan more quickly
  - iv. Use data to determine success rate of specific services and focus on their duplication
  - v. Work with LEAN Coordinator to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies in service delivery and policy that can be addressed
- b. Continue implementation of inclusive and dynamic statewide student and youth programs that meet the community needs.
  - i. Develop a meaningful presence in all high school districts in Oregon
  - ii. Train staff on participation in Individual Education Plans
  - iii. Continue partnership with Families and Community Together (FACT) to educate students and their families about transition
  - iv. Expand partnership with the Oregon Department of Education Transition Network Facilitators, including expansion of joint training opportunities
  - v. Work to support youth who are not in school through strategic partnerships with other lead workforce agencies
  - vi. Develop and implement summer activities for high school-aged students and youth; these opportunities will include work opportunities and post-secondary education exploration activities.
  - vii. Develop and implement year-round postsecondary education opportunities for youth and students.
- c. Expand and improve VR services to Oregonians who have been underserved and underrepresented in the VR program
  - i. Establish quarterly review of caseloads to ensure equitable access and outcomes
  - ii. Establish local plans for community outreach when underserved or underrepresented populations are identified
  - iii. Partner with agencies that provide culturally specific service
  - iv. Continue working with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to ensure access to joint case management and culturally appropriate services
  - v. Convene cross agency workgroup to address the needs of underserved populations in the workforce system as a whole
- d. Work with State and local partners to increase access to employment and employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
  - i. Continue to meet the expectations outlined in Executive Order 15-01 and the Lane v. Brown settlement
  - ii. Plan for and implement a process to identify, track, and inform clients currently working in subminimum wage environments about opportunities to work in competitive and integrated employment
- e. Increase programmatic consistencies to ensure quality employment outcomes
  - i. Align rules, policies, and procedure with the new WIOA requirements and statewide workforce system

- ii. Create and implement a new service quality review process
    - iii. Use data from the review process to inform training needs
  - f. Increase the knowledge about and usage of assistive technology (AT)
    - i. Expand training for staff on availability of AT and its uses
    - ii. Work with Access Technologies Inc. to establish a communication plan to keep staff up-to-date on new technologies
    - iii. Explore how to support FACT's training on AT to transition-aged students and their families
    - iv. Encourage VR staff attending IEP's to explore the use of AT at an earlier age for students
- 2. Increase capacity and resources to provide enhanced levels of service to Oregonians with Disabilities
  - a. Assist the workforce system with increasing its capacity and capability to serve Oregonians with Disabilities
    - i. Convene cross agency workgroup to address the needs of underserved populations in the workforce system as a whole
    - ii. Provide training to workforce partners on working with individuals with disabilities
    - iii. Work with other agencies who work with clients with barriers to employment to address common access issues in the workforce system
    - iv. Work with local workforce boards to ensure that programmatic access issues are identified and addressed
  - b. Restructure the VR service delivery model to comply with state contracting requirements and be outcome driven
    - i. Continue transition to newly structured pay-for-performance Job Placement Services Contract
    - ii. Create contracts with clear minimum qualifications, scope of work, and cost structure for all personal services to ensure high quality and consistent services statewide
  - c. Expand the availability of Vendor and Partner services that meet the needs of Oregonians with disabilities.
    - i. Develop a community college based Career Pathway to develop job placement professionals and job coaches in the community
    - ii. Identify areas of limited service availability and develop and implement recruitment and solicitation plans
- 3. Improve the performance of the VR program with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.
  - a. Increase staff knowledge of the labor market
    - i. Encourage branch level engagement with regional economists and workforce analysts to educate staff on local labor market issues

- ii. Work with Local Workforce Development Boards to engage with local sector strategies and pursue high wage, high demand work opportunities.
- b. Expand opportunities for skill gain and credentialing
  - i. Identify and access local skill upgrading opportunities within the Local Workforce Areas (LWA)
  - ii. Partner with community college Disability Service Offices (DSO) to increase access to existing credentialing programs
  - iii. Work with employers to establish on-the-job training opportunities
  - iv. Provide opportunities for skill upgrading for individuals who face barriers to work and career advancement based on disability
- c. Expand opportunities for clients to learn about and enter into higher wage, high demand jobs
  - i. Use labor market information to create work-based learning opportunities at local business who have high wage, high demand jobs
  - ii. Inform clients about training opportunities to prepare them for jobs that are above entry level
  - iii. Encourage clients to access VR services who face disability related barriers to advancement.
- d. Create an expansive employer engagement model that creates opportunities for work-based learning opportunities
  - i. Develop a common employer engagement plan, language, and focus that can be used statewide
  - ii. Implement a progressive employment model
  - iii. Create and train local VR employer engagement teams
  - iv. Work with partners on joint engagement opportunities
  - v. Engage with employers the need to meet the 503 federal hiring targets
  - vi. Utilize the SRC Business Committee to enhance engagement with employers
- e. Expand the use of Benefits Planning to assist Oregonians with Disabilities
  - i. Create online benefits training and information to address basic benefit concerns
  - ii. Work with partner agencies to create additional funding opportunities for expanding capacity
  - iii. Continue to partner with the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program operated by Disability Rights Oregon

## Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds

- (1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of Supported Employment Services.
- (2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:
  - a. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years; and
  - b. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

VR's goal for all funds used for Supported Employment Services is to help individuals whose disabilities and functional limitations have traditionally meant that they would not be able to successfully enter the labor market and be successful in employment. VR does not prioritize one disability group over another. VR works to leverage these funds with other partners and providers who have a vested interest in the success of the populations we serve. Oregon VR strives to expand our supported employment efforts and increase our outcomes.

The funds will be used to provide Supported Employment Services to those adult and transitional age youth with the most significant disabilities. At least 50% these funds will be targeted towards youth with the most significant disabilities who need them to transition to employment.

The Supported Employment Services include job development, job coaching and any extended supports needed. For individuals with a primary disability of intellectual and/or development disability, clients will receive extended services after closure from the Office of Developmental Disabilities. For clients with Mental Health disabilities who receive services from Alcohol and Mental Health Division, extended services are provided once the client exits from the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

In both cases, services are coordinated from the outset of involvement to ensure that the clients receive appropriately sequenced services in order to achieve the best possible employment outcomes.

## 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):

How the agency's strategies will be used to:

- (A) achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
- (B) support innovation and expansion activities; and
- (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.

The VR program and the SRC created a series of goals, priorities, and strategies that are found earlier in this plan. The strategies identified below come from that portion of the plan and address the specific questions of this attachment. They do not represent all of the strategies that the program has identified as ways to achieve our goals and priorities.

As stated in that earlier attachment, the state's last comprehensive attachment was part of the discussion of what the goals, priorities, and strategies should accomplish. As VR looks to move forward the program understands that with tightening budgets and increased demands we must expand our services in a way that is equitable and innovative in order to be successful. That understanding was very important to establishing this state plan

The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities:

- (1) Promote earlier engagement with Workforce partners for VR clients in the application process
- (2) Streamline referral and data collection from common referral agencies
- (3) Work with VR staff to streamline the Individual Plan for Employment process in order to get clients into plan more quickly
- (4) Use data to determine success rate of specific services and focus on their duplication
- (5) Work with LEAN Coordinator to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies in service delivery and policy that can be addressed

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.

- (1) Expand training for staff on availability of AT and its uses
- (2) Work with Access Technologies Inc. to establish a communication plan to keep staff up-to-date on new technologies
- (3) Explore how to support FACT's training on AT to transition-aged students and their families
- (4) Encourage VR staff attending IEP's to explore the use of AT at an earlier age for students

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.

- (1) Establish quarterly review of caseloads to ensure equitable access and outcomes
- (2) Establish local plans for community outreach when underserved or underrepresented populations are identified
- (3) Partner with agencies that provide culturally specific service
- (4) Continue working with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to ensure access to joint case management and culturally appropriate services
- (5) Convene cross agency workgroup to address the needs of underserved populations in the workforce system as a whole

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).

- (1) Develop a meaningful presence in all high school districts in Oregon
- (2) Train staff on participation in Individual Education Plans
- (3) Continue partnership with Families and Community Together (FACT) to educate students and their families about transition
- (4) Expand partnership with the Oregon Department of Education Transition Network Facilitators, including expansion of joint training opportunities
- (5) Work to support youth who are not in school through strategic partnerships with other lead workforce agencies
- (6) Develop and implement summer activities for high school-aged students and youth; these opportunities will include work opportunities and post-secondary education exploration activities.
- (7) Develop and implement year-round postsecondary education opportunities for youth and students.

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

1. Increase staff knowledge of the labor market
  - a. Encourage branch level engagement with regional economists and workforce analysts to educate staff on local labor market issues
  - b. Work with Local Workforce Development Boards to engage with local sector strategies and pursue high wage, high demand work opportunities.
2. Expand opportunities for skill gain and credentialing
  - a. Identify and access local skill upgrading opportunities within the Local Workforce Areas (LWA)
  - b. Partner with community college Disability Service Offices (DSO) to increase access to existing credentialing programs
  - c. Work with employers to establish on-the-job training opportunities
  - d. Provide opportunities for skill upgrading for individuals who face barriers to work and career advancement based on disability
3. Expand opportunities for clients to learn about and enter into higher wage, high demand jobs
  - a. Use labor market information to create work-based learning opportunities at local business who have high wage, high demand jobs
  - b. Inform clients about training opportunities to prepare them for jobs that are above entry level
  - c. Encourage clients to access VR services who face disability related barriers to advancement.
4. Create an expansive employer engagement model that creates opportunities for work-based learning opportunities
  - a. Develop a common employer engagement plan, language, and focus that can be used statewide
  - b. Implement a progressive employment model
  - c. Create and train local VR employer engagement teams
  - d. Work with partners on joint engagement opportunities
  - e. Engage with employers the need to meet the 503 federal hiring targets
  - f. Utilize the SRC Business Committee to enhance engagement with employers
5. Expand the use of Benefits Planning to assist Oregonians with Disabilities
  - a. Create online benefits training and information to address basic benefit concerns
  - b. Work with partner agencies to create additional funding opportunities for expanding capacity
  - c. Continue to partner with the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program operated by Disability Rights Oregon

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

1. Convene cross agency workgroup to address the needs of underserved populations in the workforce system as a whole
2. Provide training to workforce partners on working with individuals with disabilities
3. Work with other agencies who work with clients with barriers to employment to address common access issues in the workforce system
4. Work with local workforce boards to ensure that programmatic access issues are identified and addressed

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## Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Include the following:

- (1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.

VR's SE program provides opportunities for individuals of ages with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment with ongoing support provided by a variety of partners. These same individuals are those for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred. VR provides a continuum of SE services in partnership with other human services agencies and programs that persons with the most significant disabilities need to develop, maintain and advance in competitive employment. VR continues to work closely with other state programs, local governmental units, community-based organizations and groups to develop, refine and expand the availability of SE services throughout Oregon.

During FFY 15 VR revamped our pay for performance Job Placement Services Contracts that provides Job Placement, Job Coaching, and Retention services. VR currently has over 180 contracts in place to provide job placement statewide. These contracts give VR the ability to pay for placement services in three tiers based on the significance of the functional limitation that the client experiences. Tiers two and three focus on clients who require SE services in order to be successful in the labor market.

In FFY 2015, VR provided SE services to 2,160 individuals with significant disabilities, including persons with psychiatric disabilities, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries. During this same period, 452 individuals who received SE services entered into competitive integrated employment, and 1,215 individuals continued to participate in their SE IPEs.

In general, the quality of a VR SE plan is evaluated to ensure that it complies with defining criteria of SE:

- Work is performed in an integrated setting
- The individual is receiving a wage and benefits commensurate with non-disabled workers doing the same work.
- The individual is receiving opportunities for advancement commensurate with non-disabled workers doing the same work.
- The ongoing support needs and sources of support have been identified and secured.
- Supported employment services provided to clients are for the maximum number of hours possible, based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities,

capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

- Clients and employer are satisfied with placements.

Historically, VR has partnered with AMH in promoting Individualized Placement and Support (IPS), an evidence-based SE model. Quality of these programs is assessed through compliance with a scale, which measures the ‘fidelity’ or the degree to which a program is being implemented in accordance with the program’s design. Some of the measures used in the IPS fidelity scales are the kinds of employment outcomes participants are obtaining; the degree of collaboration with vocational rehabilitation; availability of rapid job search and evidence of consumer choice. VR maintains quality SE outcomes through ongoing collaboration with mental health providers on the local level and AMH central office staff.

Supported employment is integrated into the array of services and programs available to Oregonians with disabilities, including Oregon’s mental health and developmental disability service systems. Success in SE requires a partnership among the responsible state and community programs, other service providers, consumers and families, advocacy organizations, employers and others. Long-term success continues to depend on the availability of funding for follow-along SE services.

VR utilizes Title VI, Part B and Title I funds for the time-limited services necessary for an individual to stabilize in a community-based job. Services that may be part of a SE IPE include:

- Person centered planning
- Community-based assessment
- Job development
- Job placement
- On-site training for worker and/or coworkers
- Long-term support development
- Other services and goods
- Post-employment services

The specific type, level and location of ongoing supports provided to an individual are based upon his or her needs and those of the employer. Ongoing support may be provided by a variety of public and/or private sector resources including:

- AMH and community mental health programs
- DDS community supports
- County developmental disability case managers and developmental disability service brokerages
- Social Security work incentives
- Employer-provided reasonable accommodations
- Natural supports
- Family or community sponsorship

## **TIMING OF THE TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES**

Generally, VR will not exceed its 24-month in-plan status with a SE case. This 24-month timeline can be extended for exceptional circumstances, if the counselor and client jointly agree to the extension. Job coaching and/or on-the-job training supports are usually structured into a much shorter time frame, with long-term extended services being built into the plan as quickly as possible to ensure ongoing success when VR involvement ends.

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