

2013 FEDERAL STATE PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2013
October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013**

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
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Attachment 4.2 (c) Summary Input Provided by the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) Comments

The Florida State Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR, also known as the Designated State Unit - DSU) continue to collaborate in strategic partnership to strengthen outreach, service and support systems. FRC members representing all standing committees formed a State Plan Task Force to study the draft 2013 State Plan. Comments from public meetings were included so FRC members would know how vendors, customers and staff view VR services, policies and procedures. Information was also gathered from customer satisfaction survey results, preliminary needs assessment results, quarterly updates, and the public forums conducted during the year. Each of these feedback areas were obtained in collaboration with VR.

The full Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) received the State Plan Task Force recommendations on May 18, 2012 resulting from discussion held the previous two days at the FRC quarterly meeting. The FRC observations and suggestions were discussed with the VR Director, who received FRC input and recommendations to the State Plan Draft. The result was unanimous approval to accept the Florida 2013 State Plan.

FRC recommendations are presented below:

Recommendation 1: Order of Selection

In alignment with Attachment 4.11 (b), Attachment 4.11 (c) (1) and Attachment 4.11 (c) (3) the FRC encourages VR to seek all opportunities to expand access to individuals on the category 3 wait list, contingent upon the continued open access to service for individuals in categories 1 and 2. The FRC encourages VR to review and discuss with the Council the effectiveness of the Information and Referral process for individuals who are on the wait list [per Section 101 (a) (5) (D) of the Act and 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 361.36 (a) (3) (iv)]. The FRC continues to advocate with VR to seek all opportunities to responsibly reduce the wait list.

Agency Response:

The Order of Selection wait list is currently being reduced. Approximately 666 Category 3 cases have been closed between February 2012 and March 2012. Category 1 and 2 cases do not have a wait list; however, the case load in those categories continues to rise on a monthly basis. This increase places additional burden on the VR staff who provide services to customers.

VR is currently conducting studies to determine the key factors impacting service processes. Studies include the analysis of data to assess the factors that drive unsuccessful closures during the application process and following the implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment.

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VR will continue to conduct strategic projects geared to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of services. In addition, VR will continue to monitor Florida's economic situation in relation to current financial and human resource constraints. If the current caseload, economic conditions, and operational constraints stabilize, VR will then consider releasing individuals from the Category 3 wait list. In the meantime, counselors are instructed to advise customers of alternative support services outside of VR.

Recommendation 2: Federal Performance Indicators

Concerning past VR performance on the federal indicators, as presented in Attachment 4.11(e) (2), the FRC requests that VR continue to provide information on a quarterly basis. The report includes updates on history, action performed, and actions to improve performance.

Agency Response:

VR provides the FRC with performance reports on a monthly basis. In addition, current performance and performance improvement initiatives are reported by the VR Director during conference calls and during quarterly meetings of the FRC. VR is currently making good progress toward eliminating the performance improvement plan, and it will continue to update the FRC on progress.

Recommendation 3: Career Service Personnel Development

In alignment with Attachment 4.10, the FRC applauds VR's efforts to encourage personnel development and training for division staff. The hiring of people who have disabilities under On-the-Job Training for headquarters support is outstanding. With many universities eliminating their Institutions of Higher Education for Rehabilitation Counseling programs, VR is having difficulty finding qualified counselors. Because of this, the FRC encourages VR and Rehabilitation Services Administration to seek opportunities to fund additional training.

Agency Response:

VR will continue these practices. Also, VR will continue to seek alternatives for hiring qualified individuals and for continuing education opportunities. Currently, VR is conducting an in-depth analysis of factors that contribute to field service employee turnover in order to improve recruitment and retention of qualified employees.

Recommendation 4: Budget

In alignment with Attachment 4.11 (b) the FRC would like to encourage VR to strengthen efforts with the FRC to share its budgets and expenses for the current year and expected future needs.

Agency Response:

VR will continue to make budget reports and projections available to the FRC. The Director presents a budget report to the FRC at each quarterly meeting.

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VR is currently strategically pursuing grant opportunities. For example, VR was recently awarded a \$50,000 grant to conduct a comprehensive benchmarking study on assessing and reporting the performance of contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers. Applications for grants that align with VR's goals and strategies will continue.

Recommendation 5: Outreach

Outreach is an important and needed component when working with our customers, employers, and stakeholders as highlighted in the 2012 VR Needs Assessment results, Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), the CFR and the most recent RSA monitoring report for Florida. It is the desire of the FRC to expand outreach to customers encouraging self-advocacy, to make efforts to reach diverse populations in those underserved groups, and to engage, recruit, and recognize business leaders across the state to promote employing people with disabilities.

Agency Response:

Outreach strategies and partnering initiatives are incorporated into the state plan, and efforts continue to improve in this area.

Recommendation 6: National Involvement

In alignment with Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), the FRC recognizes the need for networking and collaboration with other FRC's on a national level to share processes that can enhance VR services in Florida. The FRC appreciates VR's support of and funding for national involvement and participation in and travel to National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils and Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation conferences. The FRC also applauds VR's sharing of best practices and effective evaluation processes with other agencies and partners both statewide and nationally.

Agency Response: The comments are noted. VR will continue this practice.

Recommendation 7: Process Development

In accordance with official guidance, the FRC has been a strong partner in the development and reporting of the 2012 Needs Assessment. The FRC would like to continue its involvement in the development of primary processes and customer service programs, such as the development and changes to the VR strategic plan, counselor procedural manuals, the development and implementation of rules promulgated, training, and the state plan.

Agency Response:

VR will continue to involve the FRC in the development of the above-mentioned processes and documents, as well as other key projects. For example, the FRC was invited to provide feedback for the benchmarking study on assessing and reporting the performance of contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers.

Also, VR is currently collaborating with the FRC to enhance websites and market versions of the state plan that are easier for all stakeholders to understand and to

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provide feedback. A plan is currently in place which allows for continuous opportunities for the public and other stakeholder groups to comment on the plan, as well as any other VR issues every day of the year.

Recommendation 8: FRC Membership

In alignment with criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.17 the FRC continues to focus on meeting FRC membership regulations. Discussions, correspondence, and meetings with the State of Florida Governor's Appointment Office are ongoing and a top priority in partnership with VR. The FRC appreciates VR's continued support to achieve the Council's federally-mandated membership requirement.

In closing, the FRC will continue to work with VR as a strategic partner to support efforts to improve and expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter into and maintain gainful employment.

Agency Response:

VR will continue its ongoing support of the FRC to obtain membership to the Council in accordance with the requirements in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, and 34 Code of Federal Regulations 361.17.

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Attachment 4.7 (b) (3): Request for Waivers of Statewideness

Overview

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides services throughout the state, including School to Work Transition services that expand and improve vocational rehabilitation options for eligible customers. VR has entered into Third Party Cooperative Arrangements in some political subdivisions, but services are not currently available in all areas of the state. The State Plan cannot assure that the expanded services provided through the Third Party Cooperative Arrangements will be available in all political subdivisions of the State as required in 34 CFR 361.25. A Waiver of Statewideness is requested in this State Plan in accordance with 34 CFR 361.26 and 34 CFR 361.28 (b).

Types of Services Provided

School and Community-Based Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

VR offered the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement in October 2006 to Florida's 67 school districts. The three-year (state fiscal years) arrangement provides community-based work experiences to eligible students who have VR transition service needs identified in their Individual Educational Plan and Individualized Plan for Employment. VR gave interested school districts another opportunity from January 2007 until June 2008 to enter into an arrangement that would end on June 30, 2010. Due to Order of Selection, new arrangements for providing services during school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 were not available. VR will give all school districts without an arrangement the opportunity to enter into new arrangements to provide services from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014. A generic copy of the template for the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement is available on the VR website at RehabWorks.org.

Written Assurances

VR assures the Rehabilitation Services Administration that the Division has Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with some school districts and will provide written assurances as required. Specifically, each arrangement is formalized through the VR procurement contracting process and contains the following:

1. The local school district will certify to VR that funds used for match funds are non-federal and are not used for match in any other federally or state assisted project or program.
2. VR approval will be obtained for all Third Party Cooperative Arrangement services.
3. VR will assure that all local school districts with Third Party Cooperative Arrangements will abide by the state's Order of Selection policy.
4. VR will assure that the Division will comply with 34 CFR 361.28(a)(1) and (a)(2).

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5. All other state plan requirements will apply to all services provided under the scope of the arrangement.

Third Party Cooperative Arrangement

During state fiscal year 2011-12, VR had arrangements with the school districts in the following counties:

1. Baker
2. Bay
3. Bradford
4. Calhoun
5. Columbia
6. Flagler
7. Gadsden
8. Gulf
9. Hendry
10. Holmes
11. Leon
12. Manatee
13. Monroe
14. Nassau
15. Pasco
16. Taylor
17. Volusia
18. Wakulla
19. Walton

Prior to state fiscal year 2012-13, VR will offer arrangements to all Florida School Districts without a current arrangement.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (1): Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce Investment System

Cooperation with agencies and other entities not carrying out activities under the Workforce Investment System include agreements with The Able Trust, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Division of Blind Services, Mental Health Program Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and others. As of FFY 2006, the State Rural Development Council no longer operates in Florida (National Rural Development Partnership, 2006).

The Able Trust

The mission of The Able Trust is to assist citizens with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process. This includes administering grants, as well as educational and public awareness programs. The recipients of vocational rehabilitation program services and other Floridians with disabilities receive direct support through funded community rehabilitation program employment projects and individual client grants from The Able Trust. The Able Trust is a non-profit corporation that relies upon contributions and gifts. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) does not provide any Title I funds to The Able Trust. The agreement between the Able Trust and VR promotes cooperation between the two organizations. This includes, as provided for in Florida Statutes, the submission of The Able Trust's annual budget, annual report, annual audit, and any changes to the Articles of Incorporation or by-laws to the division's director. The VR director is to be informed of all board meetings, as required by Florida statute. VR reviews the above documents and makes the necessary certification, based on statute. This agreement is currently in effect through June 30, 2014.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

The cooperative agreement between the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and VR contains a detailed and specific focus on collaborative planning and funding of Supported Employment services. Specifically, the agreement addresses the transition of secondary students to the community, to provide a seamless transition of services. The cooperative agreement includes local strategies and joint obligations for implementation.

Both agencies have a common goal of enabling eligible persons to achieve greater independence through employment. The goal of this agreement is to provide coordination of support and services throughout the state to ensure that maximum client satisfaction and informed choice is maintained.

Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, Florida Department of Health

VR and the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program have agreed to expand referrals between the two agencies in order to improve employment outcomes for persons with a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. The effort will include joint statewide training for those involved in the project and identification of local referral liaisons.

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Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.

VR and the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. agree to share specific information about their customers to optimize service delivery. Both agree to specific procedures that facilitate the delivery of services to their respective and mutual consumers. Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology offers an Alternative Financing Program for the purchase of assistive technology to all residents of Florida who have disabilities. Some of VR's customers can benefit from this program.

Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.

VR coordinates with Florida Independent Living Council, Inc., and the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state. Through Memoranda of Agreement, VR provides funding, outlines roles and responsibilities, and ensures cooperative planning.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and VR agree to cooperate in serving students and customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, and in establishing transition meetings. Activities have been implemented to increase public awareness of programs serving these customers and to improve transition between the school and local counselors.

Florida Small Business Development Center Network

Coordination with this network is carried out at the local level on a case-by-case basis. VR customers who are seeking self-employment can use a Business Planning Team. A representative from the Small Business Development Center Network can serve on such teams to help VR's customers assess their potential for self-employment and analyze the various issues that need to be taken into account.

Institutions of Higher Education

VR has Memoranda of Understanding with the Presidents of Florida's public universities and the Florida College System. Both Memoranda outline the purposes, roles and responsibilities of VR and the educational institutions, as well as, financial and programmatic responsibilities. The Memoranda of Understanding provides information regarding financial assistance, sharing of assessment findings, accommodations, rehabilitation technology services, academic advisement, counseling, confidentiality, and other topics.

The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe

The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe is the recipient of the Federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. VR and the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe have a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate services for eligible Native Americans with disabilities residing on or near the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe Tama Reservation within a 150 mile radius. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of both groups, including services for joint consumers and technical assistance.

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Mental Health Program, Florida Department of Children and Families

VR has extensive coordination efforts to assist customers who have mental illnesses. One of these is participation on the Florida Assertive Community Treatment Team, a community-based, outreach-oriented method of delivering services to individuals with mental illnesses coordinated by the Mental Health Program. VR provides staff liaisons with many of these teams to help serve this group of customers in a comprehensive manner. In addition, VR is an active member of the State Mental Health Planning Council of Florida. The cooperative agreement promotes coordination so that appropriate services can be delivered to maximize customer choice and satisfaction.

Division of Blind Services, Florida Department of Education

Both VR and Blind Services serve individuals with visual impairments. This agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of each division, including those for individuals with one-eye pathology, bilateral visual impairment, multiple disabilities, and for individuals who are deaf-blind.

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education; Division of Blind Services; Florida Department of Health; Agency for Workforce Innovation

The Florida Interagency Agreement for the Transfer of Assistive Technology, signed in 2006, establishes a framework for a more efficient transition of technology as individuals with disabilities move through the continuum from educational services to employment. Specifically, the agreement ensures children and youth with disabilities and their families, educators, and employers are informed about the continued use and transfer of assistive technology devices. These devices may remain with the person as he or she moves from home to school and to post-school activities in order to assist in meeting transition needs. The agreement outlines the conditions for coordination, the authority for transfer of property by local education agencies, financial responsibilities, and other topics.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Employment Standards Administration

Both agencies agree to further the common goal of providing (VR) equal employment opportunities and protecting against discrimination. VR will provide expertise on matters relating to disability issues and employment, cross-referral of individuals with disabilities, and will participate in interagency training programs, staff meetings, and conferences. Both agencies agree to a coordinated public outreach effort.

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE)

VR uses the services and manufactured items produced in correctional work programs through PRIDE. PRIDE is a Florida corporation that provides these goods and services as a state-use contracting program. A similar product or service of comparable price and quality, found necessary for use by a state agency, may not be purchased from a source other than PRIDE. Also, contracts between VR and any private vendor require

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all items be purchased through PRIDE. This is consistent with Section 946.515, Florida Statutes.

Rehabilitation Foundation of Northwest Florida

The purpose of this agreement is to maximize funding of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with physical disabilities residing in northwest Florida. The Foundation contributes \$25,000 to VR toward meeting its non-federal share requirements in 34 CFR 361.60. In turn, VR will allocate an additional \$92,250 in federal funds to match the Foundation's contribution for vocational rehabilitation services in the following northwest Florida counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton.

The intent of these cooperative efforts is to increase the services leading to quality competitive employment outcomes that are responsive to the strengths, resources, interests, and capabilities of individuals with disabilities residing in northwest Florida. VR agrees to provide quarterly reports of expenditures to the Foundation's Trustees. Each report will include the number of individuals served and a description of services provided under the terms of the agreement.

Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Act

One of VR's ongoing objectives for the Ticket to Work Program is to increase the number of partnerships with Employment Networks (Employment and Rehabilitation Service Providers). VR hopes to expand the resources available to customers to meet the current and future levels of demand. It is also the goal of VR to ensure that customers have a choice in service providers available within their communities. Also, VR has implemented a new Employment Network Referral and Partnership Agreement that creates more opportunity to develop partnerships with Employment Networks. The agreement features a transitional approach by assisting Social Security Administration customers in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency through core VR services followed by ongoing support services from employment networks. During the 2011-2012 year, VR will monitor the Agreements effectiveness in meeting the previously stated goal.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

The need to serve Florida veterans who have disabilities led to the development of an agreement between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and VR. The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of VR and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also, it clarifies which agency can provide specific services and it includes information regarding shared planning, joint activities, and coordination.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (2): Coordination with Education Officials

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) updated the interagency agreement coordinating transition services with state education officials in July 2006. It is a state-level agreement, including agencies charged with providing transition services to students leaving high school and going to postsecondary education/training, support services, and/or employment. The agencies listed below agree to meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives, collaborate on training and special projects, cooperate in planning and budgeting, and generally support any areas of work which are mutually beneficial. Agencies which support this “way of work” are:

Florida Department of Education:

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Division of Blind Services

Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Florida Department of Health, Children’s Medical Services

Florida Department of Children and Families, Mental Health Services

This formal interagency agreement is designed to serve as a transition services model for improved collaboration, communication, coordination, and cooperation among local education agencies and local offices of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children’s Medical Services, and Mental Health Services.

VR continues to dedicate a VR program administrator who is the central point of contact for the VR School to Work Transition Program. The administrator serves as the liaison for the 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. This position coordinates and plans for effective transition services delivery with VR’s staff and external stakeholders statewide. The administrator is responsible for training internal staff and making presentations about VR transition services at conferences statewide in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of the agency’s role in assisting eligible students with disabilities.

Additionally, the VR administrator provides transition-related technical assistance to the Florida Rehabilitation Council. The administrator serves as a representative on the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee and works closely with the regional representatives of Project 10: the Transition Education Network. Project 10 is funded by the University of South Florida through a grant from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services under the Florida Department of Education. Project 10 helps Florida school districts and stakeholders increase their ability to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and postsecondary outcomes. Project 10 helps educators, parents, students, agency representatives, and others interested in Florida’s transition efforts by providing capacity building to implement secondary transition services, interagency

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collaboration, transition legislation and policy, and student development and outcomes. VR counselors serving transition students participate in each area's local interagency councils. The interagency councils are a collaborative effort between VR and Department of Education partners, public high schools, adult service agencies, workforce programs, parents, students, advocates, and employers working together to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

The VR Director or designee serves on the State Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Education of Exceptional Students. This committee is administered by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) within the Department of Education. The SAC includes parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, educators and administrators from secondary and postsecondary institutions, foster care and juvenile justice representatives, and representatives of various state agencies that provide transition and other services to children, youth and young adults with disabilities. The committee advises the state education agency on what children with disabilities need and helps them develop corrective action plans to address findings in related federal monitoring reports. The committee also helps the state education agency develop evaluations and policies, implement policies, and report data. The committee may comment publicly on rules and regulations proposed by the state relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

VR adopted an early referral/application process for transition students during SFY 2008-2009 to better coordinate with the state education agency and local education agencies. Brochures for the VR School to Work Transition Program are made available to students and families so that they can begin gathering information at age 14. Referrals for VR services are made at age 16 for those students with disabilities that are engaged in community-based work experiences or in the last two years of secondary school for other students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who are at high risk for dropping out of school may be referred at any age. This additional time allows the counselor to develop a rapport with the transition student and family, explore vocational options and comparable benefits, and begin necessary guidance and counseling.

Provisions for Development and Approval of Individualized Plans for Employment for Students with Disabilities

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Supported Employment Individualized Plan for Employment, Individual Support Plan, and/or Care Coordination Plans are completed or updated as early as possible prior to graduation or leaving school to allow a seamless transition to a student's desired postsecondary outcome.

VR counselors, with assistance from VR technicians, are assigned as representatives to work with all public high schools statewide. They provide outreach and vocational rehabilitation services orientation to students, school officials, parents, and others involved in transition services. Only the VR counselor may determine a student's eligibility for VR services, develop an approved IPE, and sponsor the delivery of

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necessary transition services to assist the student with planning, preparing for, and attaining successful postsecondary employment.

Information on Formal Interagency Agreement with Respect to:

Technical Assistance and Consultation

Local education agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services staff. The agreement addresses consultation, coordination, and the provision of technical assistance to each other, students, and their families/guardians/surrogates in planning for the transition from secondary school to postsecondary activities and inclusion in the adult community.

Transition Planning by Personnel of the Designated State Agency and Educational Agency for Development and Completion of the Individual Educational Plan

Local education agencies work collaboratively with VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services in the Transition Individual Educational Plan process. Local education agencies that are considering transition services during the Individual Educational Plan meeting will invite representatives from any other agency who may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the school district shall take other steps (e.g., correspondence or phone calls) to obtain the participation of the agency in the planning of any transition services. The local education agency must reconvene the Transition Individual Educational Plan team to identify alternative strategies for providing a student's transition needs if an agency fails to do so.

In order to plan effective transition services for students with disabilities, it is essential that all invited partner agencies encourage and support participation in the Transition Individual Educational Plan process.

VR invests 20 to 25 percent of its statewide staffing resources to transition services to serve students with disabilities in Florida's 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Additional improvements to the Rehabilitation Information Management System for transition students' data collection have been requested. When this enhancement is completed, VR will be able to analyze differences between the transition students with disabilities who have an Individual Educational Plan, 504 Education Plan and those without postsecondary educational plans. In SFY 2009-2010, when updates were made to the Ombudsman's tracking system, revisions were also made to the transition coding to assist with continuous improvement of the VR School to Work Transition Program.

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Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for each partner agency as required by federal and state regulations are as follows:

1. Local education agencies provide free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities, including preparation for transition from school to work or other postsecondary activities.
2. VR and the Division of Blind Services assist with student transition from secondary school to work through postsecondary training, education, or direct placement into employment necessary to attain a successful employment outcome.
3. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities endeavors to "reduce the use of sheltered workshops and other noncompetitive employment day activities and promote opportunities for gainful employment for persons with developmental disabilities who choose to seek such employment," (Chapter 393, Florida Statutes). Additionally, Chapter 393, Florida Statutes states that "to promote independence and productivity, the agency shall provide support and services, within available resources, to assist clients enrolled in Medicaid waivers who choose to pursue gainful employment." If an individual is eligible for Agency for Persons with Disabilities' waiver services and employment is a needed service, then this service must be provided to meet standards as outlined in Florida rule.
4. Children's Medical Services ensures a smooth and successful transition process to adult healthcare services and providers for youth and young adults with special healthcare needs that it serves.
5. Mental Health Services provides a system of care, in partnership with families and the community that enables children and adults with mental health or emotional disabilities to successfully live in the community, become self-sufficient or to attain self-sufficiency at adulthood, and realize their full potential. Mental health support and services enable adults and transitioning students to participate in community activities such as employment and other valued community roles.

Specific Purpose

Specifically, it is intended that the interagency agreement:

1. Provide guidance to the local education agencies, VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services' front-line staff, when serving students transitioning from school to work or postsecondary activities.

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2. Provide information to parents/students so they know what they can and should expect from the local education agencies, VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services during the transition process.
3. Provide parameters to the local education agencies, VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services' administrators/managers/nursing supervisors when developing, negotiating, and implementing local cooperative agreements.
4. Encourage and support the participation of all agency personnel in the IEP process at the local level through the development of guidelines, policies, and/or procedures.

Financial Responsibilities

The Department of Education, VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services are committed to meeting financial responsibilities as required by law. Agency/Division heads for the organizations will periodically identify areas for improved programmatic and financial efficiencies and develop strategies to meet financial responsibilities, including joint appropriations requests from the state legislature and negotiations with federal agencies. Each party is financially responsible for the services it provides under its own laws and rules.

Conditions and Terms of Reimbursement

If a non-education agency fails to provide or pay for services for which they are responsible, and which are also considered special education and related services, the local education agency (or state agency responsible for developing the child's IEP) shall provide or pay for these services to the child in a timely manner. The local education agency or state agency may then claim reimbursement for the services from the non-education agency that was responsible for the provision of the services and failed to provide or pay for these services, and that agency shall reimburse the local education agency or state agency in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

Procedures for Outreach to and Identification of Students with Disabilities who need Transition Services

Outreach and Identification of Students

Local education agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services staff, on the outreach methods used to inform to students with disabilities who may need, and could benefit from these agencies.

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Brochures, flyers, website resources, presentations, transition fairs, or informational letters will be made available to the local education agency, students, and their parents or guardians, to explain the role that VR, the Division of Blind Services, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services programs play in the transition process, and the agencies' referral/application policies and procedures.

VR has executed a total of 19 third party cooperative arrangements for State Fiscal Year 2011-2012. The goal of these arrangements is to create new or expand existing transition services with a vocational rehabilitation focus. The costs are shared between the agencies. In order for the cooperating agency to receive matching vocational rehabilitation dollars, they must provide a cash match of non-federal funds. Recipients of the Third Party Cooperative Arrangements began providing job coaching to eligible students with a Supported Employment IPE in State Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (3): Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has a variety of agreements with private non-profit organizations. These include contracts, rate agreements, and other cooperative, non-financial agreements.

Specifically, VR provides contracts for three core components: employment services, supported employment, and On-the-Job Training (OJT). Additionally, some VR services are purchased through registered vendors. All new vendors/providers, whether through a contractual or vendor relationship, must go through a registration and approval process. VR reviews the qualifications of vendors providing services to our clients in order to ensure the quality of these services, as well as the safety of the public. In addition to approving and registering vendor/provider services, VR conducts employment verifications on all client placements facilitated by vendors/contract providers.

VR's policy ensures that applicants and eligible individuals exercise choice of qualified service providers. Customers are also informed if the provider has staff experienced in working with special disability populations, foreign languages, and other communication skills. Eligible individuals have the choice of necessary services, service providers, and the setting in which to receive services in the written Individualized Plan for Employment.

Currently, VR combined rate contracts include employment, supported employment, and OJT in one contract, or individually, as requested by the contractor. VR has executed over 200 contracts for the three services. In addition to the rate contracts, there are 16 agreements with the Centers for Independent Living located throughout the state to provide independent living services, 19 third party cooperative arrangements with local school boards are maintained, 29 contracts with Employment Networks, 10 OJT pilot project contracts, as well as additional contracts with agencies for providing services such as delegable VR services, outreach for migrant and seasonal farm workers, interpreting services, and rehabilitation engineering.

VR completed a competitive procurement and executed four contracts to providers for Innovative and Expansion projects. The innovative services include virtual reality simulators for customers with severe disabilities, vocational services and assistance for transitioning youth with most significant disabilities, and assistance and supports for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury or significant mental illnesses.

Additionally, VR has collaborative, non-contractual arrangements and agreements with non-profit organizations that provide referrals, other vocational rehabilitation services, and comparable benefits. For example, through coordinating with Centers for Independent Living, individuals with disabilities receive life skills training, employability skills training, and support such as transportation, clothing, and emergency funds.

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Relationships with organizations that serve clients with hearing impairments provide opportunities for support groups, sign language classes, and placement assistance.

Throughout the state, many counselors are designated to serve as liaisons with specific groups and organizations. Individuals are referred to those groups if it is determined that they can benefit from their services. Services are coordinated with numerous non-profit hospitals and clinics for referrals and medical assistance. Numerous foundations and associations such as the Easter Seals Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, National Kidney Foundation, Brain Injury Association of Florida, Epilepsy Foundation, Family Network on Disability of Florida, and others provide individual and family support groups and disability education to our mutual clients.

It is the intent of VR to continue with the above referenced contractual agreements, cooperative arrangements, and liaison relationships through the 2013 Federal Fiscal Year.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (4): Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has entered into cooperative agreements with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities; Department of Children and Families, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program; and other stakeholders to identify and make arrangements to provide supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. If individuals with significant disabilities want to work, the agencies pursue a cooperative process that will help them to get jobs. Six broad-based objectives govern Florida's interagency supported employment programs. They are:

1. Continue to develop and enhance supported employment for persons with the most significant disabilities. The state system for the provision of supported employment reflects: (a) mutually agreeable definitions of the services to be provided; (b) administrative responsibility of the intensive component of supported employment services to eligible individuals as the primary responsibility of VR for individuals with most significant disabilities; (c) administrative responsibility of the extended services component as the primary responsibility of other stakeholders including, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Children and Families, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program.
2. Continue to improve the statewide management of supported employment programs by avoiding duplication of effort and funding, while ensuring accountability. This process will provide a coordinated system of program development for supported employment services. The process includes the coordination of statewide planning and request for proposal process, coordination of programmatic and fiscal responsibilities prior to beginning any new program, and promotion of consistency in funding, reporting, and monitoring.
3. Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring a comprehensive, continuous, efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services, information collection and dissemination, confidentiality, and technical assistance.
4. Identify issues, policies, and practices that present systemic barriers to effective participation of individuals with most significant disabilities, and develop appropriate resolutions to remove such barriers.
5. Continue to implement an interagency planning process for budget coordination, which defines and projects the number of people in need of intensive and extended services for each fiscal year and facilitates program and fiscal planning.

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6. Support the belief that all individuals with disabilities can work if provided appropriate and timely assistance.

Supported Employment Services

VR is responsible for Phase One of Supported Employment Services. The objective of the intensive vocational service segment is to obtain and stabilize the supported employment placement to the individual's and employer's satisfaction and to transition the individual to a comprehensive plan of extended services. Supported employment services consist of intensive, time-limited vocational rehabilitation services (the responsibility of VR) and extended services, also known as Phase Two. Phase Two funding is provided by other funding sources which may be, but are not limited to, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Children and Families Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program or other identified funding sources.

Extended Services

The purpose of the extended services is to maintain the individual in supported employment and enhance the individual's involvement in the workplace culture and career advancement. The nature of services provided during the intensive and extended services of supported employment may be similar to the initial services but may differ in intensity.

VR is working with its collaborative partners to identify alternative methods of providing extended services (e.g. social security incentives, natural supports, etc.). VR will try to secure funding for extended services for all individuals with most significant disabilities receiving supported employment services.

Allowances would be made for individuals who, while receiving extended services, require re-intervention of intensive services through VR because they have destabilized on the job. When appropriate, VR shall again assume the responsibility and cost of providing intensive vocational services, including necessary job related support services.

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Attachment 4.10: Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is continuing its Comprehensive System of Personnel Development plan to meet the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18.

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

As of May 31, 2012, VR has 951 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Of this number, there are 401 counseling positions providing vocational rehabilitation services. Seventy-eight (78) supervisory and/or area level managerial positions support the counseling positions. There are 445 managerial/administrative, paraprofessional, technical, and administrative support positions. Twenty-seven (27) positions are located in the Bureau of Rehabilitation and Reemployment Services. However, effective July 1, 2012 through legislative action, these 27 positions will be abolished. In addition to the 951 FTEs, there are 75 contracted positions providing VR services under state supervision. As of May 31, 2012, VR's turnover rate increased from last year's average of 18.2 percent to approximately 25.8 percent for counseling positions. The turnover rate for field supervisors increased from 16.7 percent to 23.3 percent, while the turnover rate for program administration decreased from 10 percent to seven percent. VR continues to employ all available strategies to address turnover.

Assurance of an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessional personnel is the major driver for VR's Human Resource Development Section. Data from numerous sources is used to determine current and projected needs, as well as VR's progress toward meeting them.

The state's automated People First personnel system maintains employment histories to help project human resource needs. The state continues to make available a deferred retirement option program (DROP) that allows individuals to continue working for the state for five years beyond their original retirement date. Because it is impossible to anticipate how many individuals will accept the deferral option, projecting future employment needs is difficult. However, we know that there are currently 98 individuals in DROP, 81 individuals with 30 or more years of service, and 129 individuals over the age of 62.

VR collects data from the Rehabilitation Information Management System (RIMS) to get our counselor-client ratio. This is another tool for assessing current and projected staffing needs. The average counselor-client caseload is 125, in relation to assisting customers from application to closure.

People First and RIMS data, as well as information from other internal reports, are used to obtain:

- The number and classification of authorized positions for each local unit and state headquarters in relation to the number of individuals served

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- The number and classification of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services
- The projected number and classification of personnel who will be needed in five years to provide vocational rehabilitation services
- The state institutions of higher education that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by program type
- The number of students in each of these institutions, by program type
- The number of students graduating from each program and the credentials they have received

The average annual projected staffing requirements for the VR counselor and field supervisor positions are listed below. The projections for the VR counselor, field supervisor, and program administration positions are based on the average turnover rates of 25.8, 23.3, and seven percent listed in paragraph one on the previous page.

• <u>Job Group</u>	<u>Projected Annual Vacancies</u>
• VR Counselor	103*
• Field Supervisors	18*
• Program Administration	31*

*This number is an annual average derived by multiplying the number of positions for the job group times the respective turnover rate.

Approximately 22– 25 percent of the estimates above represent Transition Counselor needs. When population growth is factored in, the projected five-year staffing need is slightly higher than that noted above, but would require that VR be provided with additional FTEs, which is unlikely in the current economic climate.

In order to ensure the continuity of quality rehabilitation services and to address staff vacancies and turnover in particularly difficult to fill geographic areas, VR has contracted for staff. The contracts ensure that qualified personnel are hired to provide necessary rehabilitation services. These employees are supervised by a state VR supervisor or counselor/analyst who performs the activities that federal regulations (34 CFR 361.13) specify are the responsibility of the designated state unit and cannot be delegated to private providers. These activities include:

- All decisions affecting eligibility for VR, the nature and scope of available services and the provision of these services, and the suspension, reduction and termination of these services;

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- The determination to close the records of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome;
- Policy formulation and implementation;
- Allocation and expenditure of VR funds; and
- Participation as a partner in the one-stop service delivery system.

Described below is information from institutions of higher education in Florida that prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals, categorized by institution and type of program.

Program Data for Institutions of Higher Education

Institution: Florida Atlantic University

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Training – Graduate Only

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 21 Masters Graduate Students, 2 Ph.D. Students

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure or Eligibility: 7; 6 passed CRC examination, all eligible for CRC and LMHC

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2012-7 MEd, 1 Ph.D., 1 EDS
- 2013-9 MEd, 1 Ph.D.
- 2014-10 Med, 1 PhD, 10 Cat R

Institution: Florida State University

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling & Services (BS, MS, Ph.D.*)

*The BS & Ph.D. programs are being closed; no new students are being accepted.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 6 total; 0 BS, 4 MS, 2 Ph.D.

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 4

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2012 – 0 BS, 3 MS, 1 Ph.D.
- 2013 – 0 BS, 2 MS, 3 Ph.D.
- 2014 - None

Institution: University of Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling (BHS, MHS, RSD)

The MHS and RSD programs at the University of Florida have been phased out and are not accepting new admissions. Numbers in the categories below reflect students who are enrolled and completing their degrees.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 46 total; 45 BHS, 0 MHS, 1 Ph.D.

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Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: All MHS graduates are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) or CRC-eligible

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2012 – 45 BHS, 0 MHS, 1 Ph.D.

- 2013 – Program phased out. No graduates anticipated.

- 2014- Program phased out. No graduates anticipated.

Institution: University of North Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling (MS)

The MS program at UNF has been phased out and is not accepting new admissions. All remaining rehabilitation counseling students have either graduated or transferred into other programs.

Institution: University of South Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (MA)

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 179 Graduate Students

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 63; all are eligible to become Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and Registered Mental Health Interns.

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2012 – 63 MA

- 2013 – 60 MA

- 2014 – 60 MA

Institution: Florida International University

Type of Program: Master of Science in Counselor Education – Rehabilitation Counseling Track (MS)

The FIU program is not Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE)-accredited, but is a source of Masters level rehabilitation counseling graduates.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 7 MS

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 3

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2012 – 3 MS

- 2013 – 1 MS

- 2014 – 3 MS

Rehabilitation Services Administration did not sponsor any of the graduates in the programs referenced above.

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Plan for Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Qualified Personnel

VR maintains close relationships with universities within and outside of the state, including minority institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and disability-specific organizations. VR staffs serve on the Rehabilitation Advisory Committees of some of the university programs, collaborate with universities in securing grant funding, and use university staff to assist in training and education activities.

VR acknowledges that it will not be able to recruit an adequate number of qualified CRC rehabilitation counselors to replace those retiring and departing for other reasons. As a strategy to meet this need, VR has developed a plan addressing recruitment, preparation, and retention. The goals, objectives, strategies, and measurement for this plan are located in Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 2.

Personnel Standards

There is not a state-approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. VR, in conjunction with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), established the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) educational eligibility requirement as its standard.

Efforts are made to recruit and hire counselors who meet the CRC educational eligibility status. If VR is unsuccessful in finding enough qualified applicants, it will accept those who meet the minimal initial standard for individuals providing counseling and guidance services. This standard shall be no less than the following:

The individual(s) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university and one year of experience counseling individuals with disabilities. Alternative majors other than social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science may be considered along with the minimum qualification requirements for the position. When evaluating the suitability of alternative majors, the hiring authority should consider the major area of study's applicability to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. A master's degree from an accredited university in a social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science can substitute for the year of required experience.

Though VR hires counselors without the CRC, it prefers that counselors actually acquire the credential. As an incentive to do so, VR adds \$3,000 to the base pay of employees who obtain their certification. Approximately 48 percent of current personnel meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard. Those hired in 2007 or before who do not meet the standard have until 2012 to meet it. Individuals hired in subsequent years who do not meet the standard have five years to do so. Thus, individuals hired in 2011 will have until 2016 to meet the standard; those hired in 2012 will have until 2017, etc.

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State of Florida employees are permitted to use a tuition waiver to take up to six hours per semester on a space-available basis at public universities. This is how many counselors worked to reach the CSPD standard until fall 2006.

In recent years, VR has implemented a more aggressive approach to meeting the CSPD standard. A significant portion of the in-service training grant has been allocated solely to VR's CSPD activities. The tuition waiver program will continue to be used to the extent possible, as it represents a significant savings to VR. In-service training grant funds will be used to pay tuition for individuals who cannot get the coursework they need through the waiver program, such as those who are not near a public university or who otherwise cannot use the waiver program. Also, in-service training grant funds are allocated for textbook reimbursement.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Section has implemented an internal tracking data system to track academic classes taken and progress toward certification eligibility.

In addition to the Florida public universities referenced above, VR also accesses the resources of Auburn University, Southern University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Arkansas – Little Rock, the University of West Virginia and the University of Wisconsin-Stout, all of whom provide online Masters level rehabilitation programs. VR also accesses the resources of the University of North Texas and San Diego State through the Consortium on Distance Education in Rehabilitation (CDER) program. VR will continue to access additional programs, as appropriate.

Staff Development

HRD efforts will continue to be oriented toward appropriate and adequate training for all personnel, with substantial in-service grant resources allocated to the CSPD effort. Although the in-service training grant is the main funding source for funding these activities, it is not sufficient to fund all staff development and training activities. Supplemental funds are provided from other budget resources.

One of the initiatives supported by the supplemental funds is the Supervisor's Apprenticeship training program. The program consists of six, half-day modules on topics including managing expectations, time management, prioritizing and delegating, communication skills, providing feedback, conflict resolution, and legal issues. The training is highly interactive and includes out-of-class assignments that allow trainees to practice and implement the skills they are learning. VR supervisors, at all levels, completed the program in 2007. It was provided again in 2008, 2009, and 2011, and is offered periodically so that all new supervisors will have developed the skill-set afforded through the program.

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Although there has been an emphasis on assisting counselors in meeting the CSPD standard and on developing the technical, managerial, and leadership skills of the supervisors and managers, staff development opportunities are provided to employees at every level.

VR continues to offer individual training allocations for each staff member. This allocation can be used for job-related professional development activities, such as attending conferences, purchasing books, tapes, CDs, or other materials; taking online short courses; or any other approved professional development activity. Supervisory approval is required for these professional development activities to ensure that staffs participate in activities consistent with their individual needs and job responsibilities and requirements. The resources of the regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center are accessed, as available and appropriate.

The HRD Section coordinates an Annual Continuing Education Day (ACED) in each of the Areas and Headquarters, so staff at all levels will have the training and education they need to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively. In addition, local Area managers coordinate training within their areas to address local needs.

VR anticipated implementing a Learning Management System (LMS) in SFY 2011-2012, but implementation has been delayed due to Information Technology issues. The system will not only track learning participation, but will also serve as a host for online training activities for staff at all levels. VR has also purchased licenses for WebEx and uses WebEx for training purposes. Every effort is made to ensure that the correct medium is used to address each particular issue. The ability to post interactive training on the LMS will greatly expand the capacity of VR to provide a more extensive and comprehensive array of learning activities for staff at all levels.

VR produces a monthly newsletter for all staff, as well as a quarterly newsletter for supervisory staff to ensure that they are kept up to date on methods, techniques, and research for performing their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Whether offered directly or contracted by the HRD Section, VR's staff development and training programs are designed with the goal of maintaining a well-prepared, competent workforce equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully facilitate the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. VR is responsible for ensuring that staff, including contracted staff, receive necessary staff development and training. Accordingly, HRD includes contracted staff at all training programs.

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

A bi-annual needs assessment is conducted using information from a number of sources. These include a formal needs assessment instrument, performance evaluation data, training evaluation sheets obtained from every sponsored program, exit interviews, and supervisory input. VR has implemented Individual Development Plans

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for Field Service employees. HRD will use this information in assessing employee needs. The bi-annual needs assessment data determines program development and modification.

Annual performance evaluations are conducted on each staff member, with intermittent evaluation, if indicated. Performance is evaluated according to standards and goals established at the beginning of the evaluation period. Employees are evaluated in the context of their knowledge, skills, and abilities within the field of rehabilitation, and on policy about priority of service to individuals with the most significant disabilities. If circumstances change, training and professional development activities are provided to assist the individual in meeting their goals in support of the designated state unit's mission.

In-Service Training Grant

The in-service training grant application is developed based on documented and anticipated needs, with commensurate funding requested. VR continues to provide a variety of in-house training programs, including new counselor training, new counselor follow-up training, supervisory training, policy training, new legislation, casework review training, etc. VR anticipates offering eight new VR Counselor Training programs and seven new VR Counselor Follow-Up programs each year, as well as numerous other programs, as needed.

In carrying out its staff development and training program, VR addresses several topics in its training curricula. The training curricula include (but are not limited to) modules on the following: preliminary assessment, eligibility determination, vocational evaluation, vocational counseling (within the modules on eligibility determination and individualized plan for employment development), job placement, rehabilitation technology, cultural competence, ethics, supported employment, transition from school-to-work, medical and psychological issues, caseload management, and special programs.

VR places emphasis on the professional development of unit supervisors, area directors, and supervisors. Statewide supervisor training meetings are used to achieve this goal. Topics are selected based on policy or procedure changes, new initiatives, audit and review findings, and general professional development. Budgetary considerations have reduced the meetings to two per year.

Counseling and non-counseling staff, including administrative staff, will continue to be provided training in core subjects through distance and on-site learning. As caseloads grow, the role of the paraprofessional technician becomes more and more critical to effective management of caseloads. All counseling staff will continue to work toward certified rehabilitation counselor eligibility and/or degrees in rehabilitation or counseling through tuition waivers and other mechanisms and the in-service training grant. VR will continue to look for additional programs.

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Engineers from the Rehabilitation Technology Engineering Program, contracted through the University of South Florida, provide training on rehabilitation technology and engineering, and participate in centralized counselor training, as well as in-service training at the local level. The contract terms ensure that the provider makes rehabilitation technology engineers available statewide.

State labor market information, as well as national data, provides information on the employment and advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities. Job announcements are published online through the People First website, providing access to all state jobs through one portal.

Manuals related to policy and rehabilitation information management are available online. Staff have Internet access for obtaining information related to medical and psychological conditions, rehabilitation technology, Federal/State Plan, legislation and regulations, and employment- related information.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Florida's diverse population suggests a variety of different languages, dialects, and cultural traditions are needed to address the needs of individuals who participate in different programs and organizations. One strategy that VR uses in this regard is to actively recruit counselors and support staff who are representative of Florida's diverse population. VR places advertisements in ethnic newspapers and collaborates with local civic and social service groups. Bilingual individuals are on staff, but interpreters or translators will continue to be used when a counselor is unable to communicate directly with a customer in his/her preferred language. Vendor relationships with local partners will continue to be used to assure availability of this service.

American Sign Language interpretation needs are met using a combination of staff positions and arrangements with local interpreter service providers. In some areas, difficulty in hiring qualified individuals has led to positions being vacant for prolonged periods. In those situations, and to supplement needs beyond those that can be served by qualified VR staff, arrangements are in place with local providers for interpreter services. VR is considering two statewide pilot projects to assess whether they will help improve communication between VR staff and customers with hearing loss at select VR field offices. VR plans to purchase text and auditory communication devices and use video remote interpreting (VRI) services as options in situations when either staff interpreters or local interpreters are not available.

VR meets the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance by providing materials in Braille and large print, through having sign language interpreters and foreign language translators, and offering communication access real-time translation (CART) services, as needed.

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Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Presenters provide orientation and training for employees serving transition students with disabilities from VR, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), and transition partners. Cross-training between the BEESS and VR staff is emphasized through interagency agreements as presented in Attachment 4.8 (b) (2). Department of Education State Education Agency and Local Education Agency profiles are used to gather important statistical information on graduation rates, dropout rates, Individual Educational Plan compliance and postsecondary outcomes for transition students with disabilities. Additionally, BEESS and VR continue to share and analyze student data to identify students with Individual Educational Plans who can benefit from VR services and to identify potential gaps in services.

VR strives to help local education agencies meet the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Examples include: offering an early VR referral and application process, educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers, access to the original curricula, as well as providing a quality education, VR Transition Staff Contact List, VR transition brochures, and Individual Educational Plan/Individualized Plan for Employment coordination with its 94 designated school to work counselors. VR counselors will continue to attend regular in-service training that is targeted specifically towards school to work transition issues so they can help meet the requirements of the CSPD.

Also, VR and transition partners continue to make presentations and participate in annual transition conferences. Transition staff participated with education staff and community partners at the Project 10 Institutes held across the state. The VR Transition administrator, Career and Technical Education specialist, Workforce representative and Project 10 representative provided training/presentations at the institutes. Agencies provided updates and shared promising initiatives and best practices.

At these meetings, VR counselors and local educators meet to discuss and learn from one another about transition practices and issues. This information is often incorporated into VR staff trainings. A training module and video entitled "Vocational Rehabilitation School to Work Transition" is provided to new VR counselors. Information and resources from the VR School to Work Transition Program is also provided during new counselor follow-up training. VR developed the School to Work Transition Guidelines and Best Practices guide as a resource for VR Transition Teams to assure statewide consistency in coordinating services to transition students with disabilities. At the local level, VR staff participate at Project Connect sites or other interagency groups to improve local coordination and services with students, families, schools, employers, and agency partners.

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Attachment 4.11 (a): Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

During 2010-2011, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The purpose of the needs assessment is to gather information about factors that affect VR customers' ability to get and keep jobs, as well as to identify any barriers or limitations they may experience. Federal regulations require public VR programs to conduct needs assessments every three years and use the information in developing the goals and priorities in their state plans. The needs assessment project consists of five major parts: state demographic profiles, customer surveys, a VR field staff survey, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups. Below are the summary results from the state demographic profiles, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The 2008-2010 American Community Survey (ACS), 3-Year Estimates shows that there were 2,334,400 individuals with disabilities residing in Florida. This represents 12.7% of the state's population. Regarding gender, 48 percent of these populations are male and 52 percent are female.

According to 3-Year estimates in the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 9.8 percent of working age people (ages 21 to 64) in Florida report having a disability. Specifically, 1,097,268 of these 11,222,500 individuals, ages 21 to 64 in Florida, reported one or more disabilities. These 1,097,268 working age adults with an employment disability may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services. However, as expected, this number far exceeds VR's service capacity.

In the American Community Survey estimates referenced above, there are 428,791 Floridians with disabilities 16 years or older employed in the labor force. This equates to approximately 19.5 percent of the 2,204,297 individuals reporting an employment status. When combined, 51.6 percent of the occupations held by this reference group are in service (23.3%) or sales and office (28.3%) occupations. Another 26.4 percent of the jobs held by this group were occupations in management, business, science, and arts. Estimates indicate that 12.2 percent of the jobs held were in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, while 9.8 percent were employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.

In the ACS, over 500,000 individuals with disabilities, age 16 and older, reported earnings. The median earnings for this group is \$18,794. Florida VR measures the projected average annual salary at placement. At the end of fiscal year 2011, the average was \$17,265 (Performance Based Program Budgeting Report, June 2011).

Florida's unemployment rate continues to decline. As of March 2012, Florida's unemployment rate was reported as 9.0 percent. It decreased 2.5 percent below the rate for the period ending February 28, 2011. According to Florida's Office of Economic and Demographic Research, the current rate of 9.0 percent equates to approximately

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836,000 individuals not working. Information also shows that Florida's unemployment rate continues to run slightly higher than the national average of 8.2 percent. Despite these improvements, demographic data revealed that 10 of the state's 67 counties continue to have unemployment rates in the double digits. The unemployment rates in these counties ranged from 10.4 to 12.2 percent.

Underserved Populations

VR continues to implement an Order of Selection policy. As of April 15, 2012, 1,335 individuals in Category 3 remained on the waiting list. These individuals are unserved. To identify groups that may be potentially underserved, comparisons were made between selected VR customer caseload data and 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 3 Year Projection tables. Data suggest that the VR program served a greater proportion of Black and Hispanic/Latino customers than exist in Florida's general population of individuals with disabilities. Conversely, data show that fewer proportions of White Americans are represented in the VR caseload than are represented in the state population demographic profile. There are no differences in the percentages in the VR caseload and Florida's demographic profile for American Indian or Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders.

During calendar year 2010, FL VR served a higher percentage (18.6%) of individuals with less than a high school diploma than are represented in the same reference group in the state profiles. There is no explanation for this finding. Further research is needed. However, one might conclude that since VR is implementing an Order of Selection policy requiring priority be given to individuals with most significant disabilities first, having more individuals with less than a high school diploma in its caseload is plausible. In contrast, FL VR had lower percentages of individuals on the caseload who had some college/vocational technical training (9.4%) or some type of college degree (8%) compared to the same groups in the state profiles.

SUMMARY NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Customer and VR Field Staff Survey Results

In April 2011, a random sample of 4,000 active and closed VR customers from the most recent 12 month period was sent mail surveys. A total of 680 usable surveys were returned and analyzed, yielding a 17 percent response rate. An online survey was sent to 630 VR Field staff. A total of 401 individuals responded and 280 individuals completed the entire survey. This resulted in a 69.8 percent completion rate. The field staff survey was made available to Area Directors, all VR counseling staff, VR technicians, and staff interpreters/translators. In the surveys for each question, respondents were provided a pre-set list of response items as well as a section to write in additional information.

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Services Important to Find a Job

The table below shows how customers and field staff rated what services, in their opinion, were important for individuals with disabilities in their endeavor to find a job. In the rankings, one is most important and six is least important. There was relatively little difference in their rankings – only the two middle services were reversed.

Services Important to Find A Job	Customer Rank	Counselor Rank
Help finding a job	1	1
Training for a new job	2	2
Support from a job coach	4	3
Help paying for books, supplies & training materials	3	4
A computer, software, or related material	5	5
Tutoring	6	6

Described below by topic is a summary of the top three dominant results of the customer and VR Field Staff Surveys. More detailed information is provided in the full needs assessment report.

Difficulties Using VR Services

Customers and VR field staff were asked what, in their opinion, made it difficult for customers to use VR services. Below are the top three responses provided by group.

Customer Responses	Customer Rank	VR Field Staff Responses	Counselor Rank
It takes too long to get services.	1	Customers had a lack of follow through due to personal issues.	1
Need for assistance in meeting basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, clothing, and emergency medical treatment).	2	Customers needed assistance in meeting their basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, clothing, and emergency medical treatment).	2
Other Reasons (issues with the VR program policies placing limitations on the services, VR Staff lack of contact and follow-through, or the customers own physical or mental condition).	3	Customers did not have a way to get to work.	3

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Difficulties Finding a Job

Customers and VR field staff were asked what made it difficult for customers to find a job. Below are the top three responses by group.

Customer Responses	Customer Rank	VR Field Staff Responses	Counselor Rank
I had a medical, physical or mental condition that made it difficult to find a job.	1	Customers' medical, physical or mental condition made it difficult to find a job.	1
I did not have the skills required for the job.	2	Customer did not have job related skills.	2
Other Reasons (e.g. having a criminal background, lack of job vacancies, discrimination).	3	Customers did not have the necessary interpersonal, interview, or time management skills.	3

Important Services to Keep a Job

Customers and VR field staff were asked what services were important for customers in their endeavor to keep a job. Below are the top three responses by group.

Customer Responses	Customer Rank	VR Field Staff Responses	Counselor Rank
Training to stay employed.	1	A way to get to work.	1
Support from a job coach to learn how to do the job.	2	Support from a job coach.	2
Medical services to improve a health condition.	3	Training to stay employed.	3

Services Needed to Find a Job, Not Received

Customers and VR Field Staff were asked what services customers needed to help find a job that they did not receive, or VR was unable to provide them.

Customer Responses	Customer Rank	VR Field Staff Responses	Counselor Rank
Help finding a job.	1	Help finding a job.	1
More training to find a different job.	2	Training for a new job.	2
Support from a job coach to learn how to do the job.	3	Support from a job coach.	3

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Stakeholder Interview Results

As a part of this study, we held 18 structured interviews with key VR staff, Florida Rehabilitation Council members, and the Client Assistance Program Director. The focus of the interviews was to obtain key stakeholder opinions about the following:

- factors critical to customers getting and keeping a job;
- potential underserved and unserved populations;
- potential barriers experienced by VR customers; and
- suggestions on how to improve VR services.

All stakeholders were asked a set of five questions. The responses emphasized the most during the structured interviews are provided below:

I. Factors Critical to Getting and Keeping a Job

- Customers, counselors, and employers need better information.
- Customers need to learn the culture of the organization, once hired.
- Customers need to understand the VR process, which was commonly described as overly complex and bureaucratic by respondents.
- VR counselors need to be aware of the totality of available resources, including that of partners outside the agency (e.g., vendors and other federal agencies).
- Employers need to have a better understanding of the capabilities of an individual with disabilities to complete a job in order to counter unfortunate stereotypes.

II. Underserved and Unserved Populations

Underserved Groups

- Individuals with mental or cognitive impairments, particularly the former;
- Minorities(no specific group identified);
- Transition-aged customers; and
- Individuals living in rural areas.

Unserved Groups

- Individuals on the wait list because of Order of Selection

III. Barriers Experienced by Customers

- Problems in the VR process.
 - Lack of timeliness in the process, difficult to do anything quickly
 - Lack of easily available information on the process

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- Biased attitudes of employers, others in communities, and some counselors towards individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of outreach to organizations outside of VR that deal with individuals with disabilities.
- Problems with counseling (communication between counselors and customers often inadequate; certain disability groups are served poorly, e.g., mental health populations).
- Excessive caseloads.

IV. Opportunities to Improve

- Improve VR operations
- Reach out to customers and other external parties more
- Openly work toward eliminating biased attitudes through better information
- Eliminate Order of Selection
- Streamline processes and promote more consistency across units
- Provide more counselor training, particularly on mental health and transition populations

Customer Focus Group Results

A total of seven focus groups were conducted with VR customers across the six VR Areas in the state. One area held two focus groups, and the remaining five areas held one focus group each. In total, 44 individuals categorized as persons with most significant disabilities participated in the seven focus groups. The participants offered information on a range of needs and supports that would assist them in getting and keeping a job.

Service Needs

Two themes that emerged were schooling and job skills/knowledge as the most important services needed. There were 44 comments about services, 23 of which were specific about aspects of “schooling.”

Schooling includes

1. Tuition and assistance with supplies such as books for college;
2. Continued education and advanced degree assistance;
3. Education or special training targeted towards their goal; and
4. Assistance from the counselor to help the customer make the best school placement.

Job skills/knowledge includes

1. Computer and typing skills;
2. Interview skills;
 - a. what to say to get job interviews;
 - b. learning how to ensure that personal stressors or barriers are addressed prior to getting interview or job;

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3. Strategies to learn how to survive in a job environment; and
4. How to address obstacles in job placement.

Barriers to Successful Employment

Participants were asked about barriers to successful employment. VR marketing and client traits were identified as barriers that keep individuals from getting or using VR services, or from getting or keeping a job.

VR marketing issues include:

1. Lack of awareness of services or resources available; and
2. The need for better public relations strategies, such as using advertising and spreading the word about VR.

Customer traits include:

1. Attributes that include lack of self-confidence, fear, patience, and skills;
2. Mental attributes such as medical, alcohol, or drug use side effects; and
3. Physical attributes that includes flare-ups with disability and worsening of vision.

Suggestions for Improving Services

Near the end of the sessions, participants were asked for suggestions that might make it easier to get VR services or a job. Again, VR marketing was the top suggestion, followed by suggestions that include client services and training.

VR marketing suggestions

1. Advertise through TV and radio, schools, medical offices, agencies;
2. Market VR through unemployment services;
3. Use a more user-friendly name than vocational rehabilitation; and
4. Let church groups, ministries, doctors know about VR.

Client Services suggestions

1. Hire customers for overload, customers want to give back;
2. Help with basic needs such as supplies, childcare, and computers for college;
3. Provide better client choice: have more choices and better matches to provider agencies;
4. Offer customer incentives, i.e., provide unique services that others do not have; and
5. Network and partner with other agencies such as unemployment offices.

Training suggestions

1. Computer training;
2. More help with job training and placement; and
3. Sensitivity training for VR representatives

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Customer Satisfaction

There are two separate surveys used to evaluate satisfaction levels of customers: those rehabilitated and those not rehabilitated after obtaining vocational rehabilitation services. Also, active customers are assessed to see how well their services are being provided as the individual progresses through their Individualized Plan for Employment. In fiscal year 2011, 75 percent of the customers whose cases were closed and those with active cases reported that they were “very” or “mostly” satisfied with the services they received from VR.

Public Comments-State Plan

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) conducted four public forums during the 2011-2012 state fiscal year, with the most recent being held at the FRC May 2012 quarterly meeting. These forums were held in West Palm Beach, Tampa, Tallahassee and Jacksonville during the FRC quarterly meetings. Each forum is open for participation statewide by telephone or Communication Access Real-time Transcription (CART) services online. Approximately 45 individuals attended, not including FRC and VR representatives. Individuals in attendance at the public forums included FRC Council Members and staff, VR staff, a VR Ombudsman representative, customers, stakeholders, parents, providers and vendors. Representatives in attendance from other agencies included the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Centers for Independent Living, the Department of Children and Families, the Disability Rights of Florida program (authorized Client Assistance Program (CAP) representative), the state Mental Health Planning Council, Florida Independent Living Center, Family Network on Disabilities, Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Business Leadership Network area representatives, Project 10, the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, and State of Florida Legislative Delegates and Representatives.

Areas of comments included:

- Order of Selection
- On-the-Job Training
- Business Leadership Networking
- Fair Hearings
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Federal Performance Indicators
- Funding
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Financial Participation
- Case Management
- Cooperation and Collaboration
- Specific Service Questions
- Underserved Populations
- Outreach
- Rehabilitation Electronic Billing Application (REBA)

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Strategies to Address Identified Customer Needs

The results of the CSNA do not generally indicate the necessity to develop many new strategies. Many of the issues revealed by the CSNA have already been identified by utilizing VR’s strategic planning process for the past two years. Many of the current strategies in VR’s strategic plan are being carried out and/or implemented for the purpose of addressing needs. Therefore, the proposed strategies for consideration only include recommendations for new strategies or enhancement of current strategies.

Suggested Strategy	Relationship to Current VR Key Strategy	Reference
Provide tools, support, tutoring, and educational opportunities for specific job skills.	Not currently being addressed in Strategic Plan	
Ensure Employability Skills Training activities are offered by contracted service providers.	Not currently being addressed in Strategic Plan	
Identify and prioritize VR services to be standardized to reduce variance in types and quality of services provided.	Not currently being addressed in Strategic Plan	
Explore and implement the use of new technologies to provide services in rural areas.	Not currently being addressed in Strategic Plan	
Assess the effectiveness and volume of job coaching services provided to customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement contract monitoring and fraud detection processes. 	Objective 4.1
Provide specific interpersonal skills training for customers who have primary disabilities in mental health, cognitive, developmental, or brain injury categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement psychosocial mental health training to selected VR staff to effectively deliver services for individuals with mental health and substance abuse disabilities. Implement a recovery and trauma informed care model, and provide training to VR staff. 	Objective 3.3
Develop specific agreements with other agencies and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VR will assume a leadership role to foster cooperation and 	Objective 1.1

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Suggested Strategy	Relationship to Current VR Key Strategy	Reference
organizations to optimize support resources and ensure that counselors have full referral access to those resources (e.g., food, clothing, transportation).	<p>collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels for partners involved in the employment of individuals with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement a comprehensive directory of community resources. 	3.6
Eliminate activities and tasks in the field that are unnecessary for delivering timely and high-quality services (e.g., excessive reviews and approvals, unnecessary paperwork or data entry, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a gap analysis and develop user requirements for a case management system that meets VR's business needs. • Investigate feasibility of data sharing with partners in order to expedite eligibility determination. • Investigate and modify inefficiencies within the RIMS system to minimize duplication of data entry. 	Objective 4.2
Fully deploy customer contact standards across all VR service areas and contract providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and standardize customer contact process and standards. 	Objective 3.2
Develop and implement a comprehensive VR marketing plan to specific stakeholder groups, employment service providers, vendors, and employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize and systematically market to employers and existing employer networks (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Center, Business Leadership Networks, etc.) both statewide and on a local basis. 	Objective 1.2
Provide a specific and standardized training curriculum to VR field staff on difficult to place customer groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide statewide training and/or dialog on hard to place customer groups (e.g., ex-offender re-entry, cognitive, supported employment phase 2). 	Objective 1.1

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Attachment 4.11(b)

Number of Individuals in the State Who are Eligible for Services under This State Plan

According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey Estimates for Florida, a total of 1,097,268 working age adults with an employment disability may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services.

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served with Funds Provided Under Part B of Title I and Part B of Title VI of the Act

From October 1, 2012, through September 30, 2013, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) anticipates a workload of 60,395 individuals. Because of limited resources, VR has determined that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all individuals with disabilities in the state that apply for services. The following are projections for Federal Fiscal Year 2013. The estimated numbers of eligible individuals to receive vocational rehabilitation services by priority category are

Priority Category 1	38,455
Priority Category 2	21,899
Priority Category 3	41
Total by Priority Category	60,395

The estimated number to be served in Supported Employment (Part B of Title VI of the Act) is 6,000.

Cost of the services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation

The estimated costs for services for each priority category are

Priority Category 1	\$ 61,720,275
Priority Category 2	\$ 37,409,076
Priority Category 3	\$ 64,821
Total Estimate Costs by Category	\$ 99,194,172

Additionally, the cost for assessment services for FY 2013 is projected as \$12,500,000. Total revenue needed for FY 2013 is \$111,694,172.

The projected budget authority for FY 2013 for IPE and assessment services is estimated to be \$116,116,000. This amount includes the authority to expend prior year carry forward funds.

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (1): State Goals and Priorities

VISION

To become the first place people with disabilities turn when seeking employment and a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

MISSION

To help people with disabilities find and maintain employment, and enhance their independence.

THREE YEAR GOALS AND PRIORITIES (FFY 2013-2015)

VR, in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), completed its three year comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Information obtained from the needs assessment along with other management reports were used during a Senior Leadership Team strategic planning retreat to evaluate the Division's current goals, objectives, priorities. FRC members representing all standing committees formed a State Plan Task Force to study the draft 2013 State Plan. Listed below are the goals, objectives, strategies and measurements resulting from the Senior Leadership Team's evaluation and FRC's study of the draft 2013 State Plan.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Leadership and Collaboration

Strategic Objective 1.1: Assume a leadership role to foster cooperation and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels for partners involved in the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Strategy:

1. Participate in Governor's Commission for Employment for Persons with Disabilities.
2. Participate in all local workforce boards.
3. Participate in key partnership councils (FRC, FFAST, DD Council, State MH Planning, FILC, etc.).
4. Collaborate with CSAVR, RSA, and RPEN on key national issues.
5. Hold at least 2 trainings between workers compensation system partners and VR to foster return to work of injured workers.
6. Implement and evaluate the Memorandum of Agreement for Employment Networks, to include marketing the MOA (internally and externally).

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Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.1):

1. Percent of Division's responsibilities met as outlined in MOU.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.
2. Percent of Memoranda of Agreements and Memoranda of Understandings in compliance.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.
3. Number of local level provider and employer network group meetings.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

Objective 1.2: Increase compliance with requirements and promote best practices by the Centers for Independent Living.

Strategy:

1. Design a program evaluation strategy for Centers for Independent Living.
2. Develop training plan for Centers for Independent Living to address compliance and best practices.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Cumulative percent of Centers for Independent Living in full compliance with evaluation standards met.

Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

GOAL 2: Improve Service Delivery through Strengthened Workplace Environment and Improved Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Objective 2.1: Assess Overall employee satisfaction.

Strategies:

1. Develop pulse satisfaction surveys following the implementation of selected strategies and other projects.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Overall Employee Satisfaction. Target: 93%

Objective 2.2: Improve employee satisfaction.

Strategies:

1. Assess the feasibility of more flexible work schedules.
2. Redesign employee suggestion program.

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3. Assess alternative supervisor/leadership development curriculums.
4. Review and revise pay guidelines.
5. Benchmark class specifications and revise as needed.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Percent of employees satisfied with targeted topic areas (see key strategies for this objective).
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

Objective 2.3: Improve advancement opportunities for Division employees.

Strategies:

1. Review hiring practices across all areas of the state and implement activities to improve hiring practices.
2. Design and implement career path and succession planning.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 2.3)

1. Internal Promotion Rate
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

Objective 2.4: Improve service delivery by enhancing employee skills.

Strategies:

1. Develop a systematic process for on-boarding, mentoring, and training all VR employees, including the utilization of a Learning Management System.
2. Promote the use of the Individualized Training Fund.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 2.4):

1. Percentage of all VR employees successfully completing identified training (defined as demonstration of knowledge and demonstration of behavior). Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2011-12.

Objective 2.5: Provide professional comfortable office environments that are accessible, safe, and secure.

Strategies:

1. Conduct assessment of VR offices to ensure they are professional in appearance, in structure, mechanical features are in good condition and employees have the tools to do their job.
2. Provide safety and facilities management training to area staff.
3. Develop a process to report defective/unsafe working conditions.
4. Conduct a comprehensive, consumer-driven ADA transition plan evaluation and update that includes a review of the accessibility of the

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Division's programs, communications, personnel practices, facilities and technology, and a plan for making necessary improvements.

Indicator and Target (Objective 2.5):

1. Employee satisfaction with office environment (accessible, comfortable, safe). Target: 90 percent.

GOAL 3: Improve Customer Success and Satisfaction

Objective 3.1: Improve the assessment of customer satisfaction.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement an approach for analyzing factors contributing to customer satisfaction, customer dissatisfaction, and program effectiveness.

Indicators and Target (Objective 3.1):

1. Percentage of customers indicating overall Satisfaction. Target: 80%

Objective 3.2: Increase the rehabilitation rate.

Strategies:

1. Analyze reasons for unsuccessful closures across the life of the case across multiple factors.
2. Implement customer contact process and standards statewide.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.2):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2).
Target: 55.8%

Objective 3.3: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for identified customer groups: Psychosocial/Mental Health disabilities; Cognitive and Developmental disabilities; Transition-aged, and individuals with disabilities seeking self-employment.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement training about identified customer groups to help VR staff effectively deliver services.
2. Implement Recovery and Trauma Informed Care models and provide training to VR staff.

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3. Engage and recruit specialty vendors to assist with the delivery of employment services (e.g., community mental health centers, CILS, ARCs, etc.).
4. Assess the effectiveness of the Discovery and Customized Employment Pilots and implement statewide as warranted.
5. Engage APD to ensure the availability of Phase 2 Supported Employment funds.
6. Complete specialty staff training for working with self-employment and Community Based Technical Assistance Centers (CBTACs).
7. Design and deliver a series of training Webinars for transition staff and partners.
8. Conduct targeted outreach to Foster Care and Juvenile Justice Systems.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.3):

1. Percentage of individuals with Psychosocial/Mental Health disabilities who are receiving services under an IPE Target: 38%
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with Psychosocial/Mental Health disabilities who have received services under an IPE Target: 43%
3. Percentage of individuals with Cognitive/Developmental disabilities who have received services under an IPE Target: 25%
4. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with Cognitive/Developmental disabilities who have received services under an IPE Target: 45%
5. Percentage of individuals with self-employment as a goal receiving services under an IPE Target: 1.50%
6. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with self-employment as a goal who have receive services under an IPE Target: 1.00%
7. Percentage of individuals receiving services under an IPE who are transition-aged Target: 33%
8. Percentage of employment outcomes for transition-aged individuals who have received services under an IPE Target: 28%

Objective 3.4: Increase the number of individuals who are self-supporting at closure compared to at application.

Strategies:

1. Increase the numbers of appropriate referrals to One-Stop Centers by offering staff training.
2. Design and deploy a worksheet to assist counselors in determining primary source of support and accurate RIMS coding.

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Indicator and Target (Objective 3.4):

1. Percentage of individuals served that are self-supporting at closure compared to at application (RSA Indicator 1.6). Target: 53%

GOAL 4: Improve VR Support Processes and Systems

Objective 4.1: Improve vendor processes.

Strategies:

1. Conduct vendor needs assessment.
2. Conduct vendor outreach based on results.
3. Implement background screening program.
4. Review and revise vendor qualification standards.
5. Enhance detailed online handbook for service providers to ensure expectations and processes are effectively communicated.
6. Develop RIMS module for vendor registration to include background screening and electronic application.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.1):

1. Percent of vendors completing the registration process within ten days.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.
2. Average time for vendor registration.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

Objective 4.2: Improve contract and invoice payment processes.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement contract monitoring and fraud detection processes.
2. Expand the electronic billing system (REBA).

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.2):

1. Percent of invoices paid on time.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13

Objective 4.3: Update data systems and technology to better support customers and staff.

Strategies:

1. Complete modularization of RIMS to make VR processes more consistent.
2. Conduct a gap analysis and develop user requirements for modules that meet VR's business needs.
3. Implement improved email system.

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4. Implement SharePoint to improve document management and communications.
5. Design and implement a monitoring application for CILS.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.3):

1. Percentage of project milestones completed on time.
Targets: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13.

GOAL 5: Improve the System for Evaluating Quality

Objective 5.1: Design an integrated management system for business processes, reporting performance, and improving performance.

Strategies:

1. Document and update key VR processes.
2. Document key outcome measures and business process measures.
3. Integrate management reports for utilization by all management teams and communicate to all employees.
4. Identify, prioritize, and conduct performance improvement projects.
5. Centralize data analysis and reporting.

Indicator and Target (Objective 5.1):

1. Percent of indicators trending in the right direction.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13
2. Percent of strategic projects on schedule.
Target: Baseline to be collected in FY 2012-13

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (3) – Order of Selection

RSA STATE PLAN YEAR 2013

Justification for the Order of Selection

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) determined that sufficient resources were not available to provide rehabilitation services to all individuals with disabilities that apply. Consequently, VR established an Order of Selection within the state to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services, those with significant disabilities second, and all other eligible individuals selected last. The determination to invoke an Order of Selection was based on use of funds in the preceding years, projected funding, projected number and types of referrals, number of eligible individuals, and counselor case loads.

On August 4, 2008, the Order of Selection was implemented closing all categories. On February 15, 2010, VR determined that sufficient fiscal and human resources were available to serve all Category 1 individuals and opened Category 1. Category 2 was opened on August 2, 2010. Category 3 remains closed at this time. The Order of Selection remains in effect statewide and does not select one disabling condition over another. The Order is not established based on age, sex, marital status, religion, race, color, national origin or political affiliation, and is not based on the vocational goal of the individual with a disability. Elements that relate to the significance of disability are the only factors used in the Order of Selection.

As of April 15, 2012, 1,335 individuals with disabilities in Category 3 remained on the waiting list. It is anticipated that persons with most significant disabilities (Category 1) and persons with significant disabilities (Category 2) will not move to the waiting list in FFY 2012, and these categories will remain open. It is not projected that Category 3 will open. The wait period for “other eligible persons with disabilities” is indeterminate. However, VR will continue to evaluate the feasibility of releasing some individuals from Category 3 for services during the plan period.

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Outcome and Service Goals, Time Frames, and Service Costs for FFY 2013

CATEGORIES	EXISTING AND NEW IPE TO BE SERVED	AVERAGE CASE COST for 12 MONTHS	YEAR	PROJECTED 26s	PROJECTED 28s	TIME/MONTHS
Priority 1	38,455	\$1,605	\$61,720,275	4,025	4,000	19.3
Priority 2	21,699	\$1,724	\$37,409,076	1,975	1,800	30.2
Priority 3	41	\$1,581	\$64,821	25	16	34.4

Cost for assessment services for FY 2013 is projected as \$12,500,000.

Projected revenue needed for FY 2013 for IPE and assessment services is estimated to be \$111,694,172. The projected budget authority available for FY 2013 is \$116,116,000. This amount includes the authority to expend prior year carry forward funds.

Order of Selection Policies

Individuals seeking Supported Employment services are assessed as having a most significant disability. Additionally, individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits as a result of being determined to be disabled or blind are assessed as having at least a significant disability and are evaluated to determine whether they meet the criteria for individuals with most significant disabilities.

After an individual is found eligible for VR services, an Order of Selection determination is completed. Additional evaluations or assessments to make this determination may be needed. The VR counselor and individual jointly determine the individual's Order of Selection priority category by evaluating his or her functional limitations, anticipated services needed, and the duration of the services.

This policy does not affect an individual who began to receive services under an approved individualized plan for employment prior to the implementation date of Order of Selection, or those individuals who are in need of post-employment services.

VR officially notifies all individuals of their individual Order of Selection determination. Individuals not immediately activated for development of an employment plan are offered referral services and the option to be placed on a waiting list until employment plan development services can be initiated. Individuals on the waiting list are contacted annually to determine if additional information is available. If resources become available, those in Category 3 (other eligible individuals) will be activated.

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Order of Selection Priority Description

INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES (Priority 1)

Eligible individual with a disability which

1. Seriously limits three or more functional capacities in terms of work;
2. Requires three or more primary services;
3. Requires services which must be provided over an extended period of time (at least 12 months); and
4. Requires services which are not likely to be corrected through surgical intervention and/or other treatment modes.

INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES (Priority 2)

Eligible individual with a disability which

1. Seriously limits one or two functional capacities, in terms of work;
2. Requires two or more primary services;
3. Requires services which must be provided over an extended period of time (at least six months);

OR

4. The individual is a recipient of Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as a result of disability or blindness.

OTHER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS (Priority 3)

Eligible individual with a disability which

1. Does not seriously limit functional capacity in terms of work, and/or services are expected to last less than six months.

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (4): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Goal 1

Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive Supported Employment services.

Plans

Allocate Title VI-B funds to assure individuals with most significant disabilities have statewide equal access to vocational rehabilitation services.

Fully expend Title VI-B funds for purchase of Supported Employment services after reserving no more than five percent for program administration.

Provide a variety of training and awareness programs designed to increase the awareness of Supported Employment as a vocational service for individuals with most significant disabilities.

Participate with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council in the development of a series of videos promoting employment options for students transitioning into employment.

Review pilot and innovative employment practices and assess the feasibility of replicating programs with successful strategies.

Goal 2

Use Title VI-B funds to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

Plans

Use Title I funds, supplemented with Title VI-B funds, in providing Supported Employment services as specified in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

Purchase Supported Employment services based upon the established performance benchmarks. The contract for supported employment focuses on performance and reinforces the focus on successful outcomes for individuals served.

Goal 3

Increase Supported Employment training opportunities for VR Counselors, Community Rehabilitation service staff, families and individuals.

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Plans

Increase Supported Employment training opportunities for VR counselors, providers, families, and individuals.

Participate in the development of a consortium of providers designed to identify, share and promote innovative employment practices.

Promote awareness of social security benefits planning as a way to fund extended services.

Enhance direct service staff professional competencies in service delivery to individuals with most significant disabilities by providing training opportunities.

Provide funding to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities.

Goal 4

Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services.

Plans

Work collaboratively with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to assure referrals are aware of the resources available to them through Medicaid Waiver Funding and/or general revenue funding for extended services.

Coordinate interagency training on social security benefits planning to support extended services.

Provide training on the availability of funding ongoing support through Ticket to Work-Employment Network partnerships.

Encourage using employer and natural supports as a possible resource for ongoing supports.

Communicate with businesses and employers to educate them about the availability of on-the-job supports for individuals in Supported Employment.

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Attachment 4.11 (d): State Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Council Support

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to provide support for the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and Florida Independent Living Council (FILC). Funds are allocated for the operations of FRC to achieve the goals and objectives in their strategic plan. FRC participates as an active strategic partner with VR in carrying out the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. VR and FILC operate under a three-year Memorandum of Agreement. The agreement aligns with the three-year state plan for Independent Living.

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds

VR completed a competitive procurement and executed four contracts to providers for Innovative and Expansion projects. The innovative services include virtual reality simulators for customers with severe disabilities, vocational services and assistance for transitioning youth with most significant disabilities, and assistance and supports for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury or significant mental illnesses.

The four contracts awarded include:

1. **Abilities Inc. of Florida** - Assist transitioning youth and their families in obtaining counseling and vocational assistance along with medical, social and behavioral health services, as needed.
2. **The Brain Injury Association of Florida, Inc.** – Serve customers by utilizing community employment resources and support in order to improve employment outcomes for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury.
3. **University of South Florida, Center for Rehabilitation Engineering and Technology** – Use virtual reality, simulators, robotics, and feedback interfaces to allow the vocational rehabilitation population to try various jobs, tasks, virtual environments, and assistive technologies prior to entering the actual employment setting.
4. **Wilson Resources, Inc.** – Educate and support select Florida businesses on the employment of and working with employees with significant mental illness. Educate and support select service providers to establish more productive relationships with employers. Establish 25 paid internships within Florida businesses for persons with most significant mental illnesses.

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Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology is provided through a contractual agreement with the Center for Engineering and Technology Program at the University of South Florida. The program provides rehabilitation technology assessment and evaluation services for VR's customers. Rehabilitation technology includes a range of services and devices which can supplement and enhance individual functions. It includes services that can impact the work environment through changes like job redesign or worksite modifications.

VR sponsors the Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology Project that is directed by the Assistive Technology Advisory Council in accordance with Section 413.407, Florida Statutes. The project provides for the coordination and delivery of appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art assistive technology services and devices. The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST), is a not-for-profit corporation for which the Assistive Technology Advisory Council acts as the board of directors, manages the project, and provides administrative and technical support to the council.

FAAST is responsible for administering a low interest loan authority that provides funding to individuals with disabilities who may be unable to qualify for traditional loans and bank financing to purchase assistive technology (AT) devices.

AT includes both devices and services. A device is any item or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability. Many high-tech and low-tech devices are available to assist people with disabilities in daily living tasks, communication, education, work, and recreation.

VR will continue to support AT services that enhance the employability of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities as consistent with Goal 3, Objective 3.1, and Strategy 1.

Outreach to Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and/or who have been Unserved or Underserved

VR continues to assess its services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and individuals who may be unserved or underserved, as well as those with the most significant disabilities who may be from minority populations. Some of the outreach activities include the following:

1. Continue to explore opportunities to partner with community/faith-based organizations.
2. Develop contact lists of faith-based and other diverse programs as resources for partnership opportunities.

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3. Continue to identify outreach activities conducted by the local VR areas for under-represented populations.
4. Conduct outreach in local communities to promote VR as an agency, and assist individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who may be unserved or underserved to return or remain in the workplace.
5. Identify what racial/ethnic groups are under-represented in VR caseloads.
6. Identify disability types in VR caseloads statewide and compare them to the national average to determine groups that may be underserved.
7. Continue to review and implement local area outreach activities.
8. Explore implementation of a contract with the Helen Keller Foundation to conduct statewide outreach activities, which include outreach to potential customers who are deaf-blind.
9. Continue to conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families through contracts with community-based organizations and other partners.
10. Continue to implement activities outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe.
11. Continue to develop partnerships with employers that result in employment opportunities for all eligible individuals with disabilities.
12. Continue to provide disability awareness education to community service agencies and employers.

Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR assesses its business processes and organizational capacity on an ongoing basis to make consistent improvements in the infrastructure. Strategies to improve business relationships with community rehabilitation programs include:

1. Conduct vendor needs assessment. (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 1).
2. Conduct vendor outreach based on results. (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 2).
3. Review and revise vendor qualifications standards (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 4).
4. Enhance detailed online handbook for service providers to ensure expectations and processes are effectively communicated (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 5).

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5. Design and implement contract monitoring and fraud detection processes. (Goal 4, Objective 4.2, Strategy 1).
6. Expand the electronic billing system (Goal 4, Objective 2, Strategy 2).

Strategies to Improve the Performance Related to Goals, Priorities, and Performance Indicators

Program performance is influenced by many factors, including the overall economic climate in the state. As of March 2012, Florida's unemployment rate was reported as 9.0 percent. It decreased 2.5 percent below the rate for the period ending February 28, 2011. Florida's unemployment rate (9.0 percent) continues to run slightly higher than the national average (8.2 percent). Despite the decline in the Florida's unemployment rate, 10 of the state's 67 counties have unemployment rates in the double digits. The unemployment rates in these counties ranged from 10.4 to 12.2 percent (Office of Economic and Demographic Research, The Florida Legislature, March 2012). Recognizing these issues, VR will collaborate with partners at the state and local levels to maximize employment services for people with disabilities. Strategies to accomplish this objective include the following:

1. Assume a leadership role to foster cooperation and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels with partners involved in the employment of people with disabilities (Goal 1, Objective 1.1, and Strategy 1).
2. Implement contractual agreements for Innovation and Expansion services that use innovative approaches to improve the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services that result in successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. These services are to be provided to VR's customers in order to increase employment opportunities; improve the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services; and/or train individuals with the most significant disabilities to promote self-sufficiency and overcome barriers to employment. See Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 3, Objective 3.1., Strategy 2.
3. Explore implementation of a contract with the Helen Keller Foundation to conduct statewide outreach activities, which include outreach to potential customers who are deaf-blind.

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Strategies for the Statewide Workforce Investment System to Assist Individuals with Disabilities

VR continues to be geographically aligned with the workforce regions and complies with requirements to partner with regional workforce boards. The following are strategies used for collaborating with the statewide workforce investment system to assist individuals with disabilities:

1. Continue implementation of the three-party Memorandum of Agreement between VR, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the Workforce Investment Board.
2. Continue implementation of the Memoranda of Understandings with the 24 Regional Workforce Boards.
3. Collaborate with and offer training to One-Stop Centers and Employment Networks to provide services.
4. Continue Area Directors' participation on the local Workforce Investment Boards.
5. Continue to promote VR's presence in the One-Stop Centers through co-location of VR's units in One-Stop Centers; staff being out-stationed; and/or through regular visits by VR staff to One-Stop Centers.
6. Increase the number of appropriate referrals to One-Stop Centers and Employment Networks by offering training on appropriate referrals and available services (Goal 3, Objective 3.6, Strategy 2).

Equitable Access

To ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities, VR will:

1. Continue to identify barriers preventing access to services and provide training to VR counselors on the topic (Goal 3, Objective 3.1, Strategy 1).
2. Use the Technical Assistance Continuing Education Center's services to improve the delivery of Supported Employment Phase 2 services (Goal 3, Objective 3.4, Strategy 2).
3. Continue to use interpreters and translators and VR's online resources, as well as the websites of other partners and stakeholders (where permitted), to reach underserved populations and to increase communication with customers.
4. Offer reasonable accommodations to give equal access to services, and make sure that materials and other program information are available in

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English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole for various agencies, employers, churches, community leaders, health clinics, and other settings.

5. Continue to assign counselors and consultants to serve specialized populations, such as the deaf and hard-of-hearing, transition students, mental health customers, and brain and spinal cord injury customers. These staff members possess or receive the specialized training necessary to effectively serve these specialized groups, as well as perform as community liaisons for them. See Attachment 4.10.
6. Improve collaboration and partnership with other agencies, such as the Veterans Administration, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Children and Families, and Agency for Workforce Innovation, to maximize opportunities and resources for customers (Goal 1, Objective 1.1, Strategies 1 and 2).

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Attachment 4.11 (e) (2): Evaluation and Report of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), established the six goals for Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011. These goals and priorities were developed based on an analysis of VR's performance on the federal and state level standards and indicators, the preliminary result of the statewide needs assessment, and input from consumers, providers, and other stakeholders.

The following section provides VR's evaluation and report of progress in achieving the goals. Also, this attachment reports selected summary results from VR's Needs Assessment Survey and the FRC's customer satisfaction survey research.

FEDERAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

- A. Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: Increase over previous year)
 - Previous Year (2010): -2,492
 - Actual Performance (2011): +1,576

- B. Indicator 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: 55.8 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2010): 37.68 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 47.90 percent

- C. Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment Outcome (Primary) (RSA Target: 72.6 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2010): 99.59 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 99.80 percent

- D. Indicator 1.4: Significance of Disability (Primary) (RSA Target: 62.4 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2010): 93.01 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 97.9 percent

- E. Indicator 1.5: Earnings Ratio (Primary) (RSA Target: 52 percent or greater).
 - Previous Year (2010): 53.50 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 52.30 percent

- F. Indicator 1.6: Self-Support. (RSA Target: 53 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2010): 51.42 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 50.10 percent

- G. Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (RSA Target: 80 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2010): 94.53 percent
 - Actual Performance (2011): 86.10 percent

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Explanation about performance: Two primary factors have contributed to a decrease in performance outcomes. These factors include the following: 1) Invoking an order of selection on August 4, 2008; and 2) A very high rate of unemployment in Florida, which is higher than the national unemployment rate.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Leadership and Collaboration

Objective 1.1: Collaborate effectively with partners at the state and local level to maximize employment services for people with disabilities.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.1):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2)
Target: 55.8 percent; Actual 2011: 47.9 percent
2. Number of Memorandums of Agreement-Target: 23; Actual 2011: 18
3. Number of Memorandums of Understanding-Target: 33; Actual 2011: 25
4. Percent of Employment Outcomes for Individuals from Specific Disability Groups-
Target: Any group served below the national average
Cognitive Impairments: Target: 42 percent; Target change 2012: 45 percent; Actual 2011: 46 percent
Psychosocial/mental: Target: 40 percent; Target change 2012: 43 percent; Actual 2011: 44.6 percent

Objective 1.2: Educate individual employers and the business community about the benefits of employing qualified individuals with disabilities and the services available to support successful employment.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.2):

1. Number of employers who hire VR customers for minimum of 90 days
Target: 7,000; Actual 2011: 4,100.
2. Number of employers who provide OJT training to VR customers.
Target: 90; Actual 2011: 304

Objective 1.3: Maintain full partnerships with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and the Florida Independent Living Council (FILC).

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.3):

1. Percentage of partnership requirements completed.
Target: 100 percent; Actual 2011: 100 percent
2. Satisfaction Rating for Strategic Partners
Target: 80 percent; Actual: Data to be collected

Described below is a summary of VR's partnership efforts with three of its strategic partners listed in Objective 1.3.

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Florida Rehabilitation Council

The FRC works in strategic partnership with VR to facilitate policy and practices consistent with federal and state law, and to promote economic independence for persons with disabilities. In FFY 2011-12, FRC members evaluated VR performance and met with VR staff to understand, monitor, and provide feedback regarding the quality and ongoing impact of VR services, policy changes, financial participation and order of selection. FRC members also met with Florida legislators and others to seek feedback and provide education and advocacy regarding VR services and the needs of our customers. Information packets were delivered which included information about cost of services, return on investment, number of individuals successfully employed and average wages. They were able to see the positive, direct impact and contributions of VR's customers not only in their home areas, but statewide as well.

The FRC monitors customer satisfaction by contracting with Florida State University to conduct two independent surveys. The surveys measure customer satisfaction on multiple scales at the time individuals begin working on their Individualized Plan for Employment and at closure. The results of the FRC customer satisfaction surveys help the FRC develop recommendations to improve VR services. For fiscal year 2010-11, the rate of overall satisfaction for both surveys was 75 percent.

The FRC continues to work with VR staff to develop the Federal/State Plan. In partnership, it was decided that stand-alone state plan public forums will only be required when significant changes to the state plan are expected or occur. The FRC continues to conduct Public Forums during their quarterly meetings held in various areas of the state. These FRC forums are used to gather comments from stakeholders on any topic, including the State Plan, throughout the year. All comments and feedback are reviewed and used to help the Council develop comments and recommendations to VR. The FRC reviewed and voted to approve, with recommendations, the 2013 VR State Plan at their quarterly meeting conducted May 16 – 18, 2012, in Jacksonville, Florida.

Florida Independent Living Council (FILC)

1. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approved the three-year State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The plan was developed in partnership with the Centers for Independent Living and FILC and includes goals that, if achieved, will promote enhanced independent living opportunities for people with disabilities.
2. VR and FILC operate under a Memorandum of Agreement. The agreement aligns with the three-year State Plan for Independent Living.
3. More than 19,000 independent living plans were developed, and more than 24,000 independent living goals were set through the network of 16 Centers for Independent Living.

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Client Assistance Program (CAP)

1. VR continues to receive and address comments from Disability Rights Florida. A CAP representative is further involved in the FRC providing input about VR's functions regarding policy, the development of state plan goals and priorities, evaluation of the effectiveness of the program, and assessment of customer satisfaction.
2. Staff of CAP review VR policy and work together with VR's staff on rehabilitation service delivery to ensure that services to eligible consumers are effective, efficient, and appropriate.
3. CAP consults with the VR ombudsman unit in resolving many of the service delivery issues that are received.

GOAL 2: Improve Service Delivery through Strengthened Workplace Environment and Improved Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Objective 2.1: Improve benefits, salaries, and advancement opportunities for VR employees.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Percent of employees participating in variable time schedules-Target: 100 percent; Actual 2011: All employees can request a non-standard work schedule based on needs. Approximately 95 percent of all non-standard work requests are approved.
2. Percent increase in VR employee compensation-Target: 1.5 percent; Actual 2011: Due to budgetary issues, target pay increases were not an option during this time.
3. These two indicators have been changed for 2011-12. See Goal 1, Objective 2.2 in Attachment 4.11 (c) (1).

Objective 2.2: Ensure that personnel policies and practices are clear and effective and are openly communicated to all VR employees.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 2.2):

1. Percentage of all targeted employees who acknowledge receipt of policies
Target: 100 percent

Objective 2.3: Improve service delivery by enhancing employee skills.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 2.3):

1. Percentage of employees successfully completing training (defined as demonstration of knowledge and demonstration of behavior) Target: 80 percent; Actual 2011: Data will be collected during 2011-12.

Objective 2.4: Provide professional, comfortable office environments that ensure accessibility, safety, and security for employees.

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Indicator and Target (Objective 2.4):

1. Employee satisfaction with office environment (accessible, comfortable, safe) Target: 90 percent; Actual 2011: 83.78 percent for 2010. Employee satisfaction to be measured during 2013.

GOAL 3: Improve Customer Success and Satisfaction

Objective 3.1: Increase the rehabilitation rate.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.1):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2)
Target: 55.8 percent; Actual 2011: 47.9 percent
2. Number of Innovation and Expansion Proposals Adopted-Target: Seven; Actual Number Awarded: VR awarded four contracts to providers for Innovative and Expansion projects.
3. Percentage of Customers Indicating Overall Satisfaction with Services
Target: 80 percent; Actual 2011: 75 percent

Mental Health

Objective 3.2: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with mental health disabilities.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.2):

1. Percentage of individuals receiving services under an IPE that have a mental health disability-Target: 35 percent; Actual 2011: 62.50 percent
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE that have mental health disabilities-Target: 40 percent; Actual 2011: 55 percent

Self-Employment

Objective 3.3: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 3.3):

1. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal-Target: 1.5 percent; Actual 2011: .53 percent
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal-Target: one percent; Actual 2011: .382 percent

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Self-Supporting at Closure

Objective 3.4: Increase the percentage of individuals served who are self-supporting at closure compared to at application.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.4):

1. Percent of individuals served that are self-supporting at closure compared to at application (RSA Indicator 1.6)-Target: 53 percent; Actual 2011: 50.2 percent

Transition

Objective 3.5: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for transition- age individuals who receive VR services under an IPE.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.5):

1. Number of referred transition-age individuals-Target: 17,170; Actual 2011: 17,344
2. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age-Target: 30 percent; Actual 2011: 37.50 percent
3. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age-Target: 25 percent; Actual 2011: 25.7 percent

Policy and Practice

Objective 3.6: Modify VR policy and practices to more effectively address changing requirements of customers and the workplace.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.6):

1. Number of customers who participate in: a) On-the-Job Training and One-stop services Target: Baseline Collected 2010: 324 for On-the-Job Training. Actual 2011: 867. Baseline collected 2010: 758 Referrals from One-stop Centers. Actual 2011: 688

Service Delivery

Objective 3.7: Promote a consistent service delivery process throughout the state.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.7):

1. Percent of findings identified in the quarterly quality assurance reviews that are resolved-Target: Baseline data is being collected during FY 10-11

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Objective 3.8 (ARRA): Continue employment of 24 temporary employees.

Objective 3.9 (ARRA): Increase the number of individuals served by VR.

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Indicators and Targets (Objectives 3.8 & 3.9):

1. Number of temporary employees hired-Target: 24;
Actual 2011: VR sustained 24 temporary employees until July 1, 2011. After July 1, all temporary assignments were hired into full-time positions with the agency or terminated.
2. Number of customers on the waiting list-Target: a) Priority Category 1 = 0; b) Priority Category 2 = 0; c) Priority Category 3 = Less than 3,000
Actual as of March 31, 2012: a) Priority Category 1= 0, b) Priority Category 2= 0
c) Priority Category 3 = 1,335.
3. Length of time between customer notification of invitation from the waiting list and plan development-Target: 95 percent of IPEs completed in less than 120 days; Actual 2011: 85.9 percent

Objective 3.10 (ARRA): Continue On-the-Job Training (OJT) and pre-placement as services to VR's existing Employment and Supported Employment contracts.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.10):

1. Number of VR customers with OJT services as a part of the IPE-Target: 1,259;
Actual 2011: 5,792
2. Number of OJT training agreements with businesses-Target: 75; Actual 2011: 304 employers provided OJT opportunities.

Objective 3.11 (ARRA): Improve and expand Independent Living (IL) services for individuals with significant disabilities.

Objective 3.12 (ARRA): Distribute IL funds to the 16 Centers for Independent Living (CIL).

Indicator and Target (Objectives 3.11 & 3.12):

Design and implementation of innovative, replicable projects-Target: 16; Actual 2010: Close to \$672,000 has been distributed to the CILs to improve and expand IL through the activities listed in Objective 3.12. The deadline for these agreements was September 2011.

1. The outcomes from 16 consumer-controlled projects based on the needs of the local area served by each CIL-Target: Baseline data was collected during FY 09-10; Actual 2010: A majority of the CILs expended some of their ARRA funds to increase the long-term technological core of their programs. Several updated computers, data management systems, and telephone systems. These activities will enable individuals with disabilities to access services and increase accountability. Several CILs used funds to assist individuals' transition from school or institutions to more independent living. A large number of CILs used the funds on other special projects that are consistent with the State Plan for IL, including increasing mental health

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services, employment services, home modifications, assistive technology, and accessibility.

GOAL 4: Improve Infrastructure for Business Processes / Organizational Capability

Objective 4.1: Improve vendor and contract processes.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.1):

1. Percent of vendors completing the certification process within 10 days-Target: 100 percent; Actual 2011: 89.1 percent
2. Average time for vendor certification-Target: 48 hours; Actual 2011: 5.59 days
3. Percent of contracts meeting all contract process timeframe requirements- Target: 100 percent; Actual 2011: 99 percent

Objective 4.2: Update data systems and technology to better support customers and staff.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.2)

Percent of VR offices meeting employee and customer technology requirements-Target: 80 percent; Actual 2011: In 2011, VR completed the implementation phase of the Rehabilitation Electronic Billing Application web-based system. VR developed a survey to assess offices that meet employee and customer technology requirements.

GOAL 5: Improve the System for Ensuring Quality

Objective 5.1: Design an integrated system for managing business processes, reporting performance, and improving performance.

Indicator and Target (Objective 5.1):

1. Percent of indicators trending in the right direction-Target: 90 percent by December 31, 2013; Actual 2010: VR is developing a management report that will contain this information.
2. In April 2011, the Division dissolved the Bureau of Compliance and Oversight (BCO) and established a Monitoring Unit under the Bureau of Administrative Services. During this re-organization, BCO completed the following reviews, according to the work plan (September 2010-August 2011), and these additional projects that were assigned to the newly formed Monitoring Unit.

2010-2011 BCO Work Plan Reviews Completed

A. Stand Among Friends – 07/11

B. Hands on Employment Service – 7/11

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C. FAAST – 10/11

Monitoring Unit Activities

- A. Bishop Grady Villas - 02/12
- B. Diversity Initiatives – 03/12
- C. Vision Community Development – 03/12
- D. Abilities, Inc., Region 20 – 02/12
- E. Initiated development of Monitoring Unit’s new Procedures Manual – (incomplete)
- F. Desk Top Monitoring of approximately 186 Rate Contracts (invoices and supporting documentation) – 09/11
- G. Reviewed Innovation/Expansion Draft Contracts (UCP, Wilson, Best Buddies, Abilities and Hands On) – 06/11
- H. Assisted Rate Contract Managers in pre-auditing invoices and supporting documentation prior to processing for payment from 10/11 through 12/31/2011
- I. Abilities, Inc., Regions 7 and 9 – 04/12

Explanation about Performance: The strategies listed under Goal 5 and the completion of the BCO’s work plan contributed to VR’s efforts in maintaining internal controls to assure effective, efficient operations in the delivery of services to eligible individuals with disabilities.

Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

In FFY 2010-11, VR, with the agreement of the FRC, continued to use funds designated under this section to support the functions of the FRC and FILC and to embrace opportunities for improving the efficiency of service delivery.

Actual Performance:

VR continues to support and partner with the FRC and FILC as required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Specific progress information for these councils is discussed under Goal 1, above.

VR completed a competitive procurement and awarded four contracts to providers for Innovation and Expansion projects. The innovative services include virtual reality simulators for customers with severe disabilities, vocational services and assistance for transitioning youth with most significant disabilities, and assistance and supports for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury or significant mental illnesses.

Explanation about Progress:

The collaborative efforts helped strengthen leadership and improved services, which led to increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It is anticipated that the results gained through the four Innovation and Expansion projects will help improve VR’s rehabilitation rate.

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Evaluation of Supported Employment Program

Attachments 4.11 (c) (4)

This is an update of VR's progress in providing Supported Employment services. For specific information about the goals and strategies, see attachment 4.11 (c) (4) and attachment 6.3.

Goal 1: Increase service capacity for individuals with the most significant disabilities

Actual Performance:

1. VR allocated VI-B funds among its six areas on the same basis as Title I funds to ensure individuals with most significant disabilities have equal access statewide to VR services.
2. Training for new counselors includes an increased focus on innovative ways to increase employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities.

Goal 2: Utilize Title VI-B funds to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities

Actual Performance:

VR provided Supported Employment services, when appropriate, to individuals with most significant disabilities, including those with developmental disabilities, who may benefit from Supported Employment services. Data below represent VR's performance in serving consumers under Title VI-B.

VR's desire to provide Supported Employment services was complicated by the lack of sufficient partner resources for commitment of long term supports. As budgets are reduced at state and local levels, creative resource sharing and options are being explored with stakeholders.

In response to these challenges VR increased its collaboration with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and other stakeholders to help develop pilot projects designed to increase employment opportunities to those individuals with most significant disabilities.

1. Average number of active cases: Previous Year (2010): 4,541
Actual Performance (2011): 5,070
2. Number of Individualized Plans for Employment: Previous Year (2010): 2,319
Actual Performance (2011): 1,791
3. Number of Rehabilitations: Previous Year (2010): 122
Actual Performance (2010): 345

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Goal 3: Utilize the five percent permitted for administration to fund development and delivery of training and technical assistance

Actual Performance:

1. VR collaborated and partnered with the Department of Children and Families and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) at all organizational levels.
2. The Supported Employment administrator continues to provide training on service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities to new counselors, as well as follow-up trainings and technical assistance to seasoned counselors and supervisors at conferences, meetings, workshops, and upon request.
3. The administrator also provides training to families and members in the community as requested. These sessions are designed to provide information and a vision that Supported Employment services are designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities. It provides families and customers with the information they need to become successfully employed. The sessions were provided to the following:
 - a. Florida Developmental Disability Council
 - b. Family Care Council
 - c. Waiver Support Coordinators
 - d. Florida Rehabilitation Council
 - e. Florida Project Search Participant Sites
 - f. Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultant Area Training
 - g. Transition Committees
 - h. Individualized Trainings
 - i. Family Disability Network
 - j. Florida Department of Education Staff
4. The following strategies were used to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities:
 - a. Representation on the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and Employment Task Force
 - b. Representation on the Interagency Services Committee
 - c. Representation on the Medicaid Infrastructure Advisory Committee
 - d. Representation on the Asset Development Advisory Committee
 - e. Presentations on Supported Employment at conferences around the state including: Family Café, Florida Association for Supported Employment, VISIONS, and AmeriCorps
 - f. Participation in the development of a transition website that offers information for professionals, families, and students regarding employment options

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GOAL 4: Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services

Actual Performance:

1. VR staffs continue to serve as resource members on Business Leadership Networks to educate businesses and employers about on-the-job supports for individuals in supported employment.
2. VR and APD staff continue to provide training for VR counselors, waiver support coordinators, and for APD field staff on best practices in Supported Employment and the roles and responsibilities of all partners.
3. VR staff participate on a periodic basis in APD hosted conference calls, as well as quarterly meetings designed to make the Supported Employment service delivery system for mutual clients an effective and efficient one.
4. The Supported Employment administrator provides training to field staff on the multiple options available for extended services.

Explanation of Performance:

The strategies reported above helped VR increase services and employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

Attachment 6.3

Actual Performance:

1. VR, in collaboration with the Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, contracts with 19 schools districts to help provide community-based work experiences to students with disabilities.
2. The VR administrator presented at the Family Care Council, Family Café, Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Business Leadership Network, Florida Developmental Disability Council, and the VISIONS Conference in an effort to increase awareness about using natural supports and emphasized its use as a realistic option for successful job maintenance.
3. The VR administrator partners with APD to provide joint skills development training on supported employment to counselors and waiver support coordinators, and provides technical assistance, as needed.
4. Local area VR counselors and supervisors participated in the Social Security's Work Incentive Benefits and Impairment Related Work Expenses trainings provided by the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project and the APDs Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.
5. The VR administrator provides training to Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultants and VR staff to encourage the use of supported self-

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employment as an employment option for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Explanation of Performance:

The strategies reported above helped VR improve services and employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

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Attachment 6.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Quality

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is committed to providing quality Supported Employment (SE) services to people with the most significant disabilities. VR supports the individual in making employment choices consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests.

VR has developed collaborative programs with appropriate public and private not for profit organizations to provide the required resources for successful Supported Employment outcomes.

VR counselors help individuals pursue the goals detailed in the individualized plan for employment (IPE) by using Supported Employment resources to the individual's best advantage. VR actively involves customers and families as appropriate in assessment, planning, and decision making throughout the service delivery process.

VR strives to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its services and make improvements to them as needed. A key component of evaluating the services is the individual and employer's satisfaction with the services and supports as well as the job placement itself.

Extended services are provided and/or funded by sources other than VR. VR works collaboratively with other state agencies and organizations to ensure that extended ongoing support services identified on the individualized plan for employment are available for as long as the customer needs them. VR counselors monitor Supported Employment cases closely and evaluate the case for employment stability prior to closure.

VR is also collaborating with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and other stakeholders in piloting new and innovative employment practices designed for individuals with the most significant needs.

Scope

The scope of Supported Employment services is an intensive array of services that include all services under Title 1, the coordination of extended ongoing support services, and the development of natural supports.

"Phase 1 Supported Employment Services" are those services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment.

Supported Employment makes possible competitive employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally

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occurred, and who, because of the severity of their disability need ongoing support services in order to maintain their job.

These services are for a period of time not to exceed 18 months and are funded by VR. Under special circumstances, the customer and VR counselor may jointly agree in writing to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE.

Post-employment services may be provided when supports and services are needed which exceed the responsibility of the extended ongoing support service provider.

Services are individually designed around the needs and desires of the customer and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Initial placement and stabilization in the workplace
- Job Coaching
- Assistive Technology
- Specialized Job Training
- Social Skill Training
- Formal and informal work site related expectations (e.g., time and attendance, dress, communication)

Extent

VR will continue to look to expand Supported Employment services by educating community members, providers, and relevant stakeholders.

The amount of Supported Employment services is determined by the following: a statewide needs assessment; analysis of historic performance data; number of students exiting schools; and data provided by agency partners, particularly the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), and the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program.

Supported Employment services are provided as long as resources are available by collaborative efforts to improve funding for Phase 2 Follow-Along.

VR will:

- Continue to use cooperative agreements with APD and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, including maximizing funding for shared clients.
- Implement the Interagency Articulation Agreement between VR and APD, as well as the cooperative agreement with the Department of Children and Families, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse to decrease barriers for individuals working with multiple agencies while seeking employment.

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- Continue to implement the cooperative agreements at the local levels with appropriate stakeholders.
- Develop strategies to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved in the cooperative agreements.
- Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring an efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services, information collection and dissemination, confidentiality, and technical assistance.
- Implement an interagency planning process between VR and APD that defines and projects the number of people in need of intensive and extended services each fiscal year and facilitates program and fiscal planning.
- Expand the extent of available services through the School to Work Program's collaboration with local school districts.
- Emphasize the provision of services to all racial/ethnic minorities.
- Seek additional resources for Phase II services through legislative funding requests and/or collaboration with agency partners, including APD, Agency for Healthcare Administration, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Education, and others.
- Collaborate with community organizations, employers, families, and support groups to develop natural supports for supported employment extended services.
- Partner with Mental Health's Florida Assertive Community Treatment teams to provide supported employment services to individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses and individuals exiting psychiatric/mental health facilities.
- Participate in the Interagency Services Committee to expand interagency initiatives and increase employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Distribute information and train counselors about Social Security work incentives. Increase the awareness of using a Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency as an option for funding extended services.
- Provide training on using natural supports, including self-pay, family/friends, and employers. Train stakeholders on the use of natural supports to assist customers on the job site.

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- Provide opportunities for counselors, providers, and support coordinators to receive training on innovative employment strategies designed to promote employment success for individuals.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES – PHASE II

Transition to Extended Services

Transition occurs a minimum of 90 days after “stabilization.” Responsibility for funding ongoing support service transitions at this time go from VR to the source of funding for the ongoing support services.

Supported Employment Outcome Closure of a person successfully rehabilitated in a supported employment outcome occurs when the following criteria are met: (a) 90 days following stabilization and 60 days from transition to closure (to assure on-going supports are successful following transition), or (b) a minimum of 150 days of continuous employment following stabilization.

Extent of Extended Support Services

VR has developed a Supported Employment action plan to address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and others who may require Supported Employment services. VR’s action plan focuses on improved collaboration, enhanced staff and provider skills, and better use of existing resources.