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TENNESSEE
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

State Plan For The
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

Title I – Part B

Title VI – Part B

Fiscal Year 2015

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DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
TITLE 1, STATE PLAN AND ITS TITLE VI, PART B SUPPLEMENT FOR THE
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2015

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Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

This information is required to be published annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

PURPOSE:

To identify the input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

1. The Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
2. Explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act), and 34 CFR §361.16.17 of its implementing regulations. The SRC gives advice to and works in partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (referred to as “the Division” throughout this report) including input on the state plan. The following represent the comments and input of the State Rehabilitation Council with respect to the FY 2013 state plan.

- I. The SRC commends Assistant Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street and the Division for her continued commitment to providing an open system of communication with the SRC. The SRC commends Assistant Commissioner Campbell-Street for maintaining the opening PC 2 and recommend the release of PC3 and recommends that the division re-evaluate the order of selection on an ongoing basis if PC 3 & 4 can be opened in FY 15, if feasible. The SRC looks forward to Assistant Commissioner Campbell-Street hiring a Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and making IPE's more accessible for people who are blind and visually impaired.

RESPONSE: Priority Category 2 has been open for services since October 2012 and there was a release of all clients in Priority Category 3 from the waiting list in October 2013. The Division continues to monitor the number of cases on the waiting list as well as the capacity of the Division to open Priority Categories 3 and 4. The Director of Deaf and Hard and Hearing Services has been approved.

The Division is not aware of any accessibility issues with the IPE for people blind and visually impaired.

- II. In order for the SRC to make informed decisions and recommendations on the State VR program, the SRC recommends the Division continue to improve the process of providing the reports defined in 34 CFR Section 361.16(a)(2)(iv) to the SRC with adequate time to review and provide input/feedback before the reports are submitted to RSA.

RESPONSE: The Division will continue its efforts to work with the SRC to meet both internal and external deadlines. The Division would like to express its appreciation to the council for providing feedback and hopes it too will be mindful of providing information to the Division in a timely manner.

- III. The SRC is excited about the full participation between the Division and SRC in writing the State Plan for FY 14. The SRC commends the Division for collaborating with the SRC in this process. SRC commends the Assistant Commissioner and new Vocational Rehabilitation Director for coordinating this effort and placing importance and value on SRC involvement. The Division implemented a new format this year including a two day event for SRC Members, CIL Directors, and the Division staff to participate in writing the State Plan. The SRC commends the Division on conducting the Public Hearings at neutral sites, providing adequate publicizing/notification of Public Hearings, and being prepared to answer questions from the public.

RESPONSE: The Division believes the involvement of the SRC and the CILs is critical and necessary to the successful development of the State Plan. The Division will continue to schedule Public Hearings in accordance with RSA guidelines.

IV. The SRC is confident that the new Administration will allocate significant additional funding to direct client services and opening Priority Category 03 and Priority Category 04. SRC commends the new Administration on their commitment to moving out of the order of selection.

RESPONSE: Priority Category 2 has been open for services since October 2012 and there was a release of all clients in Priority Category 3 from the waiting list in October 2013. The Division continues to monitor the number of cases on the waiting list as well as the capacity of the Division to open Priority Category 3.

V. To further enhance the congressional mandate for the SRC to assist and participate in setting goals and priorities with the Division, the SRC commends the Division on working collaboratively with the SRC in conducting focus groups and providing input to the needs assessment and client satisfaction surveys.

RESPONSE: The Division is committed to working with the SRC, workforce partners and clients to conduct the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Client Satisfaction Surveys. These instruments are used to guide the direction of all program changes and improvements.

VI. The SRC understands the Division has an interagency agreement with the Department of Education to provide services to transition aged students with disabilities to assist them in making the transition from school to work. The SRC strongly recommends that the Division implement a procedure to develop a student's IPE shortly after priority category

placement to provide career exploration and job placement services earlier in the student's high school career. The SRC recommends the Division set a goal to provide a TSW Counselor in every county in the State of TN. The SRC understands that the Division is developing a plan to being the process of planning and working with students to transition from school to work earlier in their high school career.

RESPONSE: The Division agrees with recommendation of providing a Counselor in every county of the State. For those larger counties the division will assign more than one counselor. In the current transition school to work plans, as the division increases the number of transition school to work counselors, there will be consultative services available at age 14.

- VII. The SRC recommends the Division provide any and all proposed changes to the VR policy manuals and Procedural Directives to the SRC, before the manual is modified. The SRC would like to review and provide input on all policy manual changes before they become official.

RESPONSE: The Division agrees with this recommendation and will provide the SRC with any proposed changes before they become official.

- VIII. The SRC recommends the Division create a marketing plan to educate the public on Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The SRC has received many comments from the parents that have children with disabilities that they do not know what resources are available for their children after high school.

RESPONSE: The Division is currently in the development of new and improved marketing materials under the leadership of the new Statewide Business Employment Consultant.

- IX. The SRC recommends the Division implement more Innovation and Expansion grants, specifically targeting employment for individuals that have graduated from or are attending college or university to gain work experience, additional services for deaf and hard of hearing, and services for Vocational Rehabilitation clients with autism.

RESPONSE: The Division is currently in the process of hiring a Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing with the responsibility of increasing employment opportunities and outcomes for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The Division supports students attending the Mosaic program at University of Tennessee/Chattanooga. This program is designed specifically for students on the Autism spectrum.

Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

PURPOSE:

Identify the types of services to be provided by the program for which the waiver of statewideness is requested.

The waiver request should also include:

1. A written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-federal share of funds;
2. A written assurance that designated state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect;
3. A written assurance that all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

The Division requests a waiver of statewideness in order to maintain twenty-one Third Party Agreements with local education agencies (LEAs). These Third Party Agreements are designed to provide enhanced and concentrated services to Transition School to Work students/clients covered by the agreements. The Division has a contract with each entity that is consistent with Federal regulations (34 CFR § 361.26) and includes the following provisions:

1. The vocational rehabilitation services to be provided are identified in Section A. Scope of Services in each contract (Each contract has been submitted separately to RSA to provide the written assurances requested for this attachment);
2. The LEA assures that non-Federal funds are made available to the Division by committing to their maintenance of effort in Section E.13 of the contract;
3. The LEA assures that the Division's approval is required before services are provided with the Division's counselor determining eligibility for each client served;
4. The LEA assures, through the Division's vocational rehabilitation counselors, that all other state plan requirements, including the Order of Selection policy, are applied to persons receiving services through the agreement; and
5. The LEA assures that reasonable accommodations will be provided.

A list of the LEA contracts is provided below:

Anderson County Schools
Bledsoe County Schools
Blount County Schools
Carter County Schools and Johnson County Schools
Clarksville Montgomery County Schools
Cocke County Schools
Elizabethton City Schools
Greene County Schools and Greeneville City Schools
Hamblen County Schools
Henderson County Schools
Humboldt City Schools, Trenton Special School District, Milan Special School District
Jackson-Madison County Schools
Knox County Schools
McMinn County Schools
Putnam County Schools
Robertson County School
Sequatchie County Schools
Sevier County Schools
Union County Schools
Washington County Schools

In fiscal year 2014 the division changed the services offered under the TSW agreements. These new agreements provide more innovative services to the LEAs and the students.

While the Division provides transition services to all LEAs throughout the state, these transition contracts enable the provision of an expanded and more intense transition service to students/clients resulting from the inclusion of job coaches, case manager assistants, and transition specialists that would not otherwise be available to work with the vocational

rehabilitation clients. These contracts enable the Division to have a greater presence within the schools and act as a stronger resource to the LEAs in the provision of transition services. The Division will continue to make efforts to increase the number of LEA Third Party Agreements.

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Attachment 4.8(b) (1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

PURPOSE:

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

1. Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
2. If applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
3. If applicable, state use contracting programs.

The Division has interagency cooperation, collaboration, and coordination with other state and local entities that are not components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System.

The Division works in cooperation with the following Federal, state, and local agencies and programs to provide services for individuals with significant disabilities:

1. The Department of Children's Services for youth;
2. The Department of Health in providing services to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI);
3. Post-secondary school systems and their governing bodies;
4. The Department of Education and Local Education Agencies for individuals who are transitioning from school to work.
5. The Department of Corrections for individuals released from state correctional facilities;
6. The Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole for individuals released from state correctional facilities and monitored by the Board.
7. Local city police, county sheriffs and judge's programs for individuals being released from jails or on probation or trial diversion;

8. The Department of Human Services Division of Adult and Family Services for individuals participating in services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program;
9. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for individuals with mental illness and substance related disorders;
10. The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
11. University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment for marketing to businesses the services provided by the Division, to recruit businesses to hire the Division's clients and to provide staff training and development and consultation services for community supported employment service providers;
12. Tennessee AgrAbility program for professions in agriculture production. This is a cooperative effort of the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program, and Easter Seals in Tennessee, Special Technology Access Center, East Tennessee Technology Access Center and other collaborative entities of the Division;
13. Tennessee Works for employment partnerships and collaborative efforts to increase access to meaningful work and internet-based information.
14. Community Rehabilitation Agencies of Tennessee which administers the Tennessee State Use Program, directs government procurement toward organizations serving individuals with disabilities.
15. Tennessee's Alliance for Full Participation (AFP), an alliance of community and State organizations and agencies that works to enhance the employment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
16. Council on Developmental Disabilities that promotes public policies to increase and support the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities and works with public and private groups across the State to find necessary supports for individuals with disabilities and their families, so that they may have equal access to public education, employment, housing, health care, and all other aspects of community life.

17. Tennessee Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind that operate in six communities and provide interpreter services consultation.
18. Tennessee Technology Access Programs that operate in five communities and provide assistive technology services and evaluations.
19. Tennessee Centers for Independent Living that operate in six local communities are operated primarily by persons with disabilities and provide a variety of independent living services.
20. Community Rehabilitation Providers throughout the state that provide rehabilitation services under a Letter of Agreement.

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

PURPOSE:

Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including provisions for the development and approval of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before each student is determined eligible for VR services and leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating under an order of selection, before each eligible student that can be served under the order leaves the school setting. Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to:

1. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
2. Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
3. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, reasonable accommodations, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
4. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The Division maintains an ongoing interagency agreement with the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, Bureau of TennCare, Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Tennessee Department of Corrections. The agreement, along with the Division's policy manual and Standard Procedures Directives, outlines the plans, policies and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the participation of the Division staff in

transition planning and the referral of students with disabilities to the Division for a determination of eligibility for VR services.

When a student who is eligible based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) standards reaches the age of fourteen (14), the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, as defined by 34 CFR § 300.344, formulates a statement of transition service needs as a component of the IEP. The Division's staff is invited and to the extent possible participates in these IEP meetings.

The Division has been under an Order of Selection since 2001. Under the current Order, the Division is able to provide direct services to those eligible individuals in Priority Category 1 and Priority Category 2. The Division was able to open Priority Category 2 effective September 30, 2012. There was a release of clients from the waiting list in Priority Category 3 on October 1, 2013. The opening and release of clients from the waiting list allows for the provision of direct services to significantly more students with disabilities. The Division provides information and referral services to help all applicants find services through other agencies and entities.

The IEP team, which should include the Division's staff, parent and student, determines that the student should be referred for VR services, the Division's staff should inform the student and parents, preferable at the IEP meeting, the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program. This information should include the application procedures, the eligibility requirements including the Order of Selection, and the potential scope of services that may be available. As soon as possible after referral, the Division takes an application from the student and determines eligibility as well as whether the student is in an open priority category. If the student is in an open priority category, the Division's staff assists in the formulation of the student's IEP and the student's vocational rehabilitation Individualized Plan for Employment as soon as it is determined that the student can benefit from services provided by the Division in preparation for exiting the school system and transitioning into training and/or employment. Services provided by the Division may include attending job fairs, community vocational adjustment training and pre-employment, college readiness and job readiness training.

The LEA's involved in the interagency agreement with the Division should cooperate in developing and coordinating services for youth with disabilities within each respective agency's legal authority. The ultimate goal of each agency participating in the agreement is to provide, or cause to be provided, a continuum of appropriate services leading to transition from school into employment. The agreement provides for:

1. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
2. Consultation and technical assistance on providing reasonable accommodations;
3. Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-446);
4. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
5. Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

A VR counselor is assigned to work with each local education agency (LEA) for the purposes of referrals, eligibility determination and the provision of services to eligible students. In twenty-one LEAs, the VR counselor is dedicated to the LEA under a contract with the LEA. VR counselors provide technical assistance to school personnel and LEAs to help them identify appropriate referrals for vocational rehabilitation services. The VR counselor also provides information and referral to students not eligible for VR services.

It is the Division's policy that the development and approval of the IPE for each student determined eligible for VR services occurs as soon as it is determined that the student can benefit

from services provided by the Division. An IPE must be developed before the student leaves the school setting.

The interagency agreement identifies the financial responsibility of the Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that individuals who are IDEIA eligible receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. A free appropriate public education means regular and special education and related services which:

1. Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parent;
2. Meet the standards established by state law, including the requirements of IDEIA Part B and the Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards for the Governance of Tennessee Public Schools, issued by DOE;
3. Include preschool, elementary school, and secondary school (including appropriate vocational, career or work experience education); and
4. Are provided in conformity with an IEP.

The interagency agreement relates the financial responsibility of the Division to ensure that individuals who are IDEIA eligible and also meet the Division's eligibility requirements will receive VR Services. VR Services means any services necessary to determine eligibility and those services described in an IPE necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual.

The LEA is responsible for the educational costs related to the provision of special education and related services for the individual attending school. The agreement states that if another public agency is obligated under federal or state law or assigned responsibility under state policy to provide or pay for any services that are considered special education or related services and are necessary for ensuring FAPE to students who are IDEIA eligible, the public agency shall fulfill that obligation or responsibility, directly, through contract or by another arrangement. However,

failure of that public agency to pay for that service does not relieve the LEA of its obligation to provide that service to an individual with a disability in a timely manner.

The Division is responsible for all costs necessary for eligibility determination and provision of services under an IPE. The Division must take into account comparable services and benefits [34 CFR § 361.53 (c)(1)], available under any other program that does not interrupt or delay the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the IPE.

The Division's staff maintains a working relationship with special education supervisors, vocational education supervisors, directors, secondary school guidance counselors, and LEA administrators for the purpose of providing outreach for students with disabilities and technical assistance to school personnel to assist LEAs in preparing students with disabilities for career opportunities. The Division participates in in-service training programs for LEAs, as well as in statewide special education conferences for the purpose of providing information regarding VR services. The Division also participates in and organizes local community job fairs, job clubs, attends civic club/organization meetings to inform students and parents of the purpose of the VR program, the application procedures, the eligibility requirements, and the potential scope of services that may be available.

Other activities to identify students with physical, mental or emotional disabilities who do not meet the criteria for special education services (commonly referred to as Section 504 services) include completion of student health survey forms coordinated with guidance counselors or general education teachers.

It is the Division's intent to develop relationships with LEA middle or junior high schools to provide consultation for students with disabilities who are about to enter high school.

The Division has a dedicated full-time state office position that coordinates transition services statewide. This position serves as liaison with the State Department of Education and other partners in the interagency agreement to provide technical assistance and training related to

vocational rehabilitation services. This position works with VR counselors and supervisory staff to improve access and services for students with disabilities. This position identifies, arranges for, or provides training to the Division's counselors, educators, students with disabilities, and families in a variety of areas related to transition services. The Division plans to fill this position during this fiscal year to ensure that services are coordinated properly.

The Division currently contracts with twenty-one LEAs as part of its transition initiative. The contracts provide for a menu of needed and additional services chosen by the LEA to assist in the transitioning of students from school to work.. All services provided under these contracts/agreements have a VR employment focus. All services provided under these contracts/agreements are in keeping with all state plan requirements to include our state's Order of Selection requirements. Services provided under these contracts/agreements are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services of the Division. The Division will strive to increase the number of contracts with LEAs as allowed by the Division's and LEAs' funding availability.

Although the Division utilizes contracts with LEAs as part of its transition initiative, all decisions affecting eligibility for VR services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of these services remain the sole responsibility of the VR counselor employed by the Division. VR staff is responsible for determinations to close cases and for all allocations of expenditures for services.

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

PURPOSE:

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Based on information gathered by continuing statewide studies, the annual facility survey of public and private community rehabilitation programs and the on-going monitoring and annual evaluation of effectiveness, the Division continues to maximize the use of community rehabilitation programs to provide rehabilitation services in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the informed choices of the individual.

The Division is utilizing community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) throughout the state as follows:

I. The Division's Facility Program:

A. The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (Center) at Smyrna is a state operated comprehensive residential rehabilitation facility that serves individuals with significant disabilities. The facility is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in programs of comprehensive vocational evaluation services, employee development services, and employment skills training services. The Center offers the following program and support services:

i. Program Services

- Comprehensive vocational evaluation and mobile evaluation services
- Job objectives and behavioral services, a pre-vocational work adjustment training program
- Occupational skills training in automotive maintenance/detailing, building maintenance and grounds keeping, business education, commercial cleaning, food service, and warehouse training

- Physical rehabilitation services to include: occupational, physical and recreational therapy; rehabilitation nursing services, personal care attendant training and adaptive equipment assessments.

Outpatient services are also provided in occupational and physical therapy services and adaptive equipment assessments.

- Traumatic brain injury services to include: occupational, physical, cognitive, and speech/language therapy; vocational evaluation; behavioral instruction, job readiness instruction and community re-entry training.

- Transitional life skills training to include: managing self-care and daily living skills; home management skills and practices; financial management skills and practices; transportation; health maintenance; comparative shopping; meal preparation; and civil rights and advocacy.

- Vision impairment services to include: pre-vocational assessment and training for independent living; college preparation services; assistive technology assessments and training; computer training; self employment evaluation and instruction; GED preparation; and prerequisite training for entry into Tennessee Business Enterprises.

ii. Support Services

- Residential living

- Client health services

- Case management services

- Drivers education

- Psychiatric and physician services

- Recreation therapy and leisure-time skills

- Remedial education

- Job seeking skills training

- Psychological services

- Independent living skills training

The Center operates at a program capacity of 160 individuals and provides services to approximately 1,200 Tennesseans with significant disabilities each year.

The Center is a member of the National Consortium of State Operated Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers. An Advisory Council is utilized to provide valuable feedback used in guiding decision making in Center operations and program development. In addition, the Center conducts exit customer satisfaction surveys on individuals completing services, from each program of service provided, completes support services customer satisfaction surveys twice a year with clients receiving services, and conducts client family surveys, as well as a referring counselor needs assessment and satisfaction survey on an annual basis. Feedback obtained from these survey instruments is also used in guiding decisions about current and future support services and program services operations, as well as accessibility and physical plant operations.

B. A network of 17 Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers (TRCs) is located across the state providing day services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities, seeking competitive employment. All community TRC facilities are accredited by the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in programs of comprehensive vocational evaluation and employee development services. The TRCs are supported by a combination of appropriated local and Federal funds.

i. Program Services

- Vocational Evaluation

- Comprehensive vocational evaluation services provide an individualized, timely and systematic process for identifying viable vocational options and developing employment goals and objectives.

An accredited comprehensive vocational evaluation service is used to examine a wide range of employment alternatives using the following techniques:

1. Assessment of functional/occupational performance in real or simulated environments
2. Psychometric testing
3. Preference and interest inventories
4. Personality testing
5. Extensive personal interviews
6. Other appropriate evaluation tests depending on the individual
7. Analysis of prior work experience and transferable skills
8. Employee Development Services
9. Services are based upon individual needs and can include comprehensive employment services or any individual component.
10. Employee development services and/or job readiness instruction
11. Work skills development through a facility workshop: including the use of contract work, job readiness assessment and training.
12. Community Employment Services include: (job development and placement)
13. Job readiness assessment and instruction includes: interview skills instruction, completing a job application, developing a resume, grooming and hygiene for the work place, self determination training, developing and using job-finding networks and resources.
14. Job readiness assessment and instruction
15. Job development and placement into competitive employment through the identification of employment opportunities in the local job market
16. Development of realistic employment goals
17. Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes
18. Identification of resources to achieve and maintain employment.
19. Coordination of and referral to employment related services.

TRC facilities conduct exit customer satisfaction surveys on individuals completing services from each program of service provided, completes a yearly survey with clients receiving services, referring counselors, contract providers, funding sources, employers,

and other identified stakeholders. Feedback obtained from the surveys is used to improve program services.

II. Service Contracts:

A. The Division plans to continue service contracts with the following community rehabilitation programs to ensure quality services statewide provided funding is available:

- Clovernook
- Department of Education
- National Federation for the Blind
- Southeast TN Human Resource Agency
- Technology Centers: East Tennessee Technology Access in Knoxville; Signal Centers; Technology Access Center of Middle Tennessee in Nashville; West Tennessee Special Technology Access Resource (STAR) Center in Jackson; and Mid-South ACT in Memphis
- Tennessee Disability Coalition Benefits to Work
- University of Memphis Training and Technical Assistance Project
- University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy Studies
- Vanderbilt University Return to Work Program
- Vocational Consulting Services

B. The Division has two service contracts with community rehabilitation programs (Clovernook and Volunteer Blind Industries, Inc.) serving visually impaired clients in the areas of evaluation, adjustment, activities of daily living, orientation and mobility, training, job development and employment.

III. Letters of Agreement

A. Beginning in FFY2013, the Division began a rewrite of the Letters of Understanding (LOU), to change them to Letters of Agreement (LOA) . The LOA has the same purpose as the LOU in that it is an agreement between the

Division and the Community Rehabilitation Programs and in cooperation with the Department of Finance and Administration. The LOA describes the functions and responsibilities of the Division and the CRP as well as the scope of services and payment methodology agreed upon by both the Division and CRP in a joint effort of improving and expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Some of the differences in the LOAs from the LOUs are:

- Concentrated focus on outcomes rather than services
- Different payment schedule based on Priority Category assignment of the client
- Bonus for exceptional wages
- Streamlined application and approval process

B. The Division has 111 LOAs with CRPs throughout the state.

- 15 LOAs for evaluation
- 20 LOAs for Vocational Adjustment Services
- 61 LOAs for Trial Work Experiences
- 91 LOAs for Job Placement Services
- 79 LOAs for supported employment services;

The Divisions Facility Programs, Service Contracts and Letters of Agreements are used to provide needed services such as but not limited to:

- Vocational evaluation
- Personal and vocational adjustment training
- Transportation and daily meals
- Vocational training
- Job readiness training
- Job development and job placement
- Supported employment
- Rehabilitation technology
- Orientation and mobility

- Activities of daily living
- Trial work experiences
- Follow-up and follow along services

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

PURPOSE:

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

1. Supported employment services
2. Extended services and
3. Customized Employment

The Division has interagency arrangements and coordination with the following entities for the provision of supported employment services and extended services:

1. The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
2. Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities for individuals with disabilities that began during the early developmental years;
3. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for individuals with mental illness and substance related disorders;
4. The Tennessee Employment Consortium, an independent association of community rehabilitation providers and state agencies developed jointly by the Division, the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities to provide a forum for all stakeholders to review and discuss state policies and share best practices;
5. University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy Education and Employment to provide staff training and development and consultation services for community supported employment service providers; and
6. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, to provide customized employment services through their system of Career Centers on behalf of VR clients and business and industry.

The Division has encouraged the establishment and development of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to improve and expand services through Letters of Agreement. The Letter of Agreement (LOA) is an agreement between the Division and the CRP and in cooperation with the Department of Finance and Administration. The LOA describes the functions and responsibilities of the Division and the CRP as well as the scope of services and payment methodology agreed upon by both the Division and CRP in a joint effort of improving and expanding supported employment and extended services for individuals with disabilities. The Division currently has 79 LOAs for supported employment services. The Division continues its' efforts to increase S.E. providers and anticipates the numbers of providers will increase. VR is actively pursuing a number of other providers for underserved areas across the state.

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

PURPOSE:

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

1. The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
2. The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
3. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The Division received 7279 new applications for services in Fiscal Year 2013 and provided services to 23,542 individuals.

The Division currently has 557 allocated positions. Of these 557 positions, 92 are currently vacant (16.5%). Of those positions 160 positions are Counselors. 134 of the counseling positions are currently filled. The percentage of currently vacant counselor positions is 16.2% which is lower than the vacancy rate from last year of 33.2%. Over the next fiscal year the division has plans to fill all of its counselor vacancies with staff that have at least a Master's degree. All counselors will meet the CSPD requirement by January 1, 2018.

The Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services utilizes a department wide on-line computer system known as Edison for collecting and tracking all personnel actions relative to positions being vacated (resignations, terminations, retirement) as well as tracking personnel data relative

to filling vacant positions (new hires, position transfers and/or promotions).

Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
Administrative	36	7	5
Clerical	90	6	15
Rehabilitation Assistants	68	8	7
Supervisors	62	3	10
Support	59	8	15
Instructor	38	1	3
VR Direct Client Services Staff	301	68	60
Medical	28	3	10
BEP Specialist/Consultant	15	0	2

PURPOSE:

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

1. A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
2. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
3. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

In Tennessee, there are two universities that have Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) certified programs offering a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling. One is The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, which is located in the eastern part of the state; and the other is The University of Memphis, located in the western part of the state.

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) has an on-campus program with a current enrollment of 18 students. Additionally, 9 individuals are enrolled in UTK’s distance education program, 3 of whom are employees of the Division. Of the 18 students currently enrolled, 5 have disabilities and 1 student represents a minority. For the federal fiscal year (10/12 – 9/13), 15 students graduated from the program. All 15 graduates met the academic criteria to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.

The University of Memphis currently has 26 graduate students in their on-campus program. None (0%) of these students are employed by the Division. Of the 26 on-campus students, 7 have a disability (25%) and 11 represent a minority group (39%). For the federal fiscal year (10/11-9/12), 7 students graduated from the on-campus program. All graduates met the academic criteria to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam and four (57%) successfully obtained their CRC credential.

Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
University of Memphis	26	2	6	7
University of TN – Knoxville	18	3	2	15

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

PURPOSE:

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Members of the Division's leadership team have quarterly contact with the program administrators at the University of Tennessee and the University of Memphis for the purpose of planning and sharing information relative to personnel development activities. The Rehabilitation Services Training Unit staff also meets or corresponds with University of Tennessee and University of Memphis staff for the purpose of gathering information regarding the number of students enrolled in their respective rehabilitation counselor education programs, as well as the number who graduated from their programs during the past year.

To advance recruitment activities, the Division has dedicated a program specialist position. This program specialist is actively seeking out other masters level programs across the nation; primarily those with RSA funded slots, to increase the number of incumbent staff in masters programs. Other duties of the program specialist include developing/distributing recruiting brochures at job fairs, speaking to graduate level programs to promote state employment in the rehabilitation field and encouraging incumbent staff to take advantage of graduate level training opportunities in rehabilitation counseling distance learning programs. The Division recognizes that recruitment activities are also the responsibility of counseling, supervisory and management level staff across the state with these personnel involved in recruitment activities in their regional and local communities.

The Tennessee Excellence, Accountability and Management (TEAM) Act of 2012 is designed to establish methods for attracting, selecting, retaining and promoting the best applicants and employees based on performance and equal opportunity, free from coercive political influence, and to provide technically competent employees to render impartial service to the public at all times. The TEAM Act will give agencies greater flexibility in personnel management and increase customer focused effectiveness and efficiency in a best practice environment, and by

doing so, will allow the Division to strengthen its efforts to hire and retain top quality counselors.

The Division plans to expand internships to students enrolled in a rehabilitation counseling program of study. Current incentives for incumbent staff to participate in a Master's degree program include financial assistance with tuition, books, fees, and minimal educational leave. Funding for a pay incentive based upon successful completion of a Master's Degree program was approved in January 2005 for graduates and has been requested and approved for each successive graduate.

The Division continues to explore retention strategies for qualified staff. Exemplary counselors are given priority for attendance at various out-service training events in recognition of their hard work, dedication and commitment to assisting individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. Additionally, the Division is able to reimburse employees (approved by their supervisor) for the cost of the initial Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) examination fee (one time only) and/or for CRC renewal fees.

Personnel Standards

PURPOSE:

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. Standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the state is currently taking steps in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in

the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

- A. Specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- B. The specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- C. Procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- D. The identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- E. The identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

The Division continues to use the national standard as defined by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification, (CRCC) for counseling staff, which eligibility to sit for the certified exam. During the past fiscal year, a total of seven incumbent counselors graduated from Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling distance education program at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

The Division currently has 13 counseling staff enrolled in graduate level programs in rehabilitation counseling (three at University of Tennessee - Knoxville, four at Auburn University, two at The University of North Texas, and four at San Diego State University). Five graduated from the University of Kentucky and one graduated from the University of North Texas earlier this fiscal year. Members of the Division's counseling staff are expected to complete their graduate program and graduate during this federal fiscal year.

Pursuit of funding sources to support masters in rehabilitation counseling activities continues through reallocation of traditional in-service training monies and utilization of funding received through our Social Security Administration (SSA) reimbursement program. Also, the Division continues to work closely with any college or university to help secure any grant funding made available to help the Division further counselor education.

Currently 69% of the Division's counseling staff meet the CSPD standard or are currently enrolled in a CORE training program. The State's Department of Human Resources has approved the new position of Masters Rehabilitation Counselor (MRC) to replace the current Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 2 (VRC2) position. This change was effective April 30, 2013. To qualify for MRC, a person must either be eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification examination, or possess a Master's degree in field closely related to Rehabilitation Counseling and take the required steps to become eligible to sit for the CRC exam. Personnel currently in the VRC2 position who are eligible to sit for the CRC examination will automatically be reallocated to the MRC position. Personnel currently in the VRC2 position who are not eligible to sit for the CRC examination will remain in the VRC2 position and must meet the CSPD standard by December 31, 2017 to continue in a VR counselor position. All new VR counselor hires after April 30, 2013 must meet the MRC qualifications.

As part of the new department's new Performance and Quality Improvement process, all incumbent counselors will have an individual educational plan (IEP). Supervisory/counselor discussions during the IEP meeting will include measures that will be taken by the counselor to meet the state's CSPD standard.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are being encouraged to take advantage of training being offered by the Division that will enable them to meet the CSPD standard. The State Department of Human Resources has guidelines in place for compensating employees who obtain a nationally recognized professional certification during their employment with the state.

The two main objectives outlined in their policy statement are:

1. To recognize employees who choose to enhance their competencies and service to the state through acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to the performance of their major professional duties and responsibilities.
2. To provide an incentive to employees who successfully demonstrate acquisition of such competencies by attaining certification from a nationally recognized professional organization.

The intent is to provide both a means of encouraging employees to attain professional competencies and to provide an incentive for those employees to remain in state service. In an effort to assist CRC staff with maintaining this credential, the Division has received approval from the CRCC to provide continuing education credits for qualified training events.

Staff Development

PURPOSE:

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals with significant knowledge from research and other sources.

The Office of Professional Development (OLPD), is a part of the Human Resources and Professional Development (HRPD) division within the Department of Human Services (DHS). OLPD provides staff development and training for DHS employees, and in so doing, conducts training needs assessments and provides training opportunities (mandatory and elective) to

enhance staff competencies and skill sets. OLPD has dedicated staff to provide support for Rehabilitation Services and works in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Services division in the development of training necessary to ensure effective, outcome driven results. The development of core competencies for effective service delivery is an integral focus of Rehabilitation Services training. Additionally, HRPD provides performance management support to all DHS employees in alignment with the goals and priorities established by the Governor and the Commissioner of DHS. HRPD has processes in place to create individual performance plans and on-going evaluations of employees' performance in each division, including rehabilitation services.

Additional data is collected relative to training needs through the following methods:

1. Input from staff in all job classifications compiled into a statewide training needs report;
2. State rehabilitation management and administrative staff input;
3. State Human Resources Department training division mandates;
4. Rehabilitation Services Administration guidelines;
5. Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council;

Program case reviews conducted by the Department's Performance Management Unit (PMU) are also utilized to identify strengths and deficiencies among staff and related training needs.

Staff were encouraged to give feedback on what they thought were their training needs.

Outcomes of this internal review yielded the following training related recommendations:

1. Additional human resources to meet statewide need for new and incumbent staff training;
2. More timely delivery of training for new counselors;
3. Expand the new counselor curriculum to be more comprehensive /incorporate more hands-on activities to reinforce knowledge and skill sets;
4. Provide refresher training for incumbent staff relative to the Division's Standard Procedures Directives (SPDs) and other disability related topics; and

5. Additional/follow up training regarding the new online case management system.

As a result of these staff recommendations, the Rehabilitation Services Training Unit, under Division of Human Resources and Professional Development is implementing the following strategies:

1. In addition to the 4 existing trainer positions, two additional staff positions have been allocated. These two new trainer positions will provide: (1) specialized training to counselors working with blind/deaf caseloads; and (2) specialized training to staff working in community rehabilitation training centers
2. All new counselors will be expected to participate in the new counselor training within the first 3 months of employment.
3. The previous two one-week training sessions for new counselors is being significantly expanded to a new curriculum. The curriculum is an intensive, hands-on training, utilizing a variety of training modalities to include navigation of the new online case management system, case studies/scenarios, and individual and group discussions. Additionally, PowerPoint presentations, facilitator guides, participant guides, handouts and related materials are being revised to include recent policy revisions and updates.
4. Conduct regional training sessions to review the SPD revisions.
5. OLPD has established a training website whereby all training materials will be posted to enable trainers and supervisors to access training modules for disability related training topics.
6. Following implementation of the online case management system, follow up regional training sessions were conducted to further illustrate how to navigate the system and provide answers to staff questions. A new state office position was also added to serve as a resource to field staff in providing guidance in navigating/utilizing the new online case management system. TRIMS is being updated to include forms and processes that are consistent with the recent policy revisions.

As part of the new Performance and Quality Improvement process, focus groups were formed to identify specific training needs relative to each job position/classification. These focus groups laid the foundation for the development of a progressive training curriculum to include standards

for measuring performance at three, six and nine month increments during the probationary process. Utilizing this process to identify specific training needs and a subsequent training curriculum relative to each job position/classification has proven to be a more effective means of identifying and addressing training needs than staff surveys conducted in the past.

Below are the top 5 training priorities based on staff and management feedback:

1. Leadership/supervisory training (provided through the New Supervisor Academy (NSA); effective during the past year all new supervisors have attended a three week New Supervisor Academy session to enhance and develop their leadership skills.
2. New Supervisor Academy (NSA) is a requirement of all new supervisors. This 3 week course is delivered by the Department's OLPD division. All supervisory staff has completed training on writing S.M.A.R.T job plans and evaluating competency based performance.
3. Caseload management (moving a case through the VR process, critical casework activities such as eligibility determination, plan development, budgeting, etc.). Our recent policy revision was introduced and training was provided in FY 2013.
4. Communication skills/customer service (interviewing skills, effective communication, how to deal with difficult people, cultural diversity)
5. Employment / placement training (including disability disclosure)
6. General on-boarding for new employees (vision/values, people first language, respectful workplace, customer service, ethics, and departmental and division organization). On boarding training has been revised and is being reviewed by DOHR.

The Division continues to provide on-going training and technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act to staff and the general public, including business and industry. As part of the on-boarding process, counselors also receive training relative to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and subsequent amendments.

The Division continues to contract with technology centers across the state for training and technical assistance in rehabilitation technology services. Rehabilitation technology contracts are

in place with the East Tennessee Technology Access Center (Knoxville), Technology Access Center of Middle Tennessee (Nashville), West Tennessee STAR Center (Jackson), Signal Center (Chattanooga), and Mid-South Access Center for Technology (Memphis).

The Division employees continue to receive specialized training in assessment and vocational evaluation activities. Through a partnership with the University of Memphis, vocational evaluators receive extensive instruction in the appropriate selection of assessment tools, interviewing skills, evaluation techniques and report writing.

Evaluators complete a competency examination with subsequent training provided based on the individualized needs of each employee. New counselors receive, via a new counselor training program, training relative to assessments, vocational evaluation and interpreting medical and psychological reports to assist them in acquiring skills to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of individuals with disabilities. Training in the areas of vocational counseling, job placement and other topics relevant to client service delivery continue to be focal areas for the Division.

Division employees are encouraged to participate in web-based training events as offered through the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center and other disability focused training events as available.

The Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) is currently examining the existing structure of collecting personnel and training data. A new database for collection of personnel, professional, and training data is currently being developed. The new system will provide a more effective way to track and report the staff data for TDRS.

The Division has posted information memoranda on its intranet website to provide staff with an easily accessible means of acquiring information on current research, resources and related activities in the vocational rehabilitation field. Leadership staff also disseminates new information (such as the latest Institute on Rehabilitation Issues publications) through electronic

conveyance. Employees, particularly those with specialized job responsibilities, are encouraged to attend conferences, seminars and training workshops relative to their specialty areas. Local, regional and statewide meetings provide an additional avenue for keeping employees informed of new developments in the vocational rehabilitation field.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

PURPOSE:

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

The Division has policies and procedures to ensure that it includes among its personnel, or has readily available, the services of (1) Individuals able to communicate in the native languages of applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English proficiency through Avaza Language Services; and (2) Individuals able to communicate with applicants or eligible individuals in appropriate modes of communication.

During staff orientation, new counselor training, annual Title VI training and other training activities, Division staff members are informed of specific procedures to be followed to communicate with limited English speaking individuals. Telephonic translation services are available through Avaza Language Services. All regions have received orientation packages to be used to train all of their staff in the use of this service.

The Division continues to recognize its responsibility for employing or obtaining the services of sign language interpreters, which fall within the definition of appropriate modes of communication in (34 CFR § 361.5(b) (5)), to the extent necessary to meet the communication needs of individuals who are Deaf, Blind or Deaf-Blind. The Divisions policy addresses the (1) significance of such services, (2) the selection of service providers, (3) the scheduling and payment for services, and (4) an evaluation process for such services.

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

PURPOSE:

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the IDEIA.

The Individuals Disabilities Education Act provides renewed emphasis on the planning for service delivery and collaboration of the various divisions and programs designated to serve children and youth with disabilities.

The Division has an interagency agreement with the Division of Special Education, state Department of Education in providing administrative support for a coordinated, collaborative effort of service delivery. The Blind and Visually Impaired Services/Deaf and Hard of Hearing unit continues an agreement with the Tennessee School for the Blind and the Tennessee School for the Deaf. Networking of the two divisions relative to transition services has provided a means for coordinating and sharing information regarding personnel development under IDEIA. There is ongoing communication between the two divisions and each division has responsibility for providing input into personnel development activities.

An interagency agreement was developed to fulfill the requirements of IDEIA. The most recent version of this agreement was signed July 1, 2012. The purpose of this agreement is to identify and define the financial responsibility of each state agency for providing services under IDEIA and to facilitate the provision and coordination of services for all children with disabilities. The following state agencies are participating in this agreement: Tennessee Department of Education; Tennessee Department of Children's Services; Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration; Bureau of TennCare; Department of Developmental Services; Tennessee Department of Health; Tennessee Department of Human Services; Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; and Tennessee Department of Correction. Departmental representatives have formed an informal secondary transition interagency workgroup and hold monthly interagency meetings to identify and address issues relative to

transition services; particularly what is happening in transition services and what is lacking (resource mapping). This group assists with planning of the annual Transition Summit, a one-day event that precedes the statewide Department of Special Education conference. The Division also participates on the Post-Secondary Alliance; the Next Steps Advisory Council; the Project Opportunity Advisory Council and the STEP board, a parent teaching organization. STEP has a secondary transition focus area and holds parent workshops across the state. DRS staff participates in these workshops by making presentations and providing displays of DRS employment services.

The Division continues to recognize the value of the involvement of its State Rehabilitation Council in personnel development activities. It is the policy of the Division to give the Council ongoing review and input on the development of issues associated with the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The Council continues to be involved with CSPD issues associated with the recruitment and retention of staff, such as; counselor salaries and pay incentives for the successful attainment of counselors with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation and also training for existing staff to obtain a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation.

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. As required by the Federal Government, the information was obtained from several sources, assessed, and analyzed to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of the following:

- 1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those who need supported employment services;
- 2) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have not been served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- 3) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system; and
- 4) The needs to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state of Tennessee.

The Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division), in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), completed a comprehensive assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of Tennesseans with disabilities in the summer of 2013 and is conducting needs assessments on a three-year cycle. As required in 34 CFR § 29, the information obtained from a number of sources was assessed and analyzed to determine the needs as stated above.

Methodology

Five surveys were developed, one for each category of participant. The surveys have some questions in common. The five surveys were administered in mid-August 2013. Survey participants included vocational rehabilitation clients and/or their caregivers, staff, workforce investment system personnel, community resource partners, and vocational rehabilitation stakeholders. All five surveys were administered through an anonymous web-based (Survey Monkey) process. In addition, five interviewers attempted to administer the client/caregiver survey to a beginning list of 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients. In all, there were 907 completed surveys evaluated and analyzed for this Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment. There were 6,291 e-mail requests sent and 616 calls made. These 6,907 contacts yielded a response rate of 13%. Earlier during this Needs Assessment, Focus Groups of VR Staff and VR Clients were conducted in six Regions (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9). These Focus Groups aided in the low response rate of the Client/Caregiver survey.

Survey Overview

Five surveys were developed, one for each category of participant. The surveys have some questions in common. The five surveys were administered in mid-August 2013. Survey participants included vocational rehabilitation clients and/or their caregivers, staff, workforce investment system personnel, community resource partners, and vocational rehabilitation stakeholders. All five surveys were administered through an anonymous web-based (Survey

Monkey) process. In addition, five interviewers attempted to administer the client/caregiver survey to a beginning list of 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients.

The client/caregiver sample was obtained from active cases and case closures from October 2011 to March 2013. The list of 19,689 clients included active cases (Status 10 and 18), successful outcome closures (Status 26), and closures without a successful outcome (Status 28). Of the 15,965 active cases on the list, 5,521 provided an e-mail address for contact information. In addition, of the 3,724 closed cases on the list, 1,158 provided an e-mail address for contact information. Therefore, the client/caregiver survey link was sent to 6,679 participants. Of the 5,521 active case participants with an e-mail, 598 e-mails bounced back undeliverable. Therefore, 4,923 active Vocational Rehabilitation clients received the survey link. Of the 1,158 closed case participants with an e-mail, 617 e-mails bounced back undeliverable. Therefore, 541 closed case Vocational Rehabilitation clients received the survey link. Of the 541 total participants, 495 began the survey process and 469 completed the client/caregiver survey. The survey completion rate was 94.7%.

So that customers without access to the Internet could also have an opportunity to provide their opinions, five interviewers contacted 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients by phone. The 1,000 clients were chosen randomly in SPSS from the customers without e-mail addresses. Of the 1,000 customers contacted by phone, there were 384 wrong numbers or disconnected numbers. Of the remaining 616, 151 were contacted and agreed to complete the client/caregiver survey. These 151 participants fully completed 146 surveys for a completion rate of 96.7%. Approximately 25% of the 1,000 clients called completed the client/caregiver survey. Combined, the web-based survey link and the telephone survey of clients' response rate totaled approximately 10%.

The Staff survey link was sent by e-mail to 537 staff members and 45 supervisors for a total of 582 staff members. Of these 582 staff members, 123 started a staff survey and 106 or 86.2% completed the survey questions. Therefore, 21% of Vocational Rehabilitation Staff responded to the staff survey.

The Workforce Investment Act System (WIAs) personnel were sent their survey link in 92 e-mails. However, 128 WIA surveys were completed. Therefore, the survey link e-mail sent out by the Research and Planning Unit was shared with at least 36 other individuals. The completion rate for these 128 surveys was 91.4% for the 117 surveys completed. The response rate for the WIAs survey equaled 79%.

Community Resources Partners (CRPs) were sent 118 e-mail requesting respondents complete the CRP survey. There were 46 surveys started by the CRPs and 43 surveys finished. This is a completion rate of 93.5%. This places the return rate much lower at approximately 39%. Vocational Rehabilitation Stakeholders were sent 35 e-mails for the Stakeholder survey link. Twenty-nine started the survey and 26 completed all questions on the survey. This is a survey completion rate of 89.7%. However, this particular surveys return rate was 83% much higher than were the others.

In all, there were 907 completed evaluated and analyzed for this Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment. There were 6,291 e-mail requests sent and 616 calls made. These 6,907 contacts yielded a response rate of 13%. Earlier during this Needs Assessment, Focus Groups of VR Staff and VR Clients were conducted in six Regions (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9). These Focus Groups aided in the low response rate of this particular survey. The five surveys shared several like items, but also differed on distinct issues for each group. From these five survey instruments, this Needs Assessment will attempt to identify the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities in Tennessee, to discover the unmet needs of minority groups (including the not served and the underserved) in Tennessee, and to recognize which population(s) of individuals with disabilities are those not served and/or the underserved in Tennessee.

Survey Results & Analysis

Vocational Rehabilitation Stakeholders

Overall, respondents (38%) are sometimes satisfied with the services VR clients receive from TN Rehabilitation Services. Twenty-four percent are satisfied and 21% are dissatisfied. Two respondents listed not applicable, two were very dissatisfied, and one person stated that they were very satisfied with the services VR clients receive. One stakeholder praised VR's improvements made in *“Working on developing relationships with future clients before they leave high school; actively participating in meaningful IEP transition meetings.”*

According to survey results, 48% of stakeholders straddled the fence in their belief that VR Counselors fully understand how and why a client's disability affects their chances of employment. Twenty-four percent agree and 17% percent disagree that VR Counselors understand the impact a disability has on employment. Eleven of the Stakeholders felt that employment opportunities were an unmet need of individuals with disabilities. One respondent shared that *“There seems to be a lack of creativity to find positions that are compatible with their disabilities.”*

Slightly over one third of stakeholder respondents agree that VR Client chances of getting a job increased because of training and services received through Vocational Rehabilitation. One third feel training and services sometimes assist in increased job probability for clients. In addition, 30% disagreed with the statement. Qualitatively, 18 Stakeholder respondents felt that potential employers are looking for the following four types of skills from individuals with disabilities: 1) Entry level (55%), 2) Timeliness/Good Work Ethic (16%), 3) Behavior/Soft Skills (16%), and 4) Basic Computer Skills (11%). From comments on this survey, most employers seek *“Reliability, job pride, honesty and friendliness.”*

Of the 29 Stakeholder respondents, an overwhelming 72% do not feel that VR Counselors help secure employment for VR Clients. Fifty-five percent of respondents feel the majority of clients find jobs themselves. Only 10, 34.5% feel clients do not secure their own employment. Three people did not respond to the survey question.

Forty-one percent of responding Stakeholders feel VR Counselors sometimes invite VR Clients to be part of developing their vocational goals. Thirty-eight percent agree that VR Counselors involve Clients in the development of their goals and 17% disagree, while one person chose to skip the question. The 17% that disagree may feel that clients are being judged by their behavioral choices. One respondent stated an unmet need as *“The effects of their disabilities are often confused with behavioral choices, making them often appear to be resistant to services.”*

Of those who responded, 55% feel that VR Counselors do inform their clients of the available jobs of interest that also match their skills. Twenty-one percent agree that counselors do make clients aware of possible jobs, while 17% disagree. Two people skipped this question. One Stakeholder suggested the *“need for job carving for some individuals on spectrum.”*

More stakeholders disagreed (31%) than agreed (24%) that VR Counselors are strong advocates for VR clients’ mental, physical, and vocational needs. However, the majority, 41%, is unsure if Counselors are strong advocates or not. One responder did not answer. The lack of communication was a constant theme in this survey. One respondent made the following comment concerning communication: *“Placing information on the VR web site and keeping it updated, be a highly visible collaborative partner with disability related organizations and efforts geared toward employment, and positive outreaches and advertising to the community.”*

Community Resource Partners (CRP)

On average TN Vocational Rehabilitation Community Resource Partners, service more than 100 individuals with disabilities. CRP qualitative comments state that the more clients are provided one-on-one interaction time with various jobs and receive personal individualized attention or job site assessments they are better able to provide or suggest a more suitable work environment and with greater success. In addition to interpreter services, Community Resource Partners also listed computers as a big need in their agency to accommodate people with disabilities. According to respondents, the most successful element of CRP soft skills training is Individualized attention and Job Readiness. CRP sees the underserved and the not served population to be those with severe disabilities, autism, deaf and hard of hearing, along with cognitive functions. Unmet needs of the not served population include counseling and guidance as well as communication, outreach. To serve these clients CRP suggest developing better partnerships and changing eligibility to be more inclusive and flexible.

CRP believes that potential employers are most interested in employees who have appropriate behavior, work ethic, and timeliness in respective job settings. Survey response state the most beneficial agency partnerships for CRP have been other non-profits agency. The majority of CRP survey respondents are interested in documentation training. Many CPR responders report constant policy and procedure changes in VR are confusing.

CRPs provided information about successful pieces to their assessment process and successful soft skills. For both the job readiness category garnered the most responses. For assessment one provider stated *“Providing a concise report that includes realistic vocational options based on interests, aptitudes, transferrable skills, and labor market information”* as the successful piece of

their assessment process. Another provider stated “Job Shadowing Job Sampling Working Interviews” were a successful soft skill teaching tool for clients.

CRPs reported the unserved and underserved to be individuals with developmental disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Asperger’s), Veterans in category 3 or category 4, and individuals with felony charges and/or chronic or recent drug addictions. These unmet needs were reported by CRPs to be met by education and training 24% of the time. For instance, “*employment specialist needs to help stabilize client’s job*”. “*They have the skills to GET job but have no skills to KEEP the job.*” The barriers reported by minorities with disabilities were VR knowledge/awareness (20%) and language barriers (14%).

CRPs requested better training in job development and job placement. They praised the opening of Priority 2 category as a significant positive. In order to improve communication, they requested weekly or bi-weekly meetings with VR Counselors and Supported Employment staff to review caseloads.

Workforce Investment Systems (WIS)

On average Workforce Investment Systems service more than 100 individuals with disabilities. Services that WIS felt was most helpful include job readiness, Support services, and education. Computer hardware topped the list in most needed accommodations for people with disabilities. The majority of qualitative comments requested updated staff computers as well as updated computers for clients. WIS is also asking for laptops they can carry between sites and visits. The most helpful element of their assessment is the staff’s knowledgebase of the client, disability, and job market. Interviewing skills, communication, and job readiness were the number one soft skills WIS felt helped clients obtain and maintain employment. The suggestions for underserved or unserved clients included opening the priority categories, blind and visually impaired along with clients who have autism. Suggested ways to reach this group include expand outreach, improve resources, and communication. Stated barriers to reaching this group include cultural competence, educating VR staff and employers on various barriers. Respondents also suggested building the awareness of VR services among the common population, including schools, business, and VR partners.

Five respondents stated that they do not have any clients with disabilities. Another 5 stated they provide services to 1-9 persons with disabilities. Nine respondents service 10-39 clients while 40-59 clients are seen by at least 12 of the Workforce Investment Systems who responded to the survey. Three (8.6%) respondents provide client services to approximately 60-79 clients. Eleven of the 128 WIS see at least 80-99 persons with disabilities while the majority, 56.3%, of survey respondents provides supportive services to over 100 persons with disabilities.

In addition to non-VR clients, the majority, 54.7%, of surveyed Workforce Investment Systems provide services for more than 100 Vocational Rehabilitation clients. Five respondents stated that they do not have any VR clients. Seven stated they provide services to 1-9 Vocational Rehabilitation Clients. Ten respondents service 10-39 clients while 40-59 clients are seen by at least nine of the Workforce Investment Systems who responded to the survey. Fifteen (11.7%)

respondents provide client services to approximately 60-79 clients, while only 10 of the 128 WIS see at least 80-99 VR Clients.

Of the services available through WIS, Job Development (50%), Job Search (44%), On-the-Job Training (35%), and Assessments (32%) are the most successful components in obtaining and maintaining employment for individuals with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

VR Staff would like more training in New Counselor Training, Job Development, Case Management, and Disabilities. Many feel they are adequately aware of the job market but would like a more thorough understanding of connecting their clients with the right employment match based on need and client skills. From focus groups conducted in February Staff feel they would do a much better job if they are able to build relationships with businesses in their surrounding areas. Unserved clients are those who are elderly, economically unqualified, those with learning disorders, and high school students ranked as the most mentioned unserved group. Most underserved group include middle aged working age people, and those with less severe and more severe disabilities (autism and learning disabilities were listed) Support Services such as technology access, job training, were listed as unmet needs. Barriers to reaching out to the unserved and underserved include cultural competence in understanding various cultures and disabilities on the part of employers and some staff. Job Readiness and basic computer skills topped the list in expected training and skills most potential employers are looking for from VR clients. VR Staff feel that the DHS Vocational Rehabilitation is most successful in providing assistance to clients, conducting assessments and making changes to serve them more effectively.

Forty-nine percent of VR Staff agrees that the current accommodations their clients receive meet their employment needs. Four people did not respond.

Forty-six percent of VR Staff agrees that the job training their clients received or are still receiving adequately prepares them for employment. Five people did not respond.

Fifty-four percent of VR Staff agrees that they are well informed and understand how and why clients' disabilities impact their chances of getting or keeping a job. Four people did not respond.

Sixty-one percent of VR Staff stated yes, they often help clients obtain jobs. Eighteen people did not respond.

Seventy percent of VR Staff respondents stated, no, the majority of their clients do not find jobs themselves. Ten people did not respond.

Eighty-one percent of VR Staff respondents agree that they do invite clients to participate in developing vocational goals and they are involved in selecting the services of the preferred providers. Staff feels clients are unaware of the available providers, there are not enough providers, and some clients do not like to be told their ideas or plans for a career will not be supported by VR. Clients feel VR should support whatever career choice and path they decide.

Twenty-five percent of respondents agreed that on average, clients use VR services approximately 3 times to obtain employment. Fourteen staff did not respond.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents sometimes agree that the VR assessment process correctly identifies clients' strengths and their physical, mental and emotional needs. Fourteen people did not respond.

Thirty-six percent of responding VR staff stated that placement agencies are most effective method or practice that often leads to the best employment outcomes for their clients. Non-profit agencies were the second most helpful followed by family and friends.

Two-thirds of responding VR Staff feels they are adequately informed of the developing labor market and how to better advise their clients in developing skill sets that will be in demand.

At the time of the survey, 71% of VR Staff stated that their clients were not employed. Only 10 of the 122 responded that their clients were currently employed.

Of the 34 responding VR Staff, 9 agreed that clients are employed 1-3 months on average, followed by 7 who stated 1-2 years and another 7 stated 6-12 months. The time span varied practically even from 3 months – more than 2 years. There wasn't a great variation.

Of the 92 who responded, 48 stated that few clients have jobs when they leave the VR program. Forty-two (42%) stated that most clients have jobs and only 2 stated none of their clients have jobs when they leave the program.

Most clients, 60-79%, currently receive checks from the government such as SSI or SSDI, according to 30% of the VR Staff respondents. Another 28% stated that 80-90% of their clients receive SSI or SSDI.

Half of the staff who responded has Master's degrees. Another fourth have a bachelor's degree. Twenty-six people skipped this question. Most respondents are between the age of 45-64 years of age.

VR Client/Caregivers

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents are satisfied with the services they received or are still receiving from VR. However there were suggestions regarding education and training. VR Clients repeatedly want education expenses paid for college and perhaps graduate level courses. VR Clients continue to be thoroughly uninformed of the policy, procedures, and stipulations for funding school or training programs. One responded stated, *"Explaining how the money is dispersed would be helpful in the beginning of the person's acceptance into the program and how it works with the available financial aid the client receives."* Other suggestions for improvement include basic computer skills training, additional options for job training and improved and increased employment prospects. Clients voiced concern about too many jobs being geared towards janitorial, cooking, and cleaning.

Over 50% agree that the job training they received or are still receiving prepares them for employment.

Sixty-three percent of surveyed Clients agree that their counselor understands how and why their disability impacts their chances of getting or keeping a job.

Fifty-three percent of respondents agree that their chances of getting a job increased because of VR training and services. Only 185 (29%) disagreed with this statement. The remaining 94 selected “sometimes”. Twenty-four respondents elected to skip this question.

Of the 639 who responded, only 12% stated that their counselor helped them secure a job. Forty-four percent selected N/A and the remaining 43% did not feel counselors helped them secure employment.

Twenty-three percent of responding clients stated that they found their own job, while 27% stated they did not find their job on their own and 50% selected N/A meaning they currently did not have a job or they have never had a job while working with VR.

Fifty-five percent of VR clients who responded agreed that their counselor invites them to be a part of developing their vocational goals and involved in selecting services and training. Seventeen percent of those who responded selected ‘sometimes’ and another 28% state that they disagree or strongly disagree that the counselor invites them to participate in the development of goal setting and training.

The majority of respondents, 43%, stated that their counselor informs them of available jobs of interest and skill match. Thirty-eight percent disagreed with this statement. Eighteen percent were felt counselors sometimes informed them and sometimes did not inform them of suitable jobs.

Only 1/8 of the responding VR Clients had a job when they left the VR program. Thirty-two percent stated they did not have a job when leaving the program.

Over half (55%) of the VR Client’s responding to the survey stated they have not used VR services to secure employment. More than 20% used VR services at least once to secure employment. The remaining respondents, 112, secured employment via VR services 2-5 times.

Only 18% of those who received placement were satisfied with their current job situation. Eight percent are unsatisfied and 40 of the 631 responding were on the fence of satisfied and not satisfied. They selected ‘sometimes’.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents agree that their counselor is a strong advocate for their mental, emotional, and vocational needs. Twenty-eight percent disagree, 14% sometimes feel the counselors are strong advocates. The remaining 4% of the 646 skipped this question

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

PURPOSE:

Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services and identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:

1. Part B of Title I;
2. Part B of Title VI;
3. Each priority category, if under an order of selection.

Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

As of March 21, 2014, 12,533 individuals in the state are eligible for services. Of this number and in compliance with our Order of Selection, 11,151 are receiving services provided with Title I, Part B funds and 1,138 are receiving services provided with Title VI, Part B funds and with Title I, Part B funds.

For Fiscal Year 2015, it is projected that there will be 7,955 new applicants and that 15,819 individuals in the state will be eligible for services. Of this number, 13,351 will receive services under an IPE provided with Title I, Part B funds and 1,195 will receive services under an IPE provided with Title VI, Part B funds and with Title I, Part B funds. It is estimated that the number of individuals to be served under Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B under an IPE during Fiscal Year 2015 under each priority category within our Order of Selection will be:

- Priority Category 1 - 9813 (Includes Title VI, Part B)
- Priority Category 2 - 4733
- Priority Category 3 - 924
- Priority Category 4 - 349

15,819 Total

Note: Estimates for eligible individuals and those who will be provided services under our Order of Selection in Fiscal Year 2015 is based on current trends.

It is estimated that the cost of Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B services for the projected 15,470 individuals who will be eligible for services under an IPE will be approximately \$38,675,000 and that the service cost for each priority category within the Order of Selection for the individuals served will be:

- Priority Category 1 - \$24,532,500 (Includes Title VI, Part B)
- Priority Category 2 - \$11,832,500
- Priority Category 3 - 2,310,000
- Priority Category 4 - 0

\$38,675,000 Total

Note: Estimated cost for services is based on the total available funding approved by the State's Department of Finance and Administration for our Delegated Purchase Authority.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds for Services	Estimated Number to be Served Under an IPE	Average and Total Cost of Services
1,2,3		\$38,675,000	15,470	\$2,500/per case
#1	Title VI Included		9813	\$26,795,000
#2			4733	\$16,205,000
#3			924	2,310,000
#4			0	0
Totals			15,470	\$38,675,000

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

PURPOSE:

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and other state agency data on the information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
2. Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
3. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
4. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - B. The performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The goals and priorities of the Division of Rehabilitation Services for Fiscal Year 2015, as developed and agreed to by the Division of Rehabilitation Services staff and the State Rehabilitation Council, are focused around the Division's strategic plan.

The goals and priorities for 2015 are:

Goal 1. Continue Increasing Successful Employment Outcomes

Objective 1.1:

- A. Increase Successful Employment Outcomes by 10% or more over Federal Fiscal Year 2014. The opportunity exists to reinvigorate historical referral sources. This effort will include development of marketing initiatives for use in local areas for community outreach as well as joint efforts with the:
 - a. Workforce Investment System
 - b. Tennessee's Department of Labor and Workforce Development
 - c. Department of Economic and Community Development
 - d. Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 - e. Department of Children's Services and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The Division will develop strategies for increasing referrals of transition school to work clients through local education agencies. Special focus will include the identification of any underserved population at the regional level.

- B. Action Steps to establish a stronger focus on employment related activities include:
 - i. Staffing the Agency's Business Services Unit for regional and statewide activities;
 - ii. Building a comprehensive network of employment resources across the state;
 - iii. Implementing services to employers promoting the value of the Division and the hiring of people with disabilities;
 - iv. Continuing the current Community Rehabilitation Provider monitoring process to ensure effectiveness and efficiency;

v. Continue to work collaboratively with and provide greater technical assistance to the Workforce Investment System. The Division will continue to have counselors co-located in each of the State's Local Workforce Investment Areas' comprehensive career centers and to provide itinerant counselors to serve all satellite career centers.

Objective 1.2:

The Division will continue to monitor expenditures and available funding to determine if there is sufficient funding to release Category 3 and 4.

Goal 2. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness in Client Services Delivery System

Objective 2.1:

Meet or exceed the Federal rehabilitation success rate of 55.8% for FY 2014 (Success rate is determined by the number of Status 26 rehabilitated case closures divided by the number of Status 26 plus the number of Status 28 non-rehabilitated Case closures). The division is focusing on the Employment Needs Assessment Process in order to write better Individualized Employment Plans. This effort will increase the number of successful closures and decrease the number of unsuccessful closures.

Objective 2.2:

Meet or exceed the Federal ratio of the average hourly wage of individuals who achieved competitive employment to the average hourly wage of all employed individuals in the State of 0.520. Fifty-two percent of closures should be working at wages of \$10-\$11 per hour.

Objective 2.3:

Ensure adherence to quality services leading to employment and quality case management practices by:

1. Achieving an 80% or higher satisfaction rating for the vocational rehabilitation program as reported by the consumer satisfaction survey program for successful outcome closures.
2. Continuing with improvements to the Division's electronic case management system (Tennessee Rehabilitation Information and Management System, TRIMS) to enhance efficiency and accuracy.
3. Training- Continue to increase staff knowledge through continuous training.

Objective 2.4:

Ensure access to VR documents, materials and training for clients and staff:

1. The Division will ensure that all documents and materials are available in alternate formats, as needed and requested.
2. The Division will ensure that timely requests are made when qualified interpreters are needed or requested.
3. Video ASL for the Deaf

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

PURPOSE:

Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.

1. Identify the justification for the order.
2. Identify the service and outcome goals.
3. Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
4. Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

Justification for order of selection

The Division's Order of Selection is developed in accordance with 34 CFR § 361.36 of the final regulations. The Order of Selection has four priority categories as defined below in this section.

On August 1, 2001, the Division implemented an Order of Selection due to funding limitations that would not allow the Division to provide services under an IPE to all eligible individuals. Only Priority Category 1 cases (eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities) were served until 2009.

From 2009 until October 2012 there were numerous releases of Priority Category 2 and 3 cases. Beginning October 1, 2012, the Division opened Priority Category 2 for services. The Division is now serving all Priority Category 1 and 2 cases. Those Priority Category 3 cases that were on the waiting list were released for services on October 1, 2013.

The Division's funds and resources remain inadequate to serve individuals in all four priority categories. The Division expects to have approximately \$76,108,000 to spend for assessments for new cases, planned services for existing and new cases and administration of the program. Program administration costs are expected to be \$31,557,800. Operational costs are expected to be \$44,550,200. Assessment services for an expected 7,955 new applicants are expected to cost \$1,988,750. This leaves \$42,561,450 available for planned services for existing and new cases.

The Division expects to serve 15,470 existing and new Priority Category 1, 2 and 3 cases in 2015. Of this number, the Division expects to provide services for 9,813 Priority Category 1 cases, 4,733 Priority Category 2 cases, and 924 Priority Category 3 cases.

With \$42,561,450 available for planned services for existing and new cases and an expected average cost of services per case of \$2,500, the Division will require \$38,675,000 to provide services for Priority Category 1, 2 and 3 cases. The increase in costs of new cases provided for planned services is expected to substantially decrease the amount of funds carried forward and close the gap between expenditures and available funding. The Division will monitor staffing needs to determine if there is sufficient manpower to schedule releases of Priority Category 3 and 4 cases for services or open all Priority Category 3 cases for services. Therefore, continuation of the Order of Selection mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to determine which eligible individuals will be served under an IPE is still warranted due to staffing deficiencies.

The Division monitors services and expenditures on a continuous basis, allowing the Division to manage available funds and staff to assure sustainability of services for cases placed in an open priority category and receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Additionally, adequate funds will continue to be conserved and staffing deficiencies monitored to provide assessment services for all applicants expected to apply throughout the year to determine eligibility and to provide services for those eligible individuals in an open priority category within the Order of Selection.

Description of Priority categories

PRIORITY CATEGORY I -- Eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities

PRIORITY CATEGORY II -- Eligible individuals who have significant disabilities

PRIORITY CATEGORY III -- Eligible individuals who do not have significant disabilities and whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services

PRIORITY CATEGORY IV -- Eligible individuals who do not have a significant disability that cannot be classified into a higher priority category

Definitions

"Most Significant Disability" means the individual meets the criteria for having a significant disability but has a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome.

"Significant Disability" means the individual meets the three following criteria:

1. The individual has a severe physical, sensory or mental impairment which seriously limits at least one functional capacity (such as visual/mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
2. The individual has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, deaf /blind, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegic, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease; or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation; and
3. The individual's vocational rehabilitation program can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

"Non-Significant Disability" means the individual does not meet the criteria for significant disability or the criteria for most significant disability.

"Multiple Vocational Rehabilitation Services" mean two or more major vocational rehabilitation services, i.e. physical or mental restoration, training, counseling, guidance and placement.

Excluded are support services such as transportation, maintenance, and the routine counseling and guidance that should take place in every case.

"Extended Period of Time" means 6 months from the date services begin until the employment objective is achieved.

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order

The Order of Selection priority categories outcome and service goals and time frames are as follows:

1. PRIORITY CATEGORY I -- Eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities
 - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 3,202 new individuals in this priority category; serve 9,813; and close 1,512 successfully employed.
 - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2015.

2. PRIORITY CATEGORY II -- Eligible individuals who have significant disabilities
 - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 1,540 new individuals in this priority category; serve 4,733; and close 483 successfully employed.
 - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2015.

3. PRIORITY CATEGORY III -- Eligible individuals who do not have significant disabilities and whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services
 - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 380 new individuals in this priority category; serve 924; and close 105 successfully employed.
 - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2015.

4. PRIORITY CATEGORY IV -- Eligible individuals who do not have a significant disability that cannot be classified into a higher priority category

A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 123 new individuals in this priority category and have 349 on the waiting list.

B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2015.

Cases	Estimated Number of individuals to be served	Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services	Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
New	7955				\$1,988,750
PC 1	9813	1512		Sept. 30, 2015	\$24,532,500
PC 2	4733	483		Sept. 30, 2015	\$11,832,500
PC 3	924	105		Sept. 30, 2015	2,310,000
PC 4	349 eligibility and PC determination only	0		Sept. 30, 2015	\$87,250 Assessments

How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

The Division is currently serving Priority Category 1 and 2 cases. If the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority Category 1 and 2 cases, then Priority Category 1 cases will continue to be served and services for Priority Category 2 cases will be provided based on the date of application for services. If the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority Category 1 cases, then services will be provided based on the date of application for services.

The Division plans to open Priority Category 3 within the 2015 plan year. If after Priority 3 is opened and the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority 3 cases then services will be provided based on the date of application for services.

Individuals who are determined to be in a closed priority category are referred to other appropriate agencies for services.

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

PURPOSE:

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

The Division continues to provide supported employment services to eligible clients with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to require on-going support (extended) services in order to maintain employment.

Supported employment services are funded through Title VI, Part B funds. As Title VI, Part B funds are depleted, the continuance of the Division's supported employment services is made possible through Title I, Part B funds. The Division anticipates spending in excess of 1.2 million dollars of Title I, Part B funds in addition to its Title VI, Part B funding allotment (projected to be approximately \$470,000 in Fiscal Year 2015).

It is the continued goal of the Division to provide quality supported employment services which are delivered in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Supported employment services are provided through Letters of Agreement with community rehabilitation providers, and in cooperation with the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The community rehabilitation providers must assure that on-going support (extended) services will be provided prior to the implementation of supported employment services or will be developed as natural supports during training. The Division has an excellent supported employment program along with training and support activities to ensure the continued provision of quality supported employment services. These programs are ongoing and are not subject to a specific timeline. Prime examples of these ongoing activities are:

1. Through contract with the University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment (CLEE), the Division funds three supported employment consultants who are charged with the responsibility of working with our many supported employment community rehabilitation providers in providing training and technical assistance to the staff who provide services to our clients. These same consultants also work with the Division staff on an as needed basis to provide technical assistance.
2. The Division also involves the regional supervisory staff and quality improvement unit in the monitoring of and consultation to the community rehabilitation providers to ensure appropriate services are being provided to our clients.
3. The Division plans to continue the funding of the UT CLEE SE consultants activities as well as continue the provision of in-house monitoring of the services provided to the Division's clients by the SE community rehabilitation providers.

The Division will continue to seek community rehabilitation providers to provide supported employment services to under-served disability groups with the most significant disabilities who, because of their disability, have not been able to enter traditional competitive employment or whose employment is intermittent or interrupted due to a most significant disability.

The Division expects to continue increasing employment opportunities for those individuals eligible for supported employment with co-occurring disorders of mental illness, and alcohol and drug abuse by expanding more effective partnerships with mental health entities that work with this population and by implementing improved services. The Division has a Central Office field liaison who works with mental health entities and the Division's staff statewide in developing such partnerships where needed and who provides training and technical assistance to the mental health community rehabilitation providers and our staff.

The Division has a Central Office field liaison who works with service providers statewide that provides supported employment and extended services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to assist with technical assistance and staff training.

The Division expects to serve in excess of 1,100 clients through the supported employment program during the Fiscal Year 2014. Over the past two years the division has closed around 22% of the supported employment clients in successful employment. This would mean around 242 successful outcomes for FY2015.

DRAFT

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

PURPOSE:

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA):

1. Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
2. Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process.
3. Describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
4. Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities.
5. Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have not been served or underserved by the VR program.
6. Identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs, if applicable.
7. Describe strategies to improve the performance with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.
8. Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
9. Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:
 - achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
 - support innovation and expansion activities; and
 - overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.

The state plan shall include an assurance that the state will reserve and use a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities; consistent with the findings of our statewide needs assessment and our goals and priorities.

Funds will be utilized in Fiscal Year 2015 for addressing the following priorities that continue to be identified in our needs assessment as they relate to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those who need supported employment services; individuals with disabilities who are minorities; individuals with disabilities who have been un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system: Education and Training; Employment Opportunities; Information; Support Services; and Counseling and Guidance.

In addition, as the Division continues to serve Priority Category 1 and 2 cases, more individuals with significant disabilities are able to access vocational rehabilitation services. The Division continues to monitor the budget and the staff capacity in order to determine the ability to serve Priority 3 and 4 cases. It is anticipated this activity will lead to improvement in the number of individuals with disabilities reaching successful rehabilitation outcome statuses by:

1. Continuing the practice of ensuring the availability of appropriate training activities and resources to meet the individualized needs of clients by seeking out and developing partnerships with other private and public entities to provide specialized education and training activities, to include those that can be provided through self-employment, on-the-job-training by employers, and customized employment.
2. Continuing the development and expansion of statewide employer relationships that focus on inclusion of employees with disabilities in the workforce and the value of hiring people with disabilities. The Division will continue its expansion of our activities with Employment Groups across the state and in the local areas with new programs, such as Walgreens REDI and Project Search.

3. Continuing to support expansion of supported employment services by actively seeking out, training, and monitoring community rehabilitation providers; especially in the more rural areas, that are willing to provide supported employment services to vocational rehabilitation clients with the most significant disabilities; and by fostering partnerships with DIDD and the ARCs of Tennessee to implement employment network projects with community rehabilitation providers. The Division is striving to have shared vendors with DIDD in order to access services for shared clients. The Division is looking to expand participation in the Individual Placement Model of Supported Employment (IPS) statewide. In FY2014, there was a pilot in 3 of the 9 geographic regions, the sensory regions are represented within the geographic regions;
4. Continue to increase employment opportunities for clients through development, training, and monitoring of community rehabilitation providers providing job coach pools and employment services.
5. Development of the Business Services Unit will increase targeted marketing and education services to employers; and the provision of additional technical support and expertise to Division staff, clients, and employers in the areas of ongoing and emerging disability issues, and supported employment issues.
6. Continuing to support expansion of Transition School-to-Work services by continuing to work with Local Education Agencies (LEA's) in the maintenance of existing partnerships and the creation of additional partnerships to provide vocational rehabilitation services targeted specifically to that LEA's school system. Continuing to work with and educate school personnel on the mission and scope of the Division in order to maximize services from both entities to better serve our mutual clientele to include appropriate qualified interpreters/accommodations for students that are in LEA/School to Work programs. The newly hired Transition School to Work Director will manage this process.
7. Continuing improvement in the service delivery of the Division's 17 community rehabilitation centers and the comprehensive rehabilitation center at Smyrna geared directly toward providing services leading to successful employment of individuals

with the most significant disabilities. Pursue the development of additional service delivery entities in metropolitan and rural markets for services including vocational evaluation, personal and work adjustment, job development, job placement, and job coaching. The 17 Community rehabilitation centers are focusing on expansion of the job readiness programs and collaboration with local area businesses. The Smyrna TRC is expanding training programs through partnerships with Tennessee Department of Transportation, Gaylord Opryland, and Walgreens.

8. Continuing support of vocational rehabilitation counselor development by providing opportunities for vocational rehabilitation counselors to obtain Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. The Division will pursue all available RSA slots for master's level training available to the Division through outreach and research. The Division will continue utilization of recruiter staff for recruiting vocational rehabilitation counselors who have a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Finally, the Division will continue financial support of counselors seeking master's degrees.
9. Developing and implementing a comprehensive staff development program based on core competencies for all VR Staff. Utilize partnerships through the TACE and university programs. There is an Education Development Plan being developed for all staff in order to reinforce and encourage the Division's goals and priorities.
10. Continuing to implement a marketing/outreach plan that targets and reaches unserved or underserved populations to include all minorities, such as Spanish-speaking clients and clients with traumatic brain injury, autism, deaf-blindness, and mental illness. The marketing efforts will target individuals with the most significant disabilities who are seeking employment.
11. Continuing to support the Workforce Investment System by continuing to co-locate vocational rehabilitation counselors in each of the major Workforce Investment Act Service delivery area career centers and ensuring that all career center satellites also have vocational rehabilitation counselors assigned to visit their centers on a regular basis to work with individuals with disabilities that visit each center.

12. Providing cross training to the career center staff in regard to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. Continue to provide consultation on career center accessibility and accommodation needs in regard to the accessibility needs in the building(s), and accommodations in terms of appropriate technology needed to serve individuals with the disabilities. Continue to partner with the WIA career centers in employment initiatives such as the summer youth employment project and the DEI grant
13. Continuing to support the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program and use of other Social Security work incentives that benefit clients by continuing contract with the Benefits to Work Company. This company provides Social Security benefits counseling to clients before and after the Individualized Plan for Employment process. Currently the Division contracts with Benefits to Work to provide outreach to communities on how working affects Social Security Benefits, work incentives, and benefits planning. The agency will also continue to promote the most effective use of Ticket to Work Employment Network programs for the Division and our partners.
14. Continuing training for vocational rehabilitation staff on how effective rehabilitation technology options lead to successful employment outcomes. Staff at the Technology centers meeting quarterly with staff to provide training on services.
15. Continuing support of the State Rehabilitation Council. Council members will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care, - personal assistance services and qualified interpreters).
16. Continuing support of the Statewide Independent Living Council. Council members will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care, personal assistance services and qualified interpreters).
17. Continuing to submit to the Commissioner an annual report of how funds are utilized relative to innovation and expansion activities.

18. Continuing to provide a coordinated, comprehensive and statewide assistive technology delivery system through a network of contracted assistive technology centers. Each of these five centers, strategically located in Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville ensure access to clients from all 95 counties in Tennessee regardless of location. The centers diverse staff includes: Rehabilitation Engineers; Speech and Language Pathologists; Assistive Technologists; Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Therapists and other Professionals who provide clients with evaluation, training, device fabrication and follow up services. By providing clients with access to this highly trained and skilled resource, and by purchasing the required devices, clients have the tools that they need throughout their rehabilitation program to assist them in realizing their IPE goals.
19. Continue implementation of the electronic case management system (TRIMS) utilizing input from agency staff and vendors to enhance the Division's technological infrastructure and client service capabilities.
20. Continue partnerships with the three federal grants that target employment of persons with disabilities. Those grants are Tennessee Works, Employment First, and DEL. Tennessee is one of three states in the country that are receiving all three grants.
21. Revise the self-employment process to streamline the experience for clients seeking the self-employment option. Research other state VR self-employment policies for efficient, consumer oriented strategies; and include successful business owners in the process to produce a successful program that will help individuals with disabilities become successful entrepreneurs.

Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

PURPOSE:

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and other state agency data on the information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

5. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
6. Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
7. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
8. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - B. The performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The goals and priorities of the Division of Rehabilitation Services for Fiscal Year 2012, as developed and agreed to by the Division of Rehabilitation Services staff and the State Rehabilitation Council, are focused around the Division's strategic plan.

The goals and priorities for 2012 are:

Goal 1. Increase Successful Employment Outcomes

Objective 1.1:

- C. Increase Successful Employment Outcomes by 10% or more over Federal Fiscal Year 2012 Increase Priority Category 1 and 2 referrals by 10% or more over federal fiscal year 2011. Since the Division has been in an Order of Selection since 2001, the opportunity exists to

reinvigorate historical referral sources for Priority Category 2 cases. This effort will include development of marketing initiatives for use in local areas for community outreach as well as joint efforts with Tennessee's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Children's Services and Department of Mental Health. The Division will develop strategies for increasing referrals of transition school to work clients through local education agencies. Special focus will include the identification of any underserved population at the regional level.

ACHIEVEMENT: In FFY2012 Employment Outcomes were 1906. In FFY2013, the division achieved 1966. In order to achieve this goal the Employment Outcomes would have needed to be 2097.

In FFY 2012, referrals were 7257. In FFY 2013 new referral were 7279. In order to meet this goal new referrals would have needed to be 7983.

The division is partnering with the Department of Mental Health and Substance abuse services in piloting the Individual Placements and Supports model of Supported Employment in the Eastern part of the State.

The division is working with the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to have shared vendors to increase outcomes for those significant disabilities.

The division is working closely with the Department of Mental Health to provide WRAP training to our staff and develop employment initiatives.

The division has revised the transition school to work (TSW) program in order to improve services to transition students.

- D. Provide caseload carrying and employment counselors with targeted training on career planning/exploration including how to implement through the counseling and guidance process.
- i. Establish a stronger focus and recognition of employment related activities including:
 - ii. Developing an employment unit with statewide responsibility for regional employment activities,
 - iii. Placing additional employment counselors in regions where needed,
 - iv. Building a comprehensive network of employment resources across the state, an
 - v. Continuing to develop and provide services to employers promoting the value of the Division and the hiring of people with disabilities.
 - vi. Develop and implement new agreements with Community Rehabilitation Providers and provide training for both staff and vendors.
 - vii. Revise the current Community Rehabilitation Provider monitoring process to be both more effective and efficient.
 - viii. Work collaboratively with Tennessee's Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) (an alliance that includes the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD), and the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), Disability Law and Advocacy Center (CAP), and University Centers for Excellence) to develop a state plan for the national AFP summit committed to doubling the number of people with disabilities employed nationwide.

ix. Continue to work collaboratively with and provide greater technical assistance to the workforce investment programs including career centers. The Division will continue to have counselors housed in each of the primary workforce service delivery areas and will visit all other satellite centers on an itinerant basis.

ACHIEVEMENT: The Business Services Unit has been developed. There is a Statewide Business Consultant and Business Consultants located in VR Offices and Community TRC Statewide. This Unit coordinates employment resources on a statewide and regional basis. There is quarterly training of unit staff to provide the basis of the critical employment services, including services to businesses.

At the conclusion of FFY2013, a proposal for changing the Letters of Understanding (LOU) to Letters of Agreements (LOA) had been made to the Deputy Commissioner and was awaiting approval. Staff and vendor training had not been completed as the new formats were not approved. The Office of the Inspector General within DHS had begun monitoring of those agencies with LOU agreements for compliance.

All of the Comprehensive Department of Labor Centers had a VR Counselor housed within the center. The satellite centers were visited.

Objective 1.2:

A. Open Priority Category 2 by September 30, 2012

The Division is establishing regular bi-monthly release of Priority Category 2 waiting list cases during federal fiscal year 2012. The goal of the Division is to open Priority Category 2 by September 30, 2012.

ACHIEVEMENT: Priority Category 2 was opened for services on September 30, 2012.

Goal 2. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness in Client Services Delivery System

Objective 2.1:

To Increase the Rehabilitation Rate (Success Rate) to 55.8% for FY 2013 (Success rate is determined by the number of Status 26 (Rehabilitated Cases) divided by the number of Status 26 plus the number of Status 28 (Non-Rehabilitated Cases)

ACHIEVEMENT: The Success Rate for FY2013 was 59.32%. There were 1966 Successful Closures and 1348 Unsuccessful Closures for a total of 3314 closures.

Objective 2.2:

To Adhere to Quality Standards

Achieve a 96% or higher satisfaction rating for the vocational rehabilitation program as reported by the consumer satisfaction survey program for successful outcome closures.

Continue with implementation of the Division's new electronic case management system (TRIMS) utilizing input from agency staff and vendors.

ACHIEVEMENT: VR achieved a 96.6% satisfaction rating. This is based on survey participant responses to the question: "How would

you rate the overall quality of the Vocational Rehabilitation program?” The responses were:

Excellent – 56.7%

Good – 33.3%

Satisfactory – 6.6%

Poor – 3.5%

When “excellent, good, and satisfactory” responses are added together, it totals 96.6%.

Objective 2.3:

To Implement a New Organizational Development System to Ensure that Staff Obtain and Maintain Core Competencies

1. Build a comprehensive staff development program to include measures of current competencies and goals to be reached by all staff. While including all staff, the effort will focus on those staff providing service delivery, including:
 - Caseload carrying counselors,
 - Employment Counselors,
 - Vocational Evaluators, and
 - Rehabilitation Assistants

ACHIEVEMENT: Training in FY2013 was delivered primarily through the Office of Learning and Professional Development. The focus of training throughout the fiscal year was the changes in the Priority Category assignment and working with clients in Priority Category 2 as this had not been done on a consistent basis since going under the Order of Selection in 2001.

2. Implement supervisory training for new and existing supervisors focusing on supervisory skills, employment, caseload management, and critical thinking skills.

ACHIEVEMENT: All new supervisory staff attend the New Supervisory Academy. Training for current supervisory staff is still under development.

3. Provide training opportunities to educate rehabilitation staff concerning ongoing and emerging disability issues including Traumatic Brain Injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Psychiatric Disorders, Serving the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Blind/Visually Impaired, and Medical Aspects of Disabilities.

ACHIEVEMENT: Staff attended training on Traumatic Brain Injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Psychiatric Disorders. Training continues to be developed on Serving the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Blind/Visually Impaired, and Medical Aspects of Disabilities.

4. The Tennessee Technology Access Program(TTAP) Executive Director and his partners will continue their staff training and consultation to ensure staff appropriately considers technology options.

ACHIEVEMENT: Staff training is held quarterly with TTAP staff.

Objective 2.4:

To improve access to VR material for clients and staff.

1. The Division will ensure all materials are available in alternate formats as needed.

ACHIEVEMENT - the Division always ensures that materials are available in alternate formats. This information is always made available.

2. The Division will make timely requests for interpreters as needed and requested.

ACHIEVEMENT: The Division makes requests for interpreters as soon as possible.

DRAFT

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

PURPOSE:

Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities

Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

The Division continues to provide supported employment services to eligible clients with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to require supported employment services, in accordance with 34 CFR § 361 and 363, in order to obtain and maintain employment.

Supported employment services are funded through Title VI, Part B funds (projected to be approximately \$470,000 for FY 2014). The Division anticipates spending in excess of 1.2 million dollars of Title I, Part B funds for supported employment services to supplement the funding received under Title VI, Part B.

It is the continued goal of the Division to provide quality supported employment services which are delivered in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Supported employment services are provided through Letters of Agreement with community rehabilitation providers and in cooperation with both the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The community rehabilitation providers must assure that on-going support services will be available prior to the provision of supported employment services or will be developed as natural supports during training.

The Division coordinates with other state agencies and the community rehabilitation providers to transition clients receiving supported employment services to extended services. An individual is moved to extended services when the client has reached a point where he/she has achieved maximum performance on the job; has achieved minimum necessary supports on the job; the job is not in jeopardy of ending; and individual is maintaining work performance which is acceptable

to employer and client. The Tennessee Employment Consortium, an independent association of community rehabilitation providers developed jointly by the Division, the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, continues to study transitioning from services provided by the Division to services provided by the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to develop best practices for transition of services. The Division is working with the University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment to develop training for CRPs on how to develop natural supports to address extended services where funding is not available from another Agency.

The Division will continue to contract for services from the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy, Education and Employment (CLEE). These programs will provide continuing technical assistance and training to the Division's staff and contracted community rehabilitation providers to assure competency and compliance.

The UT-CLEE program continues to conduct various studies of the components of the Supported Employment program and make recommendations for the improvements based upon these studies.

The number of supported employment providers has decreased over the past year from 76 to 62 supported employment CRPs. The Division continues its efforts to increase S.E. providers and anticipates the numbers of providers will increase. VR is actively pursuing a number of other providers for underserved areas across the state. While the number of CRPs remains adequate to serve the Division's decreasing number of supported employment clients, there remains a shortage of CRPs able to provide supported employment services in more rural areas and under-served communities and under-served populations of the state. The Division will assist with start-up costs for new providers in the under-served communities and under-served populations. The Division will continue to enter into supported employment agreements with appropriate state agencies, as well as Letters of Agreement with private and/or non-profit agencies which have the capabilities of providing quality service delivery and extended services

in multiple counties. The Division will assertively seek those agencies that will provide supported employment services to persons being transitioned from institutional settings to the community and to work in competitive, integrated employment settings. The Division will also be studying in-house capabilities to provide supported employment services in more rural areas of the state utilizing the Division's facilities programs. This will include staff training to develop natural supports for extended services.

The Division will continue to seek community rehabilitation providers to provide supported employment services to under-served disability groups with the most significant disabilities.

The Division expects to serve in excess of 1,100 clients through the supported employment program during the Fiscal Year 2014. Over the past two years the division has closed around 22% of the supported employment clients in successful employment. This would mean around 242 successful outcomes for FY2015.