

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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Preprint

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Footnotes

- ^[1] Required annually except for agencies that are independent commissions do not provide this attachment.
- ^[2] Required only of agencies requesting, or previously granted, a Waiver of Statewideness.
- ^[3] The following attachments should be submitted whenever the information needs to be updated.
- ^[4] The following attachments require annual updating and must be submitted each year.
- ^[5] Required Annually for All Agencies on an Order of Selection

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Section 1: State Certifications

- 1.1 The (enter the name of designated state agency or designated state unit below)...
Office of Rehabilitation Services
... is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended ^[1] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act ^[2].
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the... (enter the name of the designated state agency below) ^[3]
Department of Human Services
... agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan ^[4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ^[5], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan ^[6], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations ^[7], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan. Yes
- 1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law. Yes
- 1.7 The (enter title of state officer below)
Director Department of Human Services

... has the authority under state law to receive, hold and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement. Yes

1.8 The (enter title of state officer below)...

Director Department of Human Services

... has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services. Yes

1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Signed?

Name of Signatory Gary D. Alexander

Title of Signatory Director

Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)

Section 1 Footnotes

- [1] Public Law 93 112, as amended by Public Laws 93 516, 95 602, 98 221, 99 506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.
- [2] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- [3] All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
- [4] No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR part 361.
- [5] Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.
- [6] No funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- [7] Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

Section 2: Public Comment on State Plan Policies and Procedures

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))

(a) Conduct of public meetings.

The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.

(b) Notice requirements.

The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council.

- (c) Special consultation requirements.
The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

Section 3: Submission of the State Plan and its Supplement

- 3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)
- (a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Rehabilitation Act.
- (b) The state submits only those policies, procedures or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.
- (c) The state submits to the commissioner, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
- comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - innovation and expansion activities; and
 - other updates of information required under Title I, Part B, or Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act that are requested by the commissioner.
- (d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Rehabilitation Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361 or 34 CFR 363.
- 3.2 Supported Employment State Plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)
- (a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B, of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.
- (b) The Supported Employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

Section 4: Administration of the State Plan

4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))

(a) Designated state agency.

- (1) There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
- (2) The designated state agency is:
 - No (A) a state agency that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; or
 - Yes (B) a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.
- (3) In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

(b) Designated state unit.

- (1) If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section, the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division or unit that:
 - (A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
 - (B) has a full-time director;
 - (C) has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
 - (D) is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
- (2) The name of the designated state vocational Office of Rehabilitation Services rehabilitation unit is

4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

No (a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission that:

- (1) is responsible under state law for operating or overseeing the operation of the vocational rehabilitation program in the state and is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(A) of this section.
- (2) is consumer controlled by persons who:
 - (A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and

- (B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated state unit under the direction of the commission is the state agency for individuals who are blind;
- (3) includes family members, advocates or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and
- (4) undertakes the functions set forth in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4).

or

- Yes (b) The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.17 and the designated state unit:
- (1) jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to and reviews annually state goals and priorities and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.29 and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;
 - (2) regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (3) includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the council and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
 - (4) transmits to the council:
 - (A) all plans, reports and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be submitted to the commissioner;
 - (B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
 - (C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.
- (c) If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.21)

The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to

individuals with disabilities;

- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) the director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.

4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state or, if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency.

No

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and
- (b) develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with the State Plan.

4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

No

If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) a description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) the services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) the respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) the share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

4.7 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

- (a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:
 - (1) nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a

- private agency, organization or individual;
- (2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
- (3) state, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in Attachment 4.7(b)(3) a waiver of the statewideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - (A) identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - (B) written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - (C) written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - (D) written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.
- (c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

4.8 Cooperation, collaboration and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

- (a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide work force investment system.

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide work force investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide work force investment system.

- (b) Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.
Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:
 - (1) cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide work force investment system;
 - (2) coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (3) establishment of cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
 - (4) efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.

(c) Coordination with education officials.

- (1) Attachment 4.8(b)(2) describes the plans, policies and procedures for coordination between the designated state agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.
- (2) The State Plan description must:
 - (A) provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
 - (B) include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
 - (i) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to postschool activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (ii) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency 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 Act;
 - (iii) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (iv) procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(d) Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(e) Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.

- (1) There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations.
No
- (2) If "Yes", the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act:
 - (A) strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;

- (B) procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
- (C) provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (b))

(a) In general.

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the plan and 34 CFR 361.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

(c) Facilities.

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Rehabilitation Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the regulations implementing these laws.

4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.

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

(1) Qualified personnel needs.

- (A) 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;
- (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (C) 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 five 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.

(2) Personnel development.

- (A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- (B) The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (C) 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.

(b) Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel.

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for 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 in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

(c) Personnel standards.

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, 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.
- (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 steps the state is currently taking and the steps the state plans to take 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, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the time lines for taking each step.
- (3) The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:
 - (A) specific strategies for retraining, recruiting and hiring personnel;
 - (B) the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
 - (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; and
 - (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 and the identification of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

(d) Staff development.

Policies, procedures and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

- (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.
- (2) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs.

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining 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 in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

(f) Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

(a) Comprehensive statewide assessment.

(1) Attachment 4.11(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every three years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a council). The assessment describes:

- (A) the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:
 - (i) individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
 - (ii) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and
 - (iii) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide work force investment system.
- (B) The need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

(2) For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:

- (1) number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the plan;
- (2) number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and under Part B of

Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and

- (3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

- (1) Attachment 4.11(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- (2) The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.
- (3) Order of selection.

If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, Attachment 4.11(c)(3):

- (A) shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) provides a justification for the order; and
 - (C) identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (4) Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds.
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(d) Strategies.

- (1) Attachment 4.11(d) describes the strategies, including:

- (A) the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
- (B) outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- (C) as applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs;
- (D) strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
- (E) strategies for assisting other components of the statewide work force investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

- (2) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:

- (A) address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);
- (B) support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the plan; and
- (C) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) Evaluation and reports of progress.

- (1) The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.
- (2) Attachment 4.11(e)(2):
 - (A) provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3) were achieved;
 - (B) identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
 - (C) describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
 - (D) assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - (E) provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.35)

- (a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the:
 - (1) development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in Attachment 4.11(a) and goals and priorities of the state identified in Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3); and
 - (2) support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).
- (b) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.
- (c) Attachment 4.11(e)(2) describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.
- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

Section 5: Administration of the Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

5.1 Information and referral services. (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.37)

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide work force investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services.

No

- (b) If No:

- (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
- (2) Attachment 4.11(c)(3):
 - (A) shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) provides a justification for the order of selection; and
 - (C) identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

- (a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.
- (b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:
 - (1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
 - (2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act;
 - (3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide work force investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;
 - (4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 - (5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices; and
 - (6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.
- (c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
 - (1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) an immediate job placement; or
 - (3) provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Rehabilitation Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide work force investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, and is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- (b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.

5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.52)

Applicants and eligible individuals or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.30)

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.55)

- (a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:
 - (1) who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
 - (2) whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.
- (b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for two years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative) to determine the interests, priorities and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.
- (c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (d) The individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation and, through signed acknowledgement, attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

- (a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Rehabilitation Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.
- (c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

- (a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.
The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than nonprofit agencies and organizations.
- (b) Cooperative agreements with private nonprofit organizations.
Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Section 6: Program Administration

6.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act.

6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

6.3 Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies,

private nonprofit organizations or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.

- 6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- 6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes 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 to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

- 6.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

- 6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated state agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the commissioner may require and collects the information required by Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B, of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 7: Financial Administration

- 7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

- 7.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B, are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.

- (c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 8: Provision of Supported Employment Services

8.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).
- (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
- (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities. (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

8.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - (1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
- (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

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Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

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:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

The State Rehabilitation Council, through its State Plan, Policy, and Quality Assurance Subcommittee, met with ORS representatives to discuss the 2009 proposed State Plan. The SRC reviewed each attachment to the State Plan with the ORS representatives.

Issue #1

The SRC supports ORS's collaboration with agencies that assist individuals with disabilities to establish and reach employment goals. We especially feel that collaboration with the Department of Education (RIDE) is critical to ensure that students with disabilities are referred to ORS early to help with transition from school to work or post-secondary educational settings. The SRC also feels that ORS should renew the Cooperative Agreement between RIDE and ORS that provides the foundation for VR involvement with Local Education Authorities (LEA) in providing transportation services and training to youth prior to graduation.

Response #1

ORS agrees that the collaboration between ORS and the Department of Education (RIDE) is very important to maintaining and enhancing timely services for transition-age youth. The Cooperative Agreement between Rhode Island Department of Education and ORS is seen as a vital component to ensuring quality services and will be updated and renewed.

Issue #2

We are pleased that the Agency is going to utilize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds to develop and implement a Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program (SWEEP) for youth with disabilities. We believe that early work experiences lend themselves to longer-range work success. In that regard, although ORS has increased training options by adding seven short-term training programs, the SRC would like to see ORS encourage more youth to explore longer-range goals such as attendance at post-secondary institutions.

Response #2

ORS develops Individualized Plans for Employment that are unique to the needs, preferences and skills of the customer. ORS agrees with the SRC about the importance of providing an array of options for transitioning youth and works with youth through the informed choice process to develop their employment goal and plan as they transition from high school. The Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program (SWEEP) is a new initiative in the

continuum of options offered to youth receiving services with ORS. ORS will continue to collaborate with the Local Education Authorities and Rhode Island Department of Education on transition activities.

Issue #3

The SRC also believes that expansion of contractual and fee-for-service agreements with a wide network of private vocational rehabilitation providers is worthwhile, especially with regard to vendors who serve minority populations. The SRC is available to assist ORS in developing new relationships with vendors who serve traditionally underserved and unserved populations through its involvement with the Comprehensive Needs Assessment survey and Quality Assurance functions.

Response #3

The input and assistance provided by the SRC State Plan, Policy, and Quality Assurance sub-committee on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment process has been vitally important to ORS. Currently the ORS Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor is in the process of contacting the 18+ vendors with experience serving minority and underserved populations who have expressed an interest in working with ORS. ORS will provide updates as available to the SRC on the vendor application process.

Issue #4

We were pleased to learn that the Agency has increased its number of supported employment providers. The SRC supports the development of an outcome-based system of service delivery for supported employment and is interested in reviewing data obtained regarding outcomes, gaps in service, and implementation/use of the model by CRPs. The SRC is also interested in learning more about the capacity of supported employment providers who serve minority populations as determined from FY 2009 baseline data. Lastly, the SRC also supports ORS promoting the intent and concept of informed choice to the entire rehabilitation network.

Response #4

Supported employment is a critical component of the ORS service array. Over the next year, ongoing development and enhancement of provider skills in job development, Ticket To Work Partnership Plus and informed choice will be a focus.

Issue #5

The SRC has voiced its concern in the past regarding the Agency's high number of vacant Rehabilitation Counselor positions. Although we were glad to learn that ORS was recently able to hire five Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, we again reiterate our concern about vacancies. We worry that the Agency may not be able to meet the employment needs of individuals with disabilities without adequate staffing. As there is an ongoing need to fill vacancies, we stress that the Agency must continue to recruit and hire new staff who have exceeded the National CRC requirement by obtaining their Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. We also believe that ongoing training and professional development are crucial to retain qualified staff.

Response #5

ORS concurs with the concerns of the SRC about the capacity to provide rehabilitation services to current and potential customers of our agency given the current counselor vacancies. We remain hopeful that ongoing hiring of new counselors will continue. ORS has maintained the practicum and internship opportunities with colleges and universities for future potential candidates who are currently seeking their Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Professional development of ORS staff remains a commitment of the Agency with an annual assessment of training needs and development of an annual training plan.

Issue #6

With respect to the Statewide Assessment, we have concerns about ORS's ability to meet the obligations for the development of minority vendors and completion of the Customer Satisfaction Survey with personnel shortages. In order to support the Agency, we have

participated in the development of the survey and will assist ORS as needed to evaluate the data compiled. We also encourage implementation of the 107 Monitoring Report programmatic goals and look forward to partnering with the Agency to develop marketing strategies to outreach to the business community.

Response #6

ORS has filled the position of the Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor who is the lead person for ORS in developing the new vendor relationships and has begun to contact the minority vendors identified in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Vendor Survey. Additionally, ORS has filled the Strategic Planning Supervisor position and with the assistance of the SRC, ORS has developed two components of a satisfaction survey to be sent to customers closed with ORS in status 26 and 28. ORS will provide updates to the SRC State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance sub-committee and will seek assistance in evaluating the survey data. The objective and goals of the 107 Monitoring Report is one of six Comprehensive Needs Assessment activities.

Issue #7

We support the goal to expand outreach on the work incentives and recommend adding a goal for outreach about work incentives particularly for youth who have yet to enter the Social Security Benefits System and become resistant to employment for fear of losing benefits. We also support a continuous quality improvement plan and suggest adding a goal to utilize the new cooperating arrangement with DLT to examine long term employment outcome data through the Wage & Hour Data System -- perhaps as part of the longitudinal data tool measuring the impact of post-secondary training and education on employment outcomes and earnings.

Response #7

ORS is exploring methods to evaluate outcomes and services provided to transition age youth. This process is in the process of being developed and may incorporate models of evaluation recommended by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

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**State Plan for the State Vocational
Rehabilitation Services Program
and
State Plan Supplement for the State
Supported Employment Services Program
Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted
FY 2009)**

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

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:

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

N/A

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

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

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

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) collaborates with programs and agencies providing services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach an employment goal. Types of agencies that ORS work with include: hospitals, medical and disability support organizations, educational institutions, professional associations, shelters, community centers, community mental health agencies, substance abuse treatment facilities and advocacy groups. Memorandums of Understanding have been negotiated with Department of Mental Health Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Institutions of Higher Education (IHE - Rhode Island College, University of Rhode Island and Community College of Rhode Island), Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), and the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH). In order to enhance our recruitment of appropriately trained rehabilitation counselors, ORS has a Memorandum of Understanding with Assumption College and Salve Regina University to provide practicum and internship opportunities to graduate students.

ORS has cultivated a strong working relationship with independent living centers to augment our vocational rehabilitation services with their ability to provide support services, transportation training, advocacy services, home assessments, independent living skills assessment, information and referral. In order to enhance these working relationships, ORS assigns Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to function as liaisons to various community agencies.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education (RIDE) and Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/ORS) targets students with disabilities for transition services with DHS/ORS for the purpose of achieving successful employment outcomes. Incorporated into the MOU is an expectation that all students who are eligible for services have an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to graduation. The MOU describes interagency collaboration and coordination, the role and responsibilities of each partner, the process for resolving disagreements, as well as, providing a Collaborative Services Chart (CSC). The CSC identifies which agency is primarily responsible for services in each of the following categories: Assessment Services, Career Development Services, Community Living Services, Related Services and Auxiliary Services.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) also exists between the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/ORS) and three state institutions of higher education: Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC) and the University of Rhode Island (URI). The MOU clarifies the role of each partner in fostering a seamless delivery system intended to support DHS/ORS customers attending post-secondary programs. It also defines the financial parameters for each partner in a cost sharing formula

for support services, accommodations and assistive technology for post-secondary students with an active Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with ORS.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

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

ORS will continue to expand both contractual and fee-for-service agreements with a wide network of private vocational rehabilitation providers in order to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities. An identified need, as determined by the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment or by individualized needs of customers, will initiate efforts to create a new service or training option. Contracts are negotiated according to agency criteria and include the development and monitoring of measurable performance goals.

In addition to contractual agreements, fee-for-service agreements incorporate a similar process with the Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) being funded based upon service provision and outcomes. During the FFY2010-FFY2012 time frame, ORS will implement a Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment to obtain current information on customers' vocational rehabilitation needs. A CRP survey was completed previously as part of our C.N.A. The SRC State Plan and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee will work with the CRP Supervisor to develop increased options for individuals with disabilities who are considered underserved or minority populations based on these survey findings. In addition, a satisfaction survey is being developed by the SRC State Plan and Quality Assurance subcommittee and ORS Strategic Planning Supervisor.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

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:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

ORS continues to embrace supported employment services as a means to enable individuals with the most significant disabilities to have access to work opportunities. The agency has increased the number of supported employment providers, has maintained involvement with two Supported Employment Advisory Councils, and has cooperative agreements with the Department of Mental Health Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH). The Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities are organized within the MHRH agency.

From FFY2010 through FFY2012, the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) will continue to partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) of supported employment services so that customers can make informed choices about supported, integrated, and competitive employment options. ORS will continue to sponsor and partner with the Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities Supported Employment Advisory Councils. ORS staff also provides ongoing training and technical assistance to the supported employment CRPs.

In FFY2010 ORS will continue to encourage CRPs to collaborate with each other to meet the diverse employment needs of significantly disabled individuals and to examine service delivery systems to ensure customer access to supported employment options.

ORS has a long-standing history of cultivating collaboration between ORS, CRPs and the netWORKri One-Stop system. It is anticipated that this effort will continue through FFY2012. ORS, through its parent agency, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, is a financial and programmatic partner with Rhode Island netWORKri One-Stop Centers. ORS counselors are located at each of the One-Stop Centers in order to provide easier access to ORS services including applications, information and referral, and placement services. ORS personnel attend monthly statewide Employer Services Network meetings at the Providence/Cranston One-Stop Career Center, netWORKri. In addition, ORS personnel, through the AT grant (ATAP), provide consultation and training to the One-Stop staff, in concert with the Disability Program Navigator, on disability issues, accessibility considerations and assistive technology.

ORS, as a provider of supported employment services, engages community resources to provide the extended supports that help sustain employment for individuals with significant disabilities. Long-term supports are planned for and included in the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). These plans are very individualized and define the scope and duration of each supported employment service. The IPE also identifies the CRP who will continue to provide support services to the individual with a disability on a long-term basis. This shift in service delivery responsibility is well coordinated by the ORS counselor and CRP agency staff so that there will be a seamless delivery of needed services to the individual. The time frame for transitioning an individual from the support services by both ORS and the CRP to extended supports provided solely by the CRP is based on the individual needs of each customer.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:
 - 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;
 - the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - 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.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is committed to providing quality rehabilitation services to its customers. Our commitment to this standard has resulted in a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling being required of all newly appointed Rehabilitation Counselors. ORS has developed a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as a systemic approach to developing all of its human resources. This system is intended to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation, direct service, supervisory, administrative, fiscal and support personnel.

Our CSPD plan follows:

PERSONNEL DATA AND PROJECTIONS

In FFY 2008, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program has served approximately 6,736 individuals, with an average caseload of 160. ORS has a total of 85 full time equivalent (FTE) positions which includes 41 counselor positions. Since September, 2007, early or forced retirements have resulted in 19 vacancies of counselor, supervisory, and clerical personnel. ORS has recently received approval to recruit for several positions resulting in the hiring of 5 vocational rehabilitation counselors. Pending approval from State Administration, it is expected that 7 additional vocational

rehabilitation counselors will be hired in the near future. All new counselors have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. ORS has recently promoted 7 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I's to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II's, and 3 Counselors to Supervisors and has hired a bi-lingual rehabilitation case aid and 7 support staff. ORS has eleven counselor vacancies, one vacant Supervisor position due to the creation of a new position that will focus on the Rhode Island Works initiative through the Department of Human Services and one vacant Assistant Administrator position due to the promotion of the Assistant Administrator to Deputy Administrator. Also the Acting Administrator was recently appointed to Administrator in January 2009.

Over the next 3 to 5 year period, ORS estimates that approximately 9-10 individuals (administrators, supervisor, counselors and support staff) will be eligible for retirement. Given the number of employees that have left state services and those that could potentially leave state service, ORS is actively pursuing graduate students in Rehabilitation Counseling programs from local universities and colleges.

Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I	26	7	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II	15	1	2
Case Aid	1	0	1
Supervisor	12	1	3
Deputy Administrator	2	0	0
Assistant Administrator	2	1	0
Support Staff	14	0	1
Administrator	1	0	1
Social Services	7	1	1
Fiscal	5	1	0

2. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:
 - a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
 - the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
 - 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.

PERSONNEL SOURCES

ORS has cultivated a relationship with the three area colleges that offer graduate training in Rehabilitation Counseling: Assumption College in Worcester, MA, Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I. and Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts. There are approximately 158 students enrolled in the graduate programs (90 at Assumption College, 53 at Salve Regina University and 15 at Springfield College) with 35 to 40 expected to graduate in May 2009 from these programs.

Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
Assumption College	90	1	0	28
Salve Regina University	53	2	0	13
Springfield College	15	0	0	0

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

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.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ORS has ongoing communication with Assumption College, Salve Regina University and Springfield College to ensure that the present and projected needs of ORS are considered in the program planning. In addition, Assumption College and Salve Regina University are offering a master's level program through a combination of distance learning and facility-based courses. A graduate student from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. utilizing their on-line distance learning program visited ORS to explore internship opportunities.

ORS continues to provide both practicum and internship opportunities for local graduate students. This program has been expanded during the past year as part of our plan to recruit qualified candidates to fill the numerous vacancies. ORS currently has 6 graduate students from Salve Regina University completing their practicum and internship assignments (3 practicum and 3 internships) and a graduate student from Assumption is currently working on his internship assignment.

The ORS Training Coordinator is a member of the Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE) Advisory Committee at Assumption College which assists with expanding training options for staff.

The ORS Administrator serves on the Advisory Board for the Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate Program at Salve Regina University which enhances the relationship with ORS and identifies current rehabilitation trends.

2. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

In addition, our efforts to recruit qualified personnel have consisted of maintaining an active relationship with the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (RIRA). The Training Coordinator is the current Past President of the Rhode Island Rehabilitation Association, and an ORS counselor is the President Elect.

3. EFFORTS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, MAINTAIN PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

ORS makes every effort to hire staff in accordance with the agencies affirmative action policies.

ORS job announcements are distributed to community-based agencies and the internet to attract qualified individuals, particularly, individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds.

ORS has hired a number of qualified individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds (visual impairments, Deafness, psychiatric/emotional, physical disabilities etc).

ORS actively recruits graduate students with disabilities and minority backgrounds for the practicum and internship program.

In FFY 2010, ORS will explore long-term strategies for recruitment of personnel from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Personnel Standards

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 steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take 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.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- 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;
- 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.

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

1. ADEQUATELY PREPARED AND TRAINED STAFF

Rhode Island does not have a state approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration requirements for Rehabilitation Counselors. Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services has elected to base its minimum personnel standards for recruitment of counselors on the requirement of a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, but and continue to monitor any state efforts for licensure of Rehabilitation Counselors. This Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling requirement exceeds the national CRC requirements.

2. NEW PERSONNEL

All new personnel are expected to meet the standard of a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from an accredited program.

ORS has been able to fill all vacancies with individuals with a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling since 10/01/2000.

ORS has worked aggressively with the institutions of higher education to recruit qualified individuals to fill vacancies.

Rhode Island is hopeful that it will be able to continue to hire individuals who meet the standard.

3. EXISTING PERSONNEL

As of April 2009, 40 out of 41 ORS counselors meet the standard (98% compliance), all field VR supervisors and Administrators meet the CSPD standard. Only one counselor does not meet the standard but is actively working toward compliance with the standard.

The counselor who does not have a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling is functioning within the parameters of an approved plan to achieve the standard and is limited in her ability to practice independently.

ORS has addressed the CSPD training needs of this one individual in the following manner:

1. Updated the individual's training plan
2. Clarified the CSPD requirements of their job
3. Established a monitoring system for quarterly updates on progress with her plans
4. Engaged Supervisor and HRD Personnel in the process

ORS continues to dedicate resources to support the CSPD plan.

ORS encourages retraining and hiring of staff from minority backgrounds and staff with disabilities.

Staff Development

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 significant knowledge from research and other

sources.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ORS recognizes the importance of ensuring that its staff has the necessary skills and abilities to provide quality services in a professional and timely manner.

The Training Coordinator conducted a needs assessment of personnel training needs between December, 2008 and February, 2009. Examples of areas identified for training included: Labor Market Information in collaboration with the Department of Labor at their computer lab, training for new supervisors, leadership, succession planning etc.

The needs assessment was analyzed for priorities and a training schedule was determined and implemented. The implementation has been restricted by the large number of vacancies.

The training plan continues to address training opportunities presented by the inclusion of the Rehabilitation Act into the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and specifically in the One-Stop Career Centers and issues related to the new regulations (effective July 2008) of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). Now that the regulations have been finalized, training has been made available to staff and will continue as the Partnership Plus program expands.

In order to retain qualified staff and in anticipation of additional retirement plans, ORS will offer leadership development training, succession planning and capacity building opportunities to interested staff. Management staff in very specific job categories will provide in-depth job analysis of their positions to include contact information for their peers in neighboring states. This is of particular importance, given the number of personnel who have retired, those that could retire in the near future, and the uniqueness of some positions.

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston has been awarded the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) grant and will be utilized to provide state-of-the-art training programs for all counselor and supervisory staff at ORS. Assumption College was also awarded the TACE grant in September 2008 and will work in conjunction with ICI to provide these trainings. ORS is currently working with the TACE representative to prioritize upcoming trainings.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

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

COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Interpreters and CART reporters are available for staff to communicate with diverse customer populations, for staff trainings and supervision. ORS now has four Video Relay stations to enable communication in ASL between Deaf staff and their colleagues and customers.

All staff trainings are now videotaped and available in a video library for new staff and for current staff for refresher opportunities. These training tapes can also be a resource for a Corrective Action Plan for remediation.

The Information Services Technician who manages the ORS and the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) web pages has expertise in providing materials in

alternate formats, and develops electronic tools for counselors. ORS assures that all information disseminated to staff with disabilities and customers is accessible.

The ORS Cultural Diversity Cadre meets regularly to recommend strategies to raise cultural competency of personnel and ensure that agency resources are accessible to culturally diverse populations.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

ORS relies on supervisory observations and self-identified training needs to enhance professional development.

The annual needs assessment conducted by the training coordinator elicits input from counselors and supervisors regarding training needs.

If a corrective action plan is necessary, the corrective action plan would be in compliance with the CSPD.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Pursuant to the Act, ORS offers to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) the opportunity to review and comment on the CSPD.

ORS will attach the comments and include them in the FFY 2010 update.

This screen was last updated on May 20 2009 11:10AM by Sharon Dipinto

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

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

RESULTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandates that ORS, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, complete a Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment (C.N.A.) at three-year increments. The C.N.A. is intended to identify the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those in need of Supported Employment, minorities with significant disabilities, underserved individuals, and individuals with disabilities served by other components of the workforce development network. In addition, the C.N.A. is intended to identify the need to develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). ORS views the C.N.A. as an evolving process that incorporates information from several diverse sources rather than from any one event or data source. During FFY 2010-2011, ORS will be addressing the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment using several resources including:

Agency strategic planning

Annual personnel needs assessments

Community Rehabilitation Provider Surveys

Compliance with Rehabilitation Services Administrations' Standards & Indicators

Customer satisfaction survey

Employer surveys

Implementation of the ORS 107 Monitoring Report

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLANNING

On an annual basis, the staff of ORS attends a planning meeting to identify the challenges and solutions needed to more effectively assist all individuals with significant disabilities to select, prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. This year, due to limited state resources, resulting in early retirements and inability to fill positions, ORS held a ½ day strategic planning session which focused on regional service goals. We project that with our ability to fill vacancies, a day-long strategic planning session will be re-established as a foundation for our C.N.A. ORS will continue to address the concerns raised in the RSA 107 Monitoring Report and 2007 - 2010 Strategic Planning Recommendations. Therefore, our strategic planning objectives have been modified in the following way:

Emphasize marketing strategies that showcase customer movement toward increased self-sufficiency, highlight customer capabilities, and address the needs of specific businesses were selected as a priority. Re-visit the implementation of the Marketing Committee, which was put on hold due to staff vacancies

Continue to enhance ORS assessment activities as a pre-cursor to development of an employment plan that promotes informed choice, self-determination, job retention and the value of life-long learning. Educate new staff on the importance of activities such as job shadowing, internships, volunteerism, skill assessments, situational assessments, and utilization of O'NET and RI Red Labor Market sites

Continue to assess and enhance staff skills in the use of group work as a viable intervention and provide joint training opportunities for CRP and ORS personnel

Maximize our collaboration with the netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers, Department of Health outreach initiatives, and the business community

ANNUAL PERSONNEL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The Training Coordinator of ORS conducts an annual training needs assessment. From December 2008 to February 2009, interviews were held with staff to establish a list of training topics and concerns. This year staff was asked to identify their top three areas of training needs. A training schedule was developed based upon the identified needs. Implementation of the training calendar has been compromised by the large number of position vacancies. However, a training calendar reflecting current needs has been developed. In addition, the ORS Training Coordinator works with TACE to provide training opportunities for new and existing personnel. ORS anticipates many newly hired staff will receive training which will provide opportunities for senior staff as well.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROVIDER (CRP) SURVEYS

According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's booklet "State of the State: A 2006 Statistical Profile of Cities and Towns", the state population is increasingly diverse in both ethnic and language minorities. African-American, Asian and Pacific Islanders had large numeric gains in their total population, while the Hispanic/Latino community nearly doubled in size with a total population of 90,280. In response to this significant change in demographics, ORS implemented a CRP survey in FFY2008 that examined vendors' experience and ability to work with minority communities. Of the 350 surveys that were distributed to ORS vendors and non-vendor community agencies, there were 117 respondents. Both the SRC State Plan Sub-Committee and the ORS staff assigned to the survey task reviewed the resultant data. Several significant findings were reflected by the results:

88% of vendors were satisfied to highly satisfied in their relationship with ORS

The need to reflect a more ethnically diverse ORS workforce was suggested as a strategy to engage minority populations

Several non-vendors have a history of working with diverse populations and can be pursued as potential ORS vendors

A long-term vacancy of the Community Rehabilitation Program Specialist prevented the follow-up of the CRP survey results with the regards to minority vendor development. During FFY 2010 the recently hired CRP Supervisor will work cooperatively with the Strategic Planning Supervisor and SRC State Plan/Policy/Quality Assurance Subcommittee to develop minority vendor relationships which address the needs of minority individuals with disabilities.

COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

For FFY 2008 the Office of Rehabilitation Services continued to meet or exceed all the Standards & Performance Indicators as dictated by Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. With the goal of maintaining the highest quality of services to customer, the Strategic Planning Supervisor will continue to monitor the agencies compliance with all Standard and Indicators on a quarterly basis with findings being reported to administration and supervisory personnel.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

A long-term vacancy of the Strategic Planning Supervisor impeded the development of the Customer Satisfaction Survey component of the C.N.A. As part of the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, the Strategic Planning Supervisor, with input from the SRC State Plan/Policy/Quality Assurance Sub-committee, will design a customer satisfaction survey to capture specific categories of closures. Additionally the survey will be designed as an ongoing tool to be distributed at set intervals which will provide longitudinal data regarding customer satisfaction.

The Continuous Quality Improvement Plan will also include ongoing supervisor case reviews as a means of performance evaluation and to ensure quality services are being delivered to all customers.

ORS EMPLOYER SURVEY

The ORS Workforce Development Supervisor functions as the liaison to the business community. The Business Advisory Counsel, which began in 2006 with twelve businesses, has since grown to thirty-five businesses that meet annually and discuss labor market trends, and employer recruitment and hiring needs. In FFY 2008 the ORS Workforce Development Supervisor designed a survey that was distributed to local businesses. The prominent theme from respondents was a need to learn more about Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology in the workplace. ORS will explore strategies to collaborate with the business community to address their concerns about technology in the work environment and access to a pool of qualified job candidates. This has resulted in ORS exploring and partnering with employers to provide internships opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORS 107 MONITORING REPORT

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) conducted an extensive review of ORS between Fall 2006 and Summer 2007. This review process included program performance statistics, on-site and telephone discussions with stakeholders, two on-site visits and multiple discussions with members of the SRC. RSA found several strengths in the program: leadership and dedicated staff; collaboration with key partners; statewide presence at the netWORKri One-Stop Centers; and statewide cooperative partnerships with all school districts and transition services to youth. For FFY 2010 ORS will continue to focus on the following areas

identified in the monitoring report as programmatic goals:

Decrease homemaker outcomes

Develop and implement a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

Improve the quality of employment outcomes

Improve the rehabilitation rate for transitioning youth

RESULTS

Based on the ongoing commitment to compliance with all Standards and Performance Indicators, the recommendations of the 107 Monitoring Report, findings from strategic planning process, and the CRP Surveys, ORS will focus on the following areas in FFY 2010:

Development, implementation and monitoring of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

Improvement of quality employment outcomes

Investment in expanding and improving our CRP and collaboration network

Reduction of homemaker outcomes

Recruitment of trained staff and skills enhancement of existing personnel

Ensure the rehabilitation rate of transitioning youth and the minority ratio comply with Standards and Indicators

Provide consultation services that respond to the needs of the business community

Develop marketing strategies in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - 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.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED AND COSTS OF SERVICES

I. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES UNDER THIS STATE PLAN

For FFY2008 there were 2,357 new applicants, and 2,113 individuals were deemed eligible. There were a total number of 1,511 individuals who developed their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and 750 individuals who had successful employment outcomes.

For FFY2009, ORS has a goal of 2,245 new applicants, given staff vacancies, and expects 2,105 individuals to become eligible. ORS anticipates that 1,510 new Individualized Plans for Employment will be developed and 751 successful outcomes achieved.

For FFY2010, ORS projects 2,250 new applicants, given filled vacancies, with 2,110 individuals to become eligible for ORS services. ORS anticipates that 1,515 individuals will develop Individualized Plans for Employment and projects 752 successful outcomes.

II. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND TITLE VI AND NUMBERS TO BE SERVED IN EACH ORDER OF SELECTION PRIORITY CATEGORY

In FFY2010, the projected number of clients to be served under an IPE is 4,428. One hundred percent of those expected to be served will be classified in the Order of Selection as either Category #1 - most significant, or Category #2 - significantly disabled.

For FFY2010, ORS is expected to serve:

Category #1 (most significant): 3,543 (Title I - 90%;

Title VI - 10%)

Category #2 (significant): 885 (Title I - 100%;
Title VI - 0%)

III. COST OF SERVICES FOR PROJECTED TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS TO BE SERVED
INCLUDING SERVICE COSTS UNDER EACH OOS CATEGORY

Average expenditure per client in FFY2010 is estimated to be: \$2,718

Total cost of services for OOS Category #1 are estimated to be: \$9,551,928

Total cost of services for OOS Category #2 are estimated to be: \$ 2,485,080

Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
OOS Category I - Title I	\$8,735,040	3,240	\$2,696
OOS Category I - Title VI	\$816,888	303	\$2,696
OOS Category II - Title I	\$2,485,080	885	\$2,808
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Totals	\$12,037,008	4,428	\$2,718

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - 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.

STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The state's goals and priorities, policies and planning activities are jointly agreed upon by the state agency and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). These goals are generated from the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment (C.N.A.), compliance with federal standards and performance indicators, monitoring reviews, quality improvement findings and feedback from customers, advocates and other stakeholders. Inherent in these goals is a belief that ORS will assist individuals with significant disabilities to move toward achievement of vocational goals and increased self-sufficiency.

ORS goals for FFY 2010 are as follows:

GOAL #1: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE QUALITY OUTCOMES

In order to increase quality employment outcomes, ORS will address several specific target areas:

BENEFITS AND WORK INCENTIVES

Provide access to benefits counseling for customers to make informed choices regarding work

Promote informed choice and awareness of SSA work incentives to reduce fears regarding how work impacts Social Security Disability benefits

Offer work incentives planning and assistance services through the Work Incentive, Planning & Advocacy (WIPA) cooperative agreement with Social Security Administration (SSA)

Provide staff training on the Ticket to Work regulations with emphasis on the new July 2008 regulations and Partnership Plus program

DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Design and implement a system for monitoring, evaluating and providing timely information for staff and administration about ORS' movement toward accomplishment of goals identified in the State Plan

Obtain and implement new MIS system with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for analysis and use of program data pending final approval from Department of Administration

Design and implement a survey of Administrators, Supervisors and Staff needs from Quality Improvement activities

Design and implement staff training to enhance understanding of the role of Quality Improvement in relationship to quality outcomes

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

Use ARRA stimulus funds to increase the number of job opportunities and successful outcomes for individuals with disabilities by hiring three to six job developers, coaches, and other personnel critical to the mission of the Vocational Rehabilitation program at the Office of Rehabilitation Services

Increase partnerships between businesses and ORS while enhancing existing collaborations with the business community

Participate on the two existing Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) covering Providence/Cranston and Greater RI areas

Partner with employers to provide internship opportunities for qualified customers which promotes enhancement of employers understanding of ORS and customers' employment-related skills

Utilize I & E funds to sponsor the Employer Honor Roll that acknowledges employers who provided employment and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities

Promote the viability of self employment through the ORS Self Employment Committee and staff liaisons to agencies working with customers toward their self-employment goal

Develop marketing materials that showcase customer employment success and self-sufficiency as well as to cultivate business awareness and interest in ORS as a workforce resource for their employment needs

Educate employers on assistive technology resources such as the Assistive Technology Access Partnership Program (ATAP)

Identify the skills needed for quality outcomes through dialogue with employers, including federal employers, Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Investment Boards, and trade

organizations

Increase job development and new partnerships with employers through ORS "Work Try Out" agreements, internships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Disseminate announcements of job openings through internal email system

Utilize internet employment sites such as Monster.com, projo.com, etc.

Participate on the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National and Regional employment group and national business network

Cultivate development of business partnerships through membership on SRC Employment Sub-Committee

Utilize the 35 member Business Advisory Council to advise ORS on developing appropriate skills for current and future workforce needs

Improve ORS marketing and public relations through membership and expansion in Rhode Island Business Leadership Network, Chambers of Commerce, Woman's Business Enterprise and Minority Business Enterprise

POST-SECONDARY SERVICES

Educate ORS customers to the opportunities that exist in the Rehabilitation Counselor field based on Labor Market Information

Expand MOUs with colleges to include transition services from college to career

Develop liaison relationship with admissions, disability services, and financial aid offices at RI state colleges

Join national and regional organizations that address the high unemployment rate of college graduates with disabilities

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (refer to Attachment 4.11(c)(4))

Analyze Supported Employment model(s) of the agency to determine effectiveness in serving increased numbers of customers in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment

Coordinate with community mental health centers and developmental disability organizations to increase the number of customers obtaining and maintaining competitive employment

TRANSITION SERVICES

Use of ARRA stimulus funds to develop and implement a Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program (SWEEP) for youth with disabilities.

Provide youth with disabilities with services to prepare for and obtain employment through career exploration, Labor Market Information and opportunities to explore employment trends, work incentives, volunteerism and mentoring

Develop a team comprised of Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Social Worker and Rehabilitation Counselor to strengthen services to transition-age students to better prepare for post-secondary activities

Incorporate summer work experiences, access to assistive technology, mobility assessment and training, work incentive information, and self advocacy skills as core services for youth in transition

Offer a Transition Conference every two years, annual disability forums, and opportunities to participate in conferences, workshops and exhibits

Develop strategies with RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN) to engage parents in learning about transitioning to the world of work

Outreach to 504 Coordinators to ensure that students with disabilities have access to ORS services

Support participation in Youth Leadership initiatives, such as the annual Youth Leadership Forum, Dare to Dream, Way to Go Rhode Island and netWORKri Youth Centers

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Support the work of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) of RIPTA (RI Public Transportation Authority) to enhance both fixed route and paratransit

Address transportation issues early in the rehabilitation process and incorporate supports and training in IPE

Encourage high schools to promote and provide travel training to increase self sufficiency for post-secondary training and employment

Assist the SRC Transportation Sub-committee in addressing transportation issues which prevent customer movement toward increased self sufficiency for post-secondary training and employment

TRAINING

Develop strategy for timely services for TANF (RI Works) individuals, given recent changes in state law and existing federal regulations for this population

Explore the use of I & E funds to support the development of paid internships for customers

Promote and increase work experiences, including internships, co-op, summer experiences, and volunteer work for adults and students to increase employability

Develop group work services such as interviewing skills workshop, social skills support group, and post-employment support group

Organize joint training of counselors and service providers toward a self-sufficiency philosophy and program designs that result in quality outcomes

Share best practices and use teamwork on complex cases to increase timely services and successful outcomes

Enhance ORS assessment activities to include academic and computer skill levels

Increase staff, service providers and individuals' knowledge about accommodations, ergonomics and assistive technology resources

Provide training in self-advocacy and reasonable accommodation requests to enhance employability and quality outcomes

Offer workshops about labor market information, completion and use of on-line job applications

GOAL #1A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE QUALITY OUTCOMES

Monitor the number of customers served through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds in relationship to program outcomes and employment outcomes of customers served

Meet Standard One of increasing employment successful closures annually, and all indicators, including:

Increase average competitive wage (Indicator 1.5) in FFY2010. In FFY 2008 the average competitive wage was \$10.70.

Increase rehabilitation rate (Indicator 1.2) in FFY2010. In FFY 2008 the rehabilitation rate was 62.81%.

Decrease homemaker outcomes in FFY2010. The number of homemaker outcomes for FFY 2008 decreased to 3.60%.

Increase number of customers with successful employment outcomes after participation in post-secondary training or education to begin measurement in FFY2009

Develop longitudinal data tool to measure impact of post-secondary training and education on employment outcomes and earnings

Assess the number of vocational evaluations provided in 2008 to transition students in relationship to successful employment outcomes of transition students

GOAL #2: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS IN 2009

Increase capacity to serve minority populations by adding new vendors, services, and bi-lingual ORS staff

Evaluate and analyze the results of the minority vendor survey

Develop strong partnerships with community-based agencies and training programs which primarily serve minority populations, as well as contact of liaisons to community-based organizations that serve minority populations

Collaborate on Rhode Island's Youth Councils associated with the two Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)

Provide technical assistance on youth with disabilities as they transition into the workforce

Provide input on the Department of Labor & Training's (DLT) "Shared Vision for Youth" Pilot Program to help develop a coordinated infrastructure between state and federal programs which are targeting the highest risk youth. Ten (10) youth with disabilities are part of the pilot group.

Monitor agency performance on Standard 2.1, Minority Ratio to Non-Minority Service Rate Ratio, by Quality Improvement Supervisor and Cultural Diversity Cadre

Complete, review and analyze C.N.A. survey to identify capacity in CRP network to meet employment needs of minority and underserved populations

Utilize new marketing materials to be placed in community organizations and businesses, including information in Spanish

Measure referral and outcome results once new MIS is operational

Ensure all agency, WIPA, and orientation materials, including those found on the ORS website and the WIPA informational sessions, are provided in Spanish or other language as needed

Develop a partnership with SRC members with contacts in the minority community as a resource in planning and development of services to minority and underserved populations

Provide in-service training on cultural sensitivity and competence, including instruction on how to use interpreters and the Language Line

GOAL #2A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS IN 2009

Monitor compliance with Standard & Performance Indicator 2.1

Identify service needs for minority populations utilizing vendor survey results

Develop additional CRP services to meet those needs

Increase the number of CRPs that have bilingual capacity and cultural competence

Monitor piloting of Spanish computer training program

GOAL #3: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

Reinforce agency commitment to the customers' right to informed choice and customer satisfaction through continuous training to new counselors, graduate student practicum, intern students and CRPs on informed choice

Ensure that customers' interests and goals are explored through vocational assessment activities such as labor market studies, Career Scope and customer independent research

Embed informed choice principal in ORS Policies and Procedures and ORS publications

Develop new CRPs in response to customer preferences, service needs and labor market needs

Assist current and new CRPs with developing new training or avenues of services which capture customers preferences

Maintain up to date information on ORS website including highlighting Informed Choice Fact Sheet

Ensure customers are aware of their right to access the Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Ensure customers are aware of their right to access the ORS customer relations process which entails discussing issues with counselor and regional supervisor to solve customer relation concerns

#3A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

Use FFY 2010 as a baseline year to collect data on customer satisfaction through our Continuous Quality Improvement Plan surveys

Monitor and compare the numbers of customer resolutions sought in FFY 2010 through Mediation and Hearings as compared to FFY 2009

Utilize information from customer satisfaction surveys and customer service activities during FFY 2010 to measure customer concerns, identify training and service development needs

Monitor customer informed choice through Continuous Quality Improvement activities such as supervisory case review, MIS data, and public forums

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

Justification for order of selection

ORDER OF SELECTION

The current Order of Selection is expected to continue from FFY2010 through FFY2012, thereby allowing ORS to serve all eligible individuals under these two categories. Office of Rehabilitation Services has lost positions due to retirements, budget constraints, promotions, maternity leaves, and workforce reductions. Therefore, in order to provide high quality employment outcomes, ORS will continue to monitor the current priority classification within the Order of Selection, and adjust if necessary. All clients with Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) are individuals with the most significant and significant disabilities. These individuals require multiple services over an extended time.

The Order of Selection consists of the following three categories:

1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities
2. Individuals with significant disabilities
3. All other individuals with disabilities who cannot be classified in a higher category

The Order of Selection does not discriminate by type of disability, economic status, or protected class.

Description of Priority categories

The Code of Federal Regulations defines an individual with the most significant disability in the following manner:

An individual who has a severe physical or mental disability that seriously limits three or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of employment outcome, and

whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time, and

who have one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorder, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disabilities, end-stage renal disease, or from another disability or combination of disabilities, which based on an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, causes comparable substantial functional limitations.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

ORS assures that its Order of Selection (OOS) policy gives first priority to individuals in Category 1 with the most significant disabilities, and Category 2 with significant disabilities. Services are delivered within a comprehensive, coordinated program that is designed to assist these individuals to prepare for and engage in gainful employment in an integrated setting.

ORS notifies all individuals assigned to Category 3 of information and referral services to assist them with preparation for obtaining employment and related services.

Individuals are reassessed when additional information relevant to OOS is received subsequent to a classification decision. Requests for post-employment services are not subject to Order of Selection.

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved

Projections for numbers to be served in FFY2010 are based on recent performance:

OOS Category 1 = 3,543

OOS Category 2 = 885

The goal for all the consumers referenced by the Order of Selection categories is an employment outcome. This employment outcome reflects the individual's informed career choice that has evolved from information about skills, interests, preferences, abilities and the labor market. The Individualized Plan for Employment is then developed to reflect that choice and the specific services/interventions needed by the individual to reach that employment outcome.

It is anticipated that multiple services will be necessary over an extended period of time in order for the individual to reach their employment goal. Quantifying the length of time an individual is active with ORS is difficult as the necessary services, duration and outcome is individualized to the needs of each customer.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Outcome goals 26s	Outcome goals 28s	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1	3,543	601	469	29	\$9,551,928
2	885	151	80	26	\$2,485,080
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

8					
9					
10					

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

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.

Title VI, Part B continues to provide \$300,000 of federal funding annually. ORS uses these funds to assist the most significantly disabled populations through carefully crafted, individually planned supported employment services. These services are provided through a partnership between ORS and a number of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) on a fee-for-service basis.

In FFY 2008, 233 individuals received multiple types of supported employment services through 34 CRP agencies. However, funding cuts, high staff turnovers, and personnel vacancies among CRP vendor agencies continue to be chronic problems.

ORS Supported Employment Plan for FFY 2010 and FFY 2011 mirror similar goals to those identified in Attachment 4.11 (c):

GOAL #1: INCREASE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Support CRP training opportunities to better prepare providers for the renewed focus on quality employment outcomes, increased wages and increased number of hours worked per week

Provide on-going training to ORS counselors regarding the supported employment model and process

Facilitate training of CRPs through a number of resources: a contract with the Sherlock Center's Supported Employment (SE) Training Program, the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (TACE), and sponsorship of trainings at ORS

Market the benefits of ORS involvement to the Administration and Management staff of agencies that are not presently ORS vendor agencies

Evaluate recently implemented outcome-based Supported Employment model to examine impact on quality outcomes, gaps in service, and implementation/use of this model by CRPs

Address ORS staff and vendor training needs via the CRP Supervisor and CSPD Training Supervisor

Utilize the CRP/ORS Supported Employment Developmental Disability Council and the

Supported Employment Behavioral Health Council as a resource to examine best practices for supported employment

Arrange and participate in bi-annual joint ORS, Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Behavioral Health Services meetings

Strive to increase successful supported employment outcomes

GOAL #1A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE QUALITY OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Meet Standard 1.1 of increasing successful closures annually, and all indicators, including: Increase in the number of supported employment successful closures based on 2008 data of 130.

GOAL #2: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY WHO ARE CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Identify need for Developmental Disability vendor development to work with cultural and language minorities through the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (C.N.A.) Vendor Survey

Develop strong partnerships with supported employment providers who have experience with minority populations

Monitor agency performance on Standard 2.1 (The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.)

Ensure agency materials are in Spanish and other alternate formats

Provide in-service training with CRPs on cultural sensitivity and cultural competence, including instruction on the use of interpreters and the Language Line

ORS will continue to recognize the importance of hiring a diverse workforce.

GOAL #2A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY WHO ARE CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

FFY 2009 will be a baseline year to gather information about the capacity of Supported Employment providers to meet the needs of minority populations who are also the most significantly disabled.

FFY 2009 will also be a baseline year to examine the number of minority populations served through Supported Employment Services.

Efforts will continue to be made by ORS to recognize and meet the needs of the minority population.

Meet or exceed Standard 2.1 service rate of .80 (The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.)

GOAL#3: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION OF CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Develop and implement a Customer Satisfaction Survey in concert with the State Rehabilitation Council Policy & Quality Assurance Sub-committee. Additionally, the survey will be distributed at set intervals, in order to provide longitudinal data regarding customer satisfaction.

Provide ongoing training with counselors, graduate students, practicum and intern students about informed choice and customer satisfaction

Develop training for CRPs in response to customer preferences, informed choice principals, and changing labor market needs

Provide a leadership role with the CRPs so that the intent and concept of informed choice is generalized to entire rehabilitation network

GOAL#3A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Utilize information from customer satisfaction surveys and customer service activities to measure customer concerns and identify training needs of ORS customers in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council

Use data from the customer satisfaction surveys and customer service activities to identify training needs of ORS staff and CRPs

Evaluate the needs of customers and assess the need for additional supported employment providers from a baseline in FFY 2008 of 34, which represents an increase of 12 from FFY 2007

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

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.)

- Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
- 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.
- Describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- Identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs, if applicable.
- Describe strategies to improve the performance with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.
- Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- 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.

STATE STRATEGIES FOR TITLE 1 FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I & E) FOR FFY2009

Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funds and program development strategies will be implemented during FFY2010 in the following areas based on the needs identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, ORS' Goals and Priorities, and ORS' commitment to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities while ensuring equal access to VR and SE services:

ADDRESS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Develop an array of marketing materials (in English and alternate formats): table top displays, brochures, pamphlets, electronic formats, and flyers to market ORS employment services to businesses, referral sources, potential customers and their families

Formulate a plan for developing a partnership with the student services, placement services and financial aid services of local colleges and universities in order to more effectively assist customers in successfully completing school and being better prepared to compete for quality employment outcomes

Use I&E funds to sponsor a statewide Transition Conference every two years, which is intended to target Rehabilitation Counselors, Educators and High School personnel, and Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) who work with youth and parents

Partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) of supported employment services and the Division of Developmental Disabilities in FFY 2010 to develop a system of services that provides increased options and choices to customers about supported, integrated, competitive employment options

Develop a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan that evaluates agency services and outcomes in order to meet the goals and objectives of the State Plan

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

Provide technical assistance and proposal review as an active member of Rhode Island's two Workforce Investment Board Youth Councils

Ensure that youth with disabilities are included as a target population in the Governor's Workforce Investment initiatives

Maintain ORS presence at the newly created One-Stop Youth Centers and at each of the netWORKri sites and utilize the resources of the One-Stop Youth Centers

Function as an instructor in the Certified Case Management Training Program of the Community Mental Health Centers by educating participants to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program as an employment resource

Increase linkages between the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) resources, existing rehabilitation technology contractors, and ORS counselors, to ensure that assistive technology is incorporated into customer services on a statewide basis throughout each stage of the rehabilitation process

Assess and provide rehabilitation services to the TANF participants of the welfare reform initiative, RI Works. System Design and limited staffing resources at both the Department of Human Service RI Works and ORS has presented challenges to implementing the new state law. ORS is committed to assisting this underserved population within the parameters of the agency mission of addressing the employment needs of individuals with disabilities referred by RI Works. In addition to the traditional array of services offered by the agency, ORS has invested in the initiative by hiring a Supervisor to oversee the RI Works Initiative.

ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Develop more summer work experience programs with several CRPs for youth with significant developmental disabilities as existing resources do not have the expertise or personnel resources to address the unmet vocational needs of this population

Develop a program for youth who transition from the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Social Service Program to the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program. As

students move from one system to the next, they often disengage in the process. The two programs plan to provide joint service provision until the youth have successfully engaged with the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Explore development of a fee-for-service program with the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) to educate students and their parents about the differences in access to resources in high school vs. college/work. These sessions will also focus on building self-advocacy and self-sufficiency skills to increase successful quality employment outcomes.

Use I&E funds to support meetings with stakeholders, to monitor implementation of the contract between DHS/ORS and the five Educational Collaboratives, and to provide vocational evaluation opportunities for youth with disabilities. The contract supports vocational evaluation and work experiences for students with disabilities through five Regional Vocational Assessment Centers.

Renew the Cooperative Agreement between RIDE and ORS that provides the foundation for VR involvement with the Local Education Authorities (LEA) in providing transportation services to youth prior to graduation.

Assist CRPs in providing quality services to ORS customers, which is critical to ensure customer satisfaction, informed choice, and a successful quality employment outcome

Assume a leadership role in educating CRPs to national trends and best practices, as related to supported employment

METHODS TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Offer a fee-for-service model to ensure that customers have access to a Benefits Counselor

Develop partnerships among agencies in order to capture the strengths of each as resources decrease and service requests increase. With decreasing resources, agencies are exploring consolidation of services in order to meet customers' employment needs.

Collaborate with service providers to support youth being released from the Rhode Island Training School to apply for ORS services

Explore partnering with innovative programs such as "AS220" - a creative arts initiative, and the RI "Diner Program". The "Diner Program" is a training initiative for youth transitioning from the Training School to learn construction trades through the renovation of mobile diners and food service skills through the operation of the mobile diners. These efforts may lessen the likelihood of recidivism by increasing employment opportunities to youth.

Participate in National Mentoring Day, and create a meaningful mentoring experience to increase participation

Review and analyze results of the statewide survey on transportation to assist the SRC Transportation Subcommittee to identify issues and obstacles to customer access to adequate transportation

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED IN THE VR PROGRAM

Cultivate liaison relationships with community-based agencies to ensure access to services and training programs, which have expertise to serve minority populations

Ensure access to ORS information and services through use of a Language Line, interpreters from a variety of resources, as well as producing materials in languages other than English. In addition, ORS is cultivating recruitment of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) who

have a presence in targeted minority populations such as Progresso Latino, South East Asian Economic Development, Native American communities, Urban League, and Bilingual psychologist and therapists.

Foster minority representation on the SRC with the recruitment of additional representation from the Latino, Native American, and under-represented populations

Explore development of presentations about ORS that are tailored to diverse audiences

Provide general information sessions about benefits and Social Security benefits (Work Incentives Planning & Advocacy Program) in Spanish

Place marketing materials about ORS in community-based locations frequented by large numbers of individuals

OVERCOME BARRIERS RELATED TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

Address equal access issues by ensuring that the program is responsive to cultural and language diversity issues of current and future customers

Encourage cultural sensitivity among its CRP network as well as engaging our CRP partners to provide accessible service

Expect training programs and CRP services to be gender neutral and open to all qualified customers regardless of age, race, and national origin

Support new and existing CRPs to provide universal access to their services

Recruit additional resources to expand service options for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth

Address the employment needs of elder-disabled customers through the Department of Elderly Affairs, netWORKri, Pawtucket Senior Community Service Employment Program and West Bay Community Action Senior Employment Program, and other applicable programs

Support employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities within the Developmental Disabilities (DD) community through a series of attitudinal changes, resource shifts, and training strategies that make employment in integrated settings a reality for individuals with significant disabilities

PERFORMANCE WITH RESPECT TO EVALUATION, STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Utilize I&E funds to support the projects of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) as well as orienting and training new members on the SRC

Develop the State Plan by the SRC and ORS, as well as the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, through I&E funds

Acquire new computer system that will integrate case management, MIS and billing functions pending state approval

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)
Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the most recently submitted version of Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

1.
 - Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

GOAL #1 TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

BENEFIT AND WORK INCENTIVES

Provided Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) to recipients of SSI and SSDI through an agreement with Social Security Administration (SSA). This resulted in a total of 522 individuals receiving services: 165 individuals received benefits counseling and ongoing support and 357 received information regarding SSA work incentives. The project emphasized working by providing accurate information regarding work incentives planning, assistance and outreach services. Maximized outreach efforts; WIPA staff offer general information sessions twice a month at the netWORKri locations. WIPA staff also provided individual benefits analysis on the SSA work incentives.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Based on the 107 Monitoring Report a Quality Improvement Plan was drafted. Due to a long-term vacancy the full implementation of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan was impeded. The implementation of a system for monitoring, evaluating and providing timely information for staff and administration about ORS movement toward accomplishing goals identified in the State Plan is a primary focus for 2010.

Utilized data from the current MIS system to monitor standards and indicators, however, the purchase of a new MIS system remains a priority for ORS. Moving forward with this goal will enhance the analysis of and use of program data. This process has been hindered by lack of staff resources and State fiscal restraints.

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

Provided two Employment Trainings for ORS Counselors that were organized by the Workforce Development Supervisor on food service industries and trade apprenticeship programs

Invited 35 employers to the "Creating a Future Workforce" presentation that included attendance of staff and providers

Utilized employers of the ORS Business Advisory Council to provide mock interviews for customers seeking employment through interviewing skills workshops

Provided technical assistance to all employers requesting support with ensuring their websites are accessible to individuals who use a screen reader

Developed additional relationships with employers by participating in several Chambers of Commerce, Business Leadership Network (BLN) and individual contacts

Developed a partnership with CVS Corporation that has developed a Pharmaceutical Technician Training program which promotes career advancement for persons with disabilities. The CSAVR National Business Network has requested ORS' Workforce Development Supervisor to share this arrangement with other VR agencies affiliated with CSAVR.

Expanded the Business Advisory Council which meets annually and updates ORS on the changing labor market to 35 employers in FFY2009

Maintained participation on the Providence-Cranston Workforce Investment Board which focused its training funding toward high demand occupations and associated Youth Councils

POST-SECONDARY SERVICES

Maintained connections with the three state colleges and education institutions in Rhode Island. Due to staff vacancies, the development of staff liaisons to the three state colleges was delayed. ORS remains committed to this initiative and plans to re-visit this goal upon staffing resources leveling off.

TRANSITION SERVICES

Established 2010 goals and objectives for quality outcomes and increasing transition outcomes based on the results of the RSA monitoring in 2007

Promoted career exploration through work experiences and mentoring opportunities

Supported participation of customers in Youth Leadership initiatives

Provided and participated in the Transition Conference which is held every two years

Participated in Transition Nights throughout the state

Provided information to high school teachers, guidance counselors, collaboratives, 504 coordinators, transition coordinators, about work incentives, benefits, and age 18 adult requirements

Provided Work Incentives workshop to ORS Transition Counselors

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Reinforced the importance of addressing transportation issues early in the rehabilitation

process by adding additional travel training vendors

Advocated for expansion of statewide public transportation routes and paratransit to increase services and flexible schedules to enable customer employment

Explored strategies to overcome transportation barriers in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council Transportation Subcommittee

TRAINING

Provided "Work Try Outs" resulting in employment for our customers

Provided Interviewing Skill Workshops to increase customer's ability to move toward self-sufficiency by being an active participant in their job search

Provided online application workshops for customers on the use and completion of online applications which are increasingly being used as a business standard

Increased training options by adding seven short-term training programs that represented five occupational areas and are reflective of current labor market trends and customer interests.

GOAL #2 TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS

Developed and built strong relationships with community-based agencies and training programs including the area Tribal VR Program in order to provide quality employment outcomes for Native Americans

Ensured equal access by minority communities to ORS services through input from the Cultural Diversity Cadre and monitoring of ORS compliance with Standard #2.1. The Cadre is involved in the development and implementation of new marketing materials, including an orientation presentation in several different languages.

Devoted additional staff resources to increase the agency's capacity to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking consumers

Hired a Bi-lingual Case Aid to improve service delivery to Spanish-speaking consumers and assist ORS staff with translation and interpreting needs

Increased access and utilization of the Spanish version of the Career Scope

Added an additional bi-lingual vendor to provide job development and placement assistance

Served on and participated in reviewing proposals for both WIA and Governor's Workforce Board youth service initiatives.

Contributed to the Shared Vision for Youth initiative that is intended to develop a coordinated infrastructure between state and federal agencies in providing services to the highest risk youth. Many of these youth are minorities. Youth with disabilities and Native American youth are specifically targeted. ORS is developing a more effective interagency collaboration to provide identified services.

GOAL #3 STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

Demonstrated commitment to customers' right to informed choice and satisfaction by continuing to ensure that choice is reflected in policies and practices as they are updated

Provided an Informed Choice In Employment Planning fact sheet to customers in the intake packet

Participated in four Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD) Public Forums

Trained new counselors, graduate students, practicum and interns on informed choice

Provided continued training to current vocational rehabilitation counselors in informed choice through clinical supervision and in-service trainings

Ensured that customers have an opportunity to develop an employment goal based on customers' informed choice

Ensured that customers have access to CRP's and training programs based on informed choice through the addition of seven community rehabilitation providers

Developed new training programs in response to the expressed needs and interests of ORS customers and the labor market demands

Provided a leadership role with the CRPs so that the intent and concept of informed choice integrated into all aspects of the rehabilitation process

Incorporated information from RSA's 107 Monitoring Report as part of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on customer choice and satisfaction

2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Utilized Supported Employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities as a successful strategy for job retention. ORS continues to work with both the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and Division of Behavioral Health (BH) Services in examining best practices and track outcomes.

Provided joint training to BH/DD Supported Employment Council members regarding the outcome-driven Supported Employment Model

Closed 130 individuals with significant disabilities through successful employment

Established an hourly wage of \$8.79 and a baseline of 18.03 hours per week for FFY2008

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for the most recently completed federal fiscal year.

ORS met or exceeded all Standards and Indicators for FFY 2008.
Evaluation Standard 1 - Employment Outcomes

Performance Indicator 1.1: Increased the number of successful outcomes annually and continued to meet Standard One of performance and indicator standards. However, ORS needs to amend its 5% annual increase in goals due to several variables. Given staff

vacancies, state fiscal constraints, unemployment rate, and a focus on increasing quality employment outcomes as per our C.N.A, the new goal is described in Attachment 4.11(d). ORS exceeded the 2008 goal of 746 successful outcomes by 4 to 750. The goal for 2009 is 751 successful outcomes.

Performance Indicator 1.2: Increased rehabilitation rate by 2.91% over FFY 2007 and exceeded the Federal Standard by 7%

Performance Indicator 1.3: Exceeded the earnings ratio by 2.85% over FFY 2007 and the Federal Standard by 22.87%

Performance Indicator 1.4: Maintained 100% individuals with significant disabilities who are earning at least minimum wage, this exceeded the Federal Standard by 37.6%

Performance Indicator 1.5: Increased the average hourly rate earned by individuals by .02% over FFY 2007 and exceeded the Federal Rate by .03%

Performance Indicator 1.6: While the Federal Standard was exceeded by 2.59% in FFY 2008 ORS saw a decline of 9.19% in the number of individuals whose own income at time of exit was their largest source of support.

Evaluation Standard 2 - Equal Access to Services

Performance Indicator 2.1: Increased the service rate for individuals with minority backgrounds by .046% and exceeded the Federal Rate by .1%. Met the standard for services and employment outcomes for minorities who are disabled for FFY2008. In 2008, 23% of the successful employment outcomes represented minority customers, an increase from 15% in 2007.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in the most recent completed federal fiscal year.

Used I & E funding to support five focus groups held statewide with stakeholders to develop a renewed vision for the Cooperative Agreement between DHS/ORS and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The Cooperative Agreement supports vocational evaluation and work experiences for students with disabilities through five Regional Vocational Assessment Centers.

Sponsored a strategic planning day with all staff as part of the ORS Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Utilized I&E funds for State Rehabilitation Council and State Independent Living Council activities

Used I&E funding to develop specialized fee-for-service interventions to assist ORS/RI Works customers transitioning to independence through obtaining and maintaining employment

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Rhode Island State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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

- 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

ORS counselors successfully placed 130 individuals with the most significant disabilities in FFY2008.

The goal for FFY2010-FFY2012 is for ORS to continue to increase the number of successful outcomes, while increasing the number of hours employed and the hourly wage of individuals. (Average pay for supported employment outcomes for FFY2008 was \$8.79/hr.; average hours per week were 18.03).

ORS continues to sponsor the use of Supported Employment Advisory Councils as a means of achieving our mutual successful employment goals. Through a contract awarded to the Paul V. Sherlock Center, a member of their staff assists in organizing the council meetings and is Chair of one of the Councils. ORS Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor and assigned ORS staff actively participate in both the Behavioral Health (BH) and the Developmentally Disabled (DD) Supported Employment Advisory Councils. Joint meetings of the two councils are held a minimum of twice a year. These meetings provide an opportunity to share technical knowledge, best practices, as well as training topics.

The CRP Supervisor represents ORS on a regional planning committee, attends bi-annual steering committee meetings, and provides input on the training needs of CRP agencies in RI.

ORS will continue to cultivate CRPs to work with underserved individuals with disabilities throughout FFY2010 and FFY2012 by providing training, technical assistance, and adjusting fee schedules. This need was predicated on the basis of the results of the 2008 Vendor Needs Assessment.

Youth with significant disabilities is a population in need of increased CRP options and services. Several vendor agencies are being supported in their efforts to provide vocational evaluations and summer work experiences. The five educational collaboratives are being encouraged to provide work experiences for youth, as well as developing vocational programs based on students' needs. These opportunities provide youth with increased choice and opportunity for career exploration.

ORS is moving to an outcome-based system of service delivery for all vendors providing supported employment services. Overall, ORS has had positive results, and during FFY2010 through FFY2012, ORS will evaluate the effectiveness of this system. Training needs for ORS

counselors around supported employment will be addressed via the Training Supervisor.

The Self-Employment Initiative has grown in Rhode Island. ORS liaisons work with BH and DD providers who have recently been awarded Self-Employment funding to provide technical assistance and support in areas such as accounting, paperwork, marketing, etc. to customers seeking to become Self-Employed. ORS liaisons to the providers are working with these ORS customers whose agreed-upon IPE reflects a goal of Self-Employment.

The Cooperative Agreement between The Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals (MHRH) and DHS/ORS is being updated. It will continue to demonstrate intra-agency cooperation and commitment to provide supported employment services. This collaborative will continue to establish new patterns of service delivery to persons with the most significant disabilities.

ORS continues to have a commitment to providing supported employment services. For those customers who meet the supported employment criteria, the IPE becomes the foundation for meeting customers' individualized supported employment needs. The IPE defines the employment goal, the timeline, services, and long-term support/vendor who will continue to provide support services to the individual with disability on a long-term basis. These long-term support providers are identified in the ORS Memorandum of Understanding, which is signed by the vendor agency. This shift in service delivery responsibility is well coordinated by the ORS counselor and vendor agency staff so that there will be a seamless and continuous delivery of needed services to the individual.

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According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1820-0500. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 25 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4760. If you have any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Carol Dobak, Chief of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Unit, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., PCP, Room 5014, Washington, D.C. 20202.