

FFY 2012 State Plan Update - Attachment 4.11 (e) (2) – Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

(A) Provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals and priorities were achieved.

Through **Goal 1**, DSHS/DVR assisted 2,676 individuals with disabilities to achieve gainful employment in Federal Fiscal Year 2010. This was an increase in rehabilitation outcomes of 272 (or 11%) over the previous year. Of these successful closures, 203 were in supported employment. In 2010, DSHS/DVR developed 5,645 new individual plans for employment which was relatively the same amount developed in the prior year FFY 2009. As a result, DSHS/DVR increased the number of open cases being served in plan status from 5,416 at the start of FFY 2009 to over 8,000 open plans per month in FFY 2010.

For FFY 2010, DSHS/DVR accepted 12,502 applications representing a 9% increase from FFY 2009. For FFY 2010, DSHS/DVR determined 10,965 individuals eligible for VR services, representing a 5% increase from FFY 2009.

Between FFY 2006 and FFY 2009, DSHS/DVR implemented a number of steps to reduce average costs and serve more individuals. In FFY 2006, the average case cost of a rehabilitation closure was \$8,898.00; by FFY 2010 this cost was reduced to \$5,727.00. This was achieved by maximizing employee strengths, implementing referral tools so that customers are referred to DSHS/DVR when they are ready for VR services and want to work, increasing comparable services and benefits and implementing more cost effective contracts with community rehabilitation programs. DSHS/DVR continues to closely monitor its fiscal resources to assure maximum case service capacity is maintained.

DSHS/DVR established the following two priorities to achieve Goal 1:

- Priority 1: Increase DVR's ability to assist customers achieve higher wage jobs with benefits.

Result: In 2009, the average wage earned by rehabilitated customers was \$11.69 per hour. In 2010, the average wage earned by rehabilitated customers was \$12.16 per hour.

- Priority 2: Enhance and improve the statewide consistency of timely, individualized services to customers who have a broad range of needs and capabilities.

Result: Days from application to plan in 2009 was 172; in 2010 this number was decreased to 132 days. Days from plan to rehabilitation in 2009 was 421; in 2010 this number decreased to 416 days. In FFY 2010, the number of plans exceeding DVR's 120 day guideline for plan development was stabilized at approximately 1,200. In addition, a new case management tracking tool was implemented in 2009 to assure consistent and timely service delivery. In FFY 2010, DVR continued to implement strategies and tools to streamline and create a more efficient process for other organizations to refer individuals for VR services. This included the development of an

online referral form posted on DVR's webpage, as well as an online referral process used exclusively for DSHS Disability Lifeline clients to be referred to DVR. These efforts have included educating partners to better understand what services DVR provides, supplying them with information about VR eligibility and criteria, and more clearly emphasizing that individuals who are referred to DVR will be expected to want to work. It also has included better educating new applicants about DVR services by continuously playing a DVD in the reception area of every field office that explains all facets of the VR program.

Under **Goal 2**, DSHS/DVR continues to implement a number of strategies designed to enhance the organizational infrastructure and skills of its staff in providing high quality VR services.

In FFY 2010, DSHS/DVR continued an initiative to train all employees on the use Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills. While MI is not intended to replace other counseling skills or methods, it has proven to be a promising practice for assisting individuals to make well informed choices when they are ambivalent or uncertain about whether they want to pursue an employment goal or how to most effectively participate in the VR process. Other staff training continues to provide a series of modules that includes Basic and Advanced Best Practices, Rehabilitation Law Review, a Rehabilitation Technician Training Academy, as well as other VR topics.

A DSHS/DVR team of internal job developers continues working to enhance individualized job development and placement for customers.

DSHS/DVR has provided events for Area employees and individual field service recognition to motivate and recognize the provision of high quality VR services.

Employee survey results continue to be utilized to identify areas of strengths and areas that need improvement to enhance staff support and the provision of quality services.

A Senior Rehabilitation Team, with representatives from all levels of the division's staff, continues to provide input and feedback on policy development, organizational efficiencies and changes within the Division.

DSHS/DVR began negotiations in 2011 with the Washington Federation of State Employees to expand external capacity to deliver the WorkStrides workshop to customers statewide as a contracted service. These negotiations continue to be underway. DSHS/DVR continues to have the internal capacity to deliver the workshop at select locations based on staff resources. These workshops provide individuals with more in-depth information about their strengths, interests, and capacities, enabling them to make better decisions about a suitable vocational goal and contributing to a higher rehabilitation rate.

DSHS/DVR continues to utilize an electronic case review tool for VR Supervisors and includes the requirement for Supervisors to review two cases per counselor per month. The results of these reviews are rolled up to the Area and Statewide level to monitor trends and identify training needs. DSHS/DVR also continues to perform a statewide case review process coordinated by State Office and conducted by a team of field and state office staff.

This process further enhances the ability of the agency to review and monitor compliance with Federal regulations, trends in case services, and areas in which training or other action is needed. The reviews are indicating substantial improvement in quality and consistency of case service practices throughout the Division.

To improve performance reporting and accountability, DSHS/DVR continues to use the GMAP (Government Management Accountability Program) and Dashboard reports. The Dashboard reports provide a real-time snapshot of performance on four key performance indicators reported statewide, by area, unit and office that is easily accessible and available to all staff on our intranet web site. Additionally, staff use the technology available through iDVR SharePoint (an intranet application) to share information, communicate and collaborate about best practices, training and other related job activities.

To accomplish **Goal 3**, Washington DSHS/DVR has taken numerous steps to build and strengthen partnerships that maximize resources and enable DSHS/DVR to serve more people.

In FFY 2009, DSHS/DVR expanded “Say Hey” employer networking events from the original location in Olympia to several other communities, including Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, Bremerton and Everett. “Say Hey” events have been co-sponsored with other organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and Business Leadership Networks. However, there was a sharp decline in participation by employers at “Say Hey” events in FFY 2010, largely due to the declining job market, which lead to the events being put in hiatus. DSHS/DVR and local partners will resume co-sponsorship of “Say Hey” events as the job market improves and more employers again become interested in attending in greater numbers.

DSHS/DVR continues to assist counseling staff to better communicate the role of the agency to customers, partners, employers, and others. A “DVR Guide to Services” and informational DVDs have been posted on DVR’s webpage as well as YouTube. In addition, DVR is playing the informational DVD about VR services continuously in the reception area of every field office.

DSHS/DVR continues to reach out to several agencies with populations who have not been served or have been underserved for the past several years. DSHS/DVR has strengthened its collaboration with various DSHS programs. Efforts continue at the regional level to establish streamlined referral procedures and to conduct cross-training.

DSHS/DVR continues efforts to build partnerships with the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery – Mental Health (DBHR-MH), a state agency that contracts with regional entities for the delivery of community mental health services and directly operates two state psychiatric hospitals.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR-MH staff continue to work together to jointly conduct cross-system training when requested to emphasize key elements of both service delivery systems and to support better coordination of the employment needs of mental health consumers.
- DSHS/DVR continues to play a key role in the “Willing Partners” employment project created by DBHR-MH using a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. Participation in the

project has expanded from 3 to 5 Regional Support Networks committed to improving employment services to mental health consumers.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR-MH continue a mutual collaboration to explore ways that mental health agencies can effectively become Employment Networks and build a revenue stream from the Ticket to Work Program that will fund extended services for mental health consumers who require a supported employment model.
- Across the state, liaison DVR counselors continue to work itinerantly from several Mental Health agencies at least one day per week to facilitate access to VR services for mental health consumers.

DSHS/DVR continues to implement collaborative efforts with the Gates Foundation and Building Changes organization with a primary focus on better serving individuals with disabilities who face homelessness and poverty. These two non-profit organizations are working in partnership to implement several pilot projects in Washington State to assist homeless families in obtaining permanent housing and employment. DSHS/DVR has been invited to join this partnership to assist in serving eligible individuals with disabilities who are members of these families.

(B) Identify the strategies that contributed.

Goal 1:

- Encouraging staff to achieve counselor expectations for Individual Plans for Employment (IPE) and rehabilitations
- Expanding WorkStrides
- Strengthening partnerships and use of comparable services and benefits
- Increasing staff skills and recognizing accomplishments
- Developing and using enhanced performance tracking tools and reports

Goal 2:

- Continued to redesign the basic training modules to increase quality and efficiency of rehabilitation practices.
- Quarterly meetings with the Senior Rehabilitation Team for communication and input from employees representing all positions and geographic areas around program priorities and changes.
- Continued implementation of an equipment replacement plan to assure staff have safe, reliable tools and equipment to perform their work.
- The Chief of Field Services continued touring field offices regularly to listen to concerns and answer questions.
- Continued to utilize a statewide case review process.
- Continued using the Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) reports and templates at the state and area level to identify and understand concerns and design strategies to address them
- Continued posting real-time performance dashboards on DVR's intranet for easy access by all DSHS/DVR staff.

Goal 3:

- Conducted public meetings to listen to partners and elicit feedback for DSHS/DVR planning and priorities.

- Continued to refocus partnerships with the DSHS Division of Developmental Disabilities and DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery- MH (DBHR-MH) to create employment opportunities that result in higher wage jobs for individuals with disabilities.
- Updated agreements with key partners and maintained strong relationships with existing partners.

(C) Factors that impeded achievement of the goals.

Goal 1:

Throughout nearly all of FFY 2010, DSHS/DVR was unable to fill vacancies for extended periods or establish any additional positions because the Washington State Legislature adopted a general government state hiring freeze that began July 1, 2010 and continued through June 30, 2011 due to worsening statewide economic conditions. During this period, DSHS/DVR has been able to fill only the most critical vacancies through an exception process that requires approval by the Governor's Office of Financial Management.

Because of the recession and the state's high unemployment rate which hovers between 9-10%, it has continued to be very difficult to assist customers in obtaining jobs that pay mid-to-high wages. However this remains a priority and will continue to be a strong focus as the job market slowly improves.

Goal 2:

Throughout FFY 2010 DSHS/DVR continued facing challenges in maintaining its workforce and keeping morale high. During this period, a state hiring freeze made it impossible to fill any vacant positions except only the most critical. This means that workloads remained high and a number of offices have been left short staffed for extended periods when employees leave their jobs. At the same time, all state employee pay raises have been frozen and most general government employees have been required to take one unpaid furlough day per month which includes all DSHS/DVR staff. At the same time, DSHS/DVR continued providing timely services to customers in FFY2010, which means that employees did the same or more work in less time and for less pay. Overall, DSHS/DVR employees achieved higher performance in FFY 2010 than any other recent fiscal year. It is a tribute to DVR staff dedication, skills and resiliency that customers' services have not been diminished during this period and productivity significantly increased.

Goal 3:

DSHS/DVR was able to accomplish all of the priorities identified in Goal 3 without any major difficulty.

(D) Assess the performance of the state on the standards and indicators.

Standard and Indicator 1.1: The number of individuals achieving employment outcomes during the current performance period compared to the previous performance period.

For FFY 2010, DSHS/DVR achieved 2,676 employment outcomes, 273 outcomes over the number needed to pass this standard.

Standard and Indicator 1.2: The percentage of individuals receiving services under an individualized plan for employment who achieve employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR achieved a rehabilitation rate of 51.41% in FFY 2010. That was below the standard of 55.8% required to meet this standard. This decline in the rehabilitation rate is attributed to the DSHS Disability Lifeline Program significantly increasing its referrals to DVR in response to a legislative mandate, with the vast majority of these individuals being unable to successfully complete DVR services. The rehabilitation rate of Disability Lifeline clients was only 9.0%. Steps have been taken to better coordinate referrals from the Disability Lifeline Program so that individuals are better prepared to complete DVR services.

Standard and Indicator 1.3: Competitive employment outcomes as a percentage of all employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR achieved this standard with 98.43% of employment outcomes as competitive employment outcomes.

Standard and Indicator 1.4: Competitive employment outcomes for individuals with Significant Disabilities as a percentage of all employment outcomes.

97.11% of DSHS/DVR's competitive employment outcomes were individuals with Significant Disabilities.

Standard and Indicator 1.5: The ratio of the average VR Hourly Wage to the Average State Hourly Wage.

DSHS/DVR achieved a wage ratio of 0.54 in FFY 2010 that was slightly above the standard of 0.52.

Standard and Indicator 1.6: The percent of individuals achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes who report their own income as Primary Source of Support at Closure as compared to application.

DSHS/DVR passed the Federal standard by achieving 61.9%.

Standard and Indicator 2.1: Access to services for Minorities as measured by the ratio of the Minority Service Rate to the Non-Minority Service Rate.

DSHS/DVR achieved a service ratio of 0.90 which was well above the Federal standard of 0.80.

(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.

During FFY 2010 DSHS/DVR reserved funds for the following innovation and expansion activities, including funding of the SRC and SILC.

1. An initiative was completed in FFY2010 that focused on developing a plan for the state of Washington government to be a model employer of individuals with disabilities. The Department of Social and Health Services was selected to be a pilot agency for implementation of this plan. However, because of the state hiring freeze, implementation will not begin until at least July 1, 2011.
2. DSHS/DVR forged a partnership with the Washington Community Mental Health Council to continue developing a model for Mental Health Agencies to become Employment Networks and use Ticket to Work revenues as a funding source for supported employment extended services. This model was to be pilot tested in FFY 2010 at several Mental Health Agencies but was postponed due to state mental health budget reductions. It is expected the pilot project will be rescheduled to be completed by the end of FFY 2012.
3. DSHS/DVR funded and co-sponsored the 2010 Disability Inclusion Conference with the Washington State Chapter of the Society of Human Resource Managers. The event was hosted by the Microsoft Corporation at their corporate headquarters and drew over 350 employer representatives from across the state. A wide array of national and local speakers, including RSA Commissioner Lynnae Ruttledge and DOL Assistant Secretary Kathleen Martinez, presented on a number of topics aimed at promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities.
4. Collaboration continued with the Washington Institute on Mental Health Research and Training to provide DSHS/DVR staff with ongoing training on Motivational Interviewing to further develop their skills in better serving customers who are ambivalent or uncertain about their employment goal and how to achieve it.
5. Cross-system training between DSHS/DVR and a number of local partners continued to be conducted to further develop ongoing relationships and keep other agencies informed of VR program requirements.
6. An online referral process was launched on the DSHS/DVR website to make it easier for individuals to refer themselves or others who are interested in DVR services. In addition, an online assessment tool was launched for use by the DSHS Disability Lifeline Program that enables their case managers to better understand DVR eligibility requirements and conduct a more knowledgeable screening of individuals before they are referred to DSHS/DVR.
7. A review of service delivery to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind individuals was completed and an action plan developed to better serve these populations based on national models for best practices.
8. The work of the Washington State Business Leadership Network (WSBLN) and its partnership with DSHS/DVR was enhanced with continued funding for the WSBLN Executive Director position. DSHS/DVR has designated local staff that participates monthly in Business Leadership Network activities.

(F) Identify supported employment goals

If funding remains consistent with prior levels, DSHS/DVR will continue to serve approximately 275 individuals in IPEs with a supported employment goal and to achieve approximately 200 supported employment outcomes per year.