

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

DSHS/DVR has established an array of goals, priorities and strategies that assure quality service delivery and maximize the number of individuals served within available resources. Specifically, the service delivery strategies along with the innovation and expansion activities within this attachment comprise the methods that will be used to expand and improve services.

These strategies and activities reflect an in depth analysis of DSHS/DVR customer service data and statewide demographic data of individuals with disabilities, statewide needs assessment surveys of DSHS/DVR customers, staff and partners, as well as ~~extensive~~ input and recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), ~~customers and stakeholders, and DSHS/DVR staff~~. DSHS/DVR closely reviews data, trends and feedback on a monthly basis to assess service delivery performance and determine the need for expanded and/or improved services. Where expansion or improvements are determined to be needed, DSHS/DVR engages the SRC, stakeholders and staff to identify a course of action, such as those identified in this attachment.

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; and describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

Procedures are followed that require VR Counselors to inquire throughout the rehabilitation process whether a customer requires assistive technology services and/or devices to reduce or eliminate an impediment to employment. DSHS/DVR brochures and “Guide to Services” that are distributed to all customers include mention of assistive technology. In addition, DSHS/DVR employs an Assistive Technology Assessment and Practitioner (ATAP) in each of its service delivery areas that is a full-time position dedicated to assuring that assistive technology services are well integrated in to the rehabilitation process. The ATAPs provide regular consultation to VR Counselors and customers, develop and work with vendors that deliver an array of assistive technology services and devices, and routinely share assistive technology information and resources with VR personnel and customers.

Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities; and what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

DSHS/DVR has well established local referral relationships statewide that assure a steady and significant flow of applicants and customers who are minorities with disabilities. Data shows that DSHS/DVR consistently serves individuals with disabilities who are minorities at rates well above their representation within the Washington State

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

population of minorities with disabilities. For example, 10.9% of DSHS/DVR customers are African American, while this population comprises 4.1% of the state disability population; 5.6% of DSHS/DVR customers are Native American or Alaskan Native, while this population comprises 2.8% of the state disability population; 4.6% of DSHS/DVR customers are Asian, while this population comprises 3.7% of the state disability population; 8.9% of DSHS/DVR customers are Hispanic, while this population comprises 7.5% of the state disability population. DSHS/DVR continues to maintain active organizational relationships with a wide range of agencies and community groups that serve minority populations, and has formal liaison relationships with many to assure an ongoing referral of individuals with disabilities who are minorities.

Through its partnership with the state Employment Security Department (ESD) and local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), DSHS/DVR has identified long-term unemployment insurance exhaustees with disabilities as an underserved population. It is estimated that at least 5,000 individuals with disabilities in Washington State have exhausted their unemployment insurance since the Great Recession and have not returned to work. Data matching with ESD reveals the majority of these individuals have not sought services from DSHS/DVR even though significant numbers could be eligible for and benefit from VR services. Outreach strategies to inform these individuals of DSHS/DVR services are being planned with ESD and local WDCs.

If applicable, identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.

DSHS/DVR ~~has~~will established a workgroup of VR staff and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives that ~~isto~~is focusing on improvements ~~on~~in the following areas ~~of improvement~~: better communication and coordination between local DSHS/DVR offices and CRPs; keeping CRPs better informed of changes or updates in DSHS/DVR policies and procedures that affect service delivery; and assuring VR Counselors more consistently follow required procedures and criteria when referring customers for CRP services. In addition, DSHS/DVR will continue working on methods to better measure the effectiveness of CRP services with a variety of customer populations, especially individuals with the most significant disabilities and those who are minorities.

Describe strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.

DSHS/DVR consistently meets or exceeds all evaluation standards and indicators except 1.5, Wage Ratio, and has struggled at times with 1.2, Rehabilitation Rate. At present, DSHS/DVR is meeting all except the wage ratio. Strategies continue to focus on assisting customers to obtain good paying jobs with benefits. Specifically, strategies are underway to intensify employer relations activities to place customers in to higher paying occupations that reflect the state’s average wage. In addition, DSHS/DVR has placed significant emphasis on developing Individualized Plans for Employment that better address customers’ barriers to employment and provide more clear steps for reaching their employment goals. This is resulting in more customers reaching employment outcomes and producing a rehabilitation rate that consistently exceeds the standard.

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR is represented on state and local Workforce Investment Boards and has played significant roles in contributing strategies and activities to state local strategic plans that aim at improving overall workforce services for individuals with disabilities. These roles at state and local levels will continue to assist the statewide workforce investment system to well serve individuals with disabilities. DSHS/DVR has specific strategies underway to: Bring together DSHS/DVR staff and other workforce partners on a regular basis at the local level to update trends in the job market and maintain a good understanding of employer needs, so that customers are given useful guidance and current information; Support the DSHS/DVR Employer Services Team in developing ongoing employer relationships and providing job placement assistance to customers, including participation in the nationwide employer network sponsored by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation; Serve on local WorkSource Business Service Teams to market DSHS/DVR job seekers to employers.

Strategies to Achieve Goals and Priorities in Attachment 4.11(c) (1)

- A. DSHS/DVR’s **Goal 1** is to provide timely, individualized services to DSHS/DVR customers that result in employment outcomes that meet the customer’s needs.

The following strategies support improving DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1.

- Assure that at least 90.0 percent of transition youth customers exit high school with an Individualized Plan for Employment underway. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6)
- Maintain customer satisfaction rates on monthly surveys of DSSH/DVR closed cases at 90.0 percent or higher.
- Assist at least 20.0% of DSHS/DVR customers who are closed rehabilitated to earn the state median wage or higher. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicator 1.5)
- Fill additional Rehabilitation Technician 2 positions to provide direct job placement support to DSHS/DVR customers who conduct self-directed job searches, including assistance with resume’ development, interviewing skills, finding job leads, and submitting employment applications.
- DSHS/DVR will increase service delivery to eligible individuals who have exhausted their Unemployment Insurance benefits and remain long term unemployed. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6)

Comment [KD1]: These strategies are being added to the 2015 State Plan because they are in the 2013-15 DSHS/DVR Strategic Plan.

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

- Utilize demographic data from the comprehensive statewide needs assessment to target outreach within geographic communities where VR services are significantly under-utilized in proportion to the working-age disability population.
- ~~Better utilize results from an ongoing study that tracks the long term employment of DSHS clients to increase the number of DSHS/DVR customers who retain employment beyond case closure, and compare their employment retention rates to the workforce as a whole. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6)~~
- ~~Continue to review and assess implementation of an on-line Self-Assessment Tool and Self-Referral Tool to increase the customer’s ability to make an informed choice when deciding whether or not to self-refer for DSHS/DVR services and to assist community partners when making referrals. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)~~
- Use results of the annual case review to
 - Determine where additional guidance and training are required; and
 - ~~Improve guidance in the policy and procedure manual; and~~
 - Emphasize specific areas of need in the Advanced Best Practices curriculum. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)
- ~~Continue to expand the availability of the DSHS/DVR WorkStrides career-preparation workshop to all customers by engaging an array of partners to help deliver the workshop on a regular basis. The division will enlist Department of Social and Health Services partners, workforce development partners, community and technical colleges, mental health providers, high schools, and other community based organizations that share customers with DSHS/DVR to present the WorkStrides workshop within their organizations. DSHS/DVR will train partners to deliver the WorkStrides workshop and develop agreements for the number of DSHS/DVR customers they will present the workshop to. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)~~
- Continue to broaden the population of individuals with disabilities being served by DSHS/DVR through outreach to increase the representation of underserved or unserved populations. Outreach, education, and marketing efforts will be targeted to individuals with disabilities who are already working to retain or progress in employment, previous DSHS/DVR customers who may have lost employment to become reemployed, college students nearing completion of their academic programs, individuals who have exhausted their Unemployment Insurance benefits and other groups who are identified as underserved. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

- DSHS/DVR will identify ways to improve and expand services to enhance earnings, employee benefits and career advancement for customers- individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals served through supported employment. Improve DSHS/DVR’s ability to assist customers to achieve higher wage jobs with benefits. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR continues to play a DVD that has been produced for customers in each of its office reception areas so that individuals waiting for appointments are reminded of the vocational rehabilitation services available to them, including information about the basics of the vocational rehabilitation process. Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
- A full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner (ATAP) continues to be available in each of DSHS/DVR’s three geographic Areas to provide AT assessment, consultation and support to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors statewide in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. This expertise and support is provided, based on the identification of assistive technology needs resulting from a standardized assessment at the time of eligibility or based on information obtained throughout the rehabilitation process. It will be emphasized that Assistive Technology services may be provided throughout the VR process to assure customers are aware of and utilize these services when required to achieve an employment outcome. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)
- DSHS/DVR uses foreign and sign language translation and interpreter services available on contract to communicate with individuals who are limited English speaking. DSHS/DVR has a Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for the deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing population. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 2.1)
- ~~DSHS/DVR will identify ways to work more closely with WorkSource partners so that more DSHS/DVR customers benefit from services provided through the one-stop workforce development system. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)~~
- ~~DSHS/DVR will more clearly define the role for its staff who have primary liaison relationships with WorkSource Centers to assure that DSHS/DVR customers and other individuals with disabilities are even better served by the WorkSource one-stop system. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)~~

B. DSHS/DVR’s **Goal 2** is to strengthen DSHS/DVR’s workforce and improve its overall organizational systems.

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

The following strategies support improving DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1.

- DSHS/DVR continues to implement an action plan to address results of the 2014³ DSHS/DVR Employee Survey. The action plan will reflect conversations with staff and identify follow through activities to improve the effectiveness and function of DSHS/DVR. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.4)
- DSHS/DVR will continue to implement staff training focused on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and impediments to employment to meet the customer’s VR needs from application to case closure. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6)
- ~~DSHS/DVR will develop staff training to improve counseling to meet the needs of customers with both episodic and chronic mental illness. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6)~~
- DSHS/DVR will develop a workgroup to establish a communication protocol for DSHS/DVR. The protocol will address the Who, What, Where, When and Why of all communication and will establish clear roles of accountability, timelines and follow up for all necessary communication. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)
- ~~DSHS/DVR continues to enhance staff counseling skills by providing training to staff at all levels in the agency in Motivational Interviewing (MI). (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)~~
- ~~DSHS/DVR continues to implement Advanced Best Practices training designed to provide instruction related to effective approaches to case management and service delivery for VRCs. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.4)~~
- DSHS/DVR continues targeted recruitment efforts to increase the ethnic and cultural diversity of qualified DSHS/DVR applicants as stated in the DSHS/DVR Cultural Competency Plan outlined in Attachment 4.11(c)(1). Key positions throughout DSHS/DVR are designated as requiring specific language competencies (including foreign and sign languages) to meet the needs of the local population. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 2.1)
- DSHS/DVR continues to implement staff recognition and appreciation practices throughout the agency. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2.)

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

- ~~• All DSHS/DVR Supervisors will complete Clinical Supervisor Training to improve management of VR counselors and service delivery outcomes. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)~~
- DSHS/DVR continues to support supervisors to promote accountability by providing intensive coaching and direction to staff who need to develop or improve counseling skills to achieve qualitative case measures or productivity standards. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)
- DSHS/DVR continues to provide supervisors with the tools needed to deliver effective, ongoing coaching for their staff. A structured coaching process has been implemented to require supervisors to review monthly performance and provide VRCs with specific feedback and support and to submit progress reports to Area Managers. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)
- ~~• DSHS/DVR continues to use the Learning Management System for all personnel to better track the training needs and training records of DSHS/DVR staff. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)~~
- DSHS/DVR continues to increase its capacity and use of technology for communications; e.g., video conferencing, video phones and long-distance learning programs, etc. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)
- DSHS/DVR continues to enhance and grow its capacity related to data analysis by adding analytical tools to assist in developing data supported business decisions (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2)

C. DSHS/DVR’s **Goal 3** is to distinguish DSHS/DVR’s role in the disability and employer communities and leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for individuals with disabilities.

The following strategies support improving DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1.

- DSHS/DVR will develop and sustain ongoing dialogue with CRP partners for the purpose of analyzing specific practices and assessing whether the employer contacts DSHS/DVR pays for, lead to job offers to customers. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

- DSHS/DVR will refine the role that local staff play which encourages them to take a more active role in connecting customers and employers. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR participates in local community organizations and events, including organizations representing diverse ethnic and disability populations, for the purpose of outreach, education and partnership building. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 2.1)
- DSHS/DVR provides educational and marketing information in accessible formats and/or conducts outreach to organizations throughout communities that serve populations who might benefit from DSHS/DVR services. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 2.1)
- DSHS/DVR continues to partner with WorkSource operators (aka “One-Stop” system) to improve and expand the services available to individuals with disabilities. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR partners with the State Rehabilitation Council and local disability service organizations to educate and inform legislators about services and outcomes of VR and other programs. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1)
- DSHS/DVR continues to expand its knowledge and use of labor market information as well as its education and training capacity to ensure the number of customers trained in an industry matches the number of expected job openings. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR continues to negotiate contractual relationships with tribal programs to assist the agency in providing culturally competent, reservation- based VR services to common customers. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 2.1)

D. DSHS/DVR’s **Goal 4** is to increase outreach to improve and strengthen DSHS/DVR’s connection and relationship with employers.

The following strategies support improving DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1.

- Conduct outreach to potential employers to increase awareness and educate them about the potential benefits of employing individuals with disabilities and partnering with DSHS/DVR. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1)

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

- ~~Conduct outreach and marketing within~~ DSHS/DVR will play a lead role among ~~and~~ other state agencies in supporting their use of the VR Talent Acquisition Portal and the Supported Employment in State Government Program to employ greater numbers of DSHS/DVR customers. related to supported employment, internships and competitive employment in state government. DSHS is launching an initiative to employ greater numbers of individuals with disabilities throughout the department; DSHS/DVR will play a key role in contributing to this effort and will assist customers in competing for these job opportunities. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- Create and maintain a DSHS/DVR employer network with strategies and incentives to increase opportunities for customer employment. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR continues to implement outreach strategies targeting mid-sized and smaller employers on an ongoing basis. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
- DSHS/DVR will develop and implement tracking tools to quantify outputs and outcomes of employer outreach activities and contacts. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1)
- Develop and focus the efforts of a statewide DSHS/DVR employment services team on increasing employer awareness, building on our partnerships with WorkSource Centers and internal job development staff. (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standards and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1)
- ~~Collaborate with employer organizations such as the Association of Washington Business, the Society of Human Resource Management, and The Net (Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation) to expand business relations and partnerships for internships and placements.~~ (Supports DSHS/DVR’s performance on standard and indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1)

Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

During FFY ~~2013—2014~~2015 – 2016, DSHS/DVR is continuing to fund the following innovation and expansion activities:

- A. Expand a high school transition model that DSHS/DVR has established with six County Developmental Disabilities Programs ~~the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities~~ to other Counties ~~County Developmental Disability~~

FFY 2015 State Plan - Attachment 4.11(d) – State’s Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

~~Programs~~ across the state. Under this model, DSHS/DVR contracts with the County instead of individual Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to place supported employment transition customers with developmental disabilities in to permanent employment when they complete high school. The County funds designated subcontractors a monthly fee to provide community based assessment, job placement, and job coaching services to a customer. When the customer is placed into employment and transitions to extended services, DSHS/DVR pays the County an outcome fee of \$8500.00. This fee is approximately \$3,000.00 less than what DSHS/DVR would pay to a CRP for the same outcome. All of the County subcontractors are CRPs; the advantage for them is they receive a monthly service delivery fee from the County that is not outcome-based instead of a fee from DSHS/DVR that is paid only when an outcome is achieved.

- B. Continue funding the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) to ~~launch and~~ host a comprehensive series of web-based on-demand training modules for CRP Supported Employment Specialists that will increase their knowledge and skills. CRP staff attrition is very high and frequently new Supported Employment Specialists are hired with little or no experience. This significantly slows service delivery and often reduces successful outcomes. The suite of on-demand training modules that WISE produces will be created in partnership with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation, DSHS Division of Developmental Disabilities, DSHS Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery, and a number of other supported employment partners.
- C. ~~DSHS/DVR will continue to purchase job placement services from the Employment Security Department (ESD) that includes an on-the-job training (OJT) agreement with the employer. DSHS/DVR is testing a model in six locales where ESD will place a customer in to permanent employment and prepare an OJT agreement and training plan that is signed by the employer, customer, and VR Counselor. DSHS/DVR pays an OJT training fee directly to the employer who provides monthly written training reports; ESD monitors progress of the OJT by maintaining contact with the customer and employer at least every two weeks.~~
- D. ~~Provide training to DSHS/DVR customers and VR Counselors on the effective use of social media to enhance job search success. The Association of Washington Business will provide this training.~~
- E. Continue to develop and launch an assessment tool and training curriculum that will Develop and provide DSHS/DVR customers with training to that will build their “soft skills,” including an assessment tool for VR Counselors to determine if an individual requires training to build their skills or some type of mental health or other clinical treatment.
- F. Expand the availability of the WorkStrides Career Exploration Workshop to customers on a statewide basis. It is presently available at select DSHS/DVR locations and will be expanded statewide.