

DSHS/DVR 2016 – 2020 State Plan

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Draft Federal Guidance

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

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Introduction

This attachment describes how DSHS/DVR contracts with private vocational rehabilitation (VR) service providers, Washington's Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), as well as the services these service delivery partners provide.

CRP Contract and Services

DSHS/DVR contracts with CRPs to provide assessment, placement, retention, and training services. The majority of CRPs are private nonprofit providers. However, in some instances, the CRP contract is with a government organization or private, for-profit businesses.

The State of Washington requires contracts, in lieu of cooperative agreements, for the purpose of procuring goods and services. These contracts meet requirements specified within CFR 361.31. DSHS/DVR's CRP contract is procured through an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and is renewed every two years. The RFQ defines the services, expected outcomes of service delivery, payment systems, uniform fees, and the qualifications prospective contractors must meet to be granted a CRP contract. DSHS/DVR does not currently limit the number of contractors who may respond to the RFQ and contractors choose which of the contracted services they provide. Currently, approximately 110 organizations have a CRP contract with DSHS/DVR.

The following service are defined, and provided to DSHS/DVR customers through, the CRP contract:

- Vocational Evaluation
 - Customers participate in one or more types of standardized vocational tests used to obtain objective information requested by a DSHS/DVR counselor regarding work-related strengths and limitations.
- Trial Work Experience
 - Customers' ability to benefit from DSHS/DVR services is assessed in a real work setting(s) arranged by the contractor. Results are used to determine eligibility based on clear and convincing evidence whether the individual's disability is too significant to benefit from services.
- Community Based Assessment
 - Customers' work interests, abilities, and employment barriers are assessed in realistic work settings arranged by the contractor. These assessments collect information and help identify the nature and extent of supports or accommodations needed for the customer to obtain and maintain competitive employment.
- Job Placement
 - Customers are placed into paid and integrated employment, arranged by the contractor, through mutual agreement between the DSHS/DVR counselor, customer, and contractor.
- Intensive Training (Supported Employment)

- Customers attain job stabilization with job supports, meet their employers' expected levels of work productivity, and transition to long-term Extended Services provided by an entity other than DSHS/DVR through one-on-one job skills training and support provided at the supported employment job site by the contractor.
- Job Retention
 - Customers learn the essential functions of a job, meet the employer's expected level of performance, and retain employment for ninety calendar days after placement through individualized training and support services provided by the contractor.
- Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services
 - Customers who have not disclosed their disabilities to their employers or customers whose employers prohibit access to the worksite receive regular therapeutic interaction. Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services enables customers to maintain satisfactory job performance and successful interactions with others at the workplace.
- Pre-employment Transition Services
 - Students with disabilities participate in individualized and group services coordinated with their schools. These services include 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning.

Trial Work Experience, Community Based Assessment, Job Placement, Intensive Training, and Job Retention are available at three levels of intensity. Customers' universal and unique barriers determine which intensity level, and commensurate support level, is needed.

All contracted service payments are outcome based; delivery of the expected result or outcome is required to receive payment. The expected outcome is specific to the service as indicated in the definition with a report detailing the activities associated with the provision of service and outcomes attained. Bonus payment incentives for employment outcomes under certain circumstances (e.g. employment which offers health insurance) are included in the contract.

Collaborative Activities

DSHS/DVR will establish a workgroup of DSHS/DVR and CRP staff. This workgroup will collaborate of a series of initiatives which will improve service quality, promote better outcomes, and improve DSHS/DVR and CRP partnerships.

Workgroup Initiatives

1. Review the current contract model to determine needed improvements or modifications.
2. Develop an evaluation tool to assess relationships between successful services outcomes and service delivery timeframes, including both qualitative and quantitative data.
3. Complete, publish, and disseminate the CRP Cost Study, collaborative research conducted by the University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) and DSHS/DVR, and use results to inform future contracts and fee structures.

4. Develop and provide training for DSHS/DVR and CRP staff to promote effective collaboration, CRP staff retention, and shared best practice service methodologies.

In the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan, DSHS/DVR targeted quarterly local-level meetings between CRPs and office-level DSHS/DVR staff. These quarterly meetings were implemented statewide and both DSHS/DVR and CRP staff report that these meetings have strengthened partnerships and improved service coordination. Therefore, DSHS/DVR will continue to conduct these mandatory quarterly meetings and will continue to foster strengthening local-level partnerships.

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