

The State of Washington  
Department of Social and Health Services

# State Plan

**State Years 2017 – 2020**  
Effective July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020



As Approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration  
and the federal Departments of Education and Labor

This State Plan is included in Washington's Combined State Plan  
for Workforce Development, Talent and Prosperity for All



To improve readability and accessibility, formatting and sequencing changes have been made to this version. However, no content approved by the federal Departments of Education and Labor has been edited or omitted.

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# INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

*This section has been jointly developed by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR). Included herein are the input and recommendations of the WSRC, provided to DSHS/DVR during FFY 2015, as well as DSHS/DVR's formal responses to each item.*

## The Washington State Rehabilitation Council

The WSRC met on a quarterly basis during the reporting period. Customer forums were held at each WSRC meeting to obtain direct customer input at the local level. Local DSHS/DVR staff and the DSHS/DVR Director joined each quarterly meeting. The WSRC continues to advise DSHS/DVR on a variety of issues.

## Input, Recommendations, & Responses

### WSRC Item One

Follow and complete all findings in the 2013 Section 107 Review conducted by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. DVR continues to break federal law with its current placement within the Department of Social and Health Services.

### *DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item One*

DSHS/DVR responded to all findings in the 2013 Section 107 Review conducted by RSA and received notice in January 2015 from RSA that all of our required corrective action plans had been completed and approved, including DSHS/DVR's current organizational placement within the Department of Social and Health Services. RSA will be monitoring the corrective action plans to see if they address and resolve the audit findings.

### WSRC Item Two

Create an action plan to reduce the Federal carry forward, and report on it to the WSRC at each quarterly meeting.

### *DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Two*

DSHS/DVR did not implement this recommendation. In light of projected state budget forecasts for the 2017-2019 biennium which predict a decline in state revenues, the decision was made to retain federal carry forward funds to offset any potential reduction in DSHS/DVR's state match.

### WSRC Item Three

Increase the role of the WSRC in the State Plan process.

### *DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Three*

DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation. The WSRC Executive Director has been actively involved in development of the 2017-2020 VR State Plan goals, priorities and strategies, as well as development of the WIOA Combined State Plan. DSHS/DVR is committed to keeping the WSRC fully engaged in all facets of the WIOA Combined State Plan and its VR portion. The WSRC is an active co-sponsor with DSHS/DVR in collect statewide public comment on the draft VR State Plan.

## **WSRC Item Four**

Create a comprehensive plan for serving all students and youth with disabilities.

### ***DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Four***

DSHS/DVR is developing a comprehensive plan for serving students and youth with disabilities, including the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, that will be included in the 2017-2020 VR State Plan.

## **WSRC Item Five**

Include the WSRC and Washington Client Assistance Program (CAP) on the upcoming Washington Administrative Code updates.

### ***DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Five***

DSHS/DVR has and will continue keeping the WSRC and CAP well informed of proposed revisions to WAC 388-891, Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities. DSHS/DVR will continue meeting with WSRC and CAP to review and edit proposed revisions before they are finalized for public comment.

## **WSRC Item Six**

Have a representative from the WSRC be part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation team.

### ***DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Six***

DSHS/DVR invited the WSRC Executive Director to be a member of our Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee that is developing overall recommendations for WIOA implementation; the Executive Director played an active and significant role on the committee. In addition, DSHS/DVR facilitated the WSRC Executive Director's appointment to the statewide writing team that is composing the Combined State Plan.

## **WSRC Item Seven**

Ensure that customers with behavioral health disabilities have adequate access to supported employment services.

### ***DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Seven***

DSHS/DVR strongly supports this recommendation and is working toward this goal. However, it is beyond the scope of DSHS/DVR's role to ensure that customers with behavioral health disabilities have adequate access to supported employment services, as DSHS/DVR does not control the availability of extended services for this population. It is within the domain of the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DSHS/DBHR) and Regional Support Networks (RSNs) to ensure that adequate resources are available to fund extended services for individuals with behavioral health disabilities who require supported employment. DSHS/DBHR, together with the DSHS Adult and Long Term Services Administration and the state Medicaid Agency, have requested a Medicaid waiver to fund supported employment extended services. If approved, this waiver will significantly increase the availability of extended services for DSHS/DVR customers. DSHS/DVR was involved in the development of this waiver request and strongly supports its approval.

## **WSRC Item Eight**

Increase WSRC Resource Plan for the part time Executive Assistant position to be a full time staff position.

### ***DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item Eight***

DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation.

## **Additional Input & Recommendations Provided to the DSHS/DVR Director**

### **Additional Input and Recommendations Item A**

The WSRC recommends that the intent of WIOA is replicated throughout Washington's workforce development system. The intent of WIOA is to promote long lasting labor market engagement for all. Repeatedly, within WIOA, its draft regulations, and communications from the Departments of Education and Labor, individuals with disabilities are identified as a priority population. The WSRC exhorts DVR and all workforce development partners to mirror the letter and intent of WIOA by addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities and taking actions to improve their employment outcomes.

#### ***DSHS/DVR Response to Item A***

DSHS/DVR strongly supports this input and has taken a leadership role in statewide development of the WIOA Combined State Plan to assure the needs of individuals with disabilities are given substantive and meaningful attention. DSHS/DVR facilitated inclusion of the WSRC Executive Director as a member of the WIOA Combined State Plan writing team so that a strong advocate voice for individuals with disabilities will be heard.

### **Additional Input and Recommendations Item B**

The WSRC recommends that DVR revamp their internal training and focus on counseling skills training for counselors, clinical supervision for supervisors, and customer service training for support staff.

#### ***DSHS/DVR Response to Item B***

DSHS/DVR is implementing this recommendation, as described in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development section of this plan.

### **Additional Input and Recommendations Item C**

The WSRC recommends that DVR address the need for additional resources for benefits planning and assistive technology services required in WIOA. Within WIOA, benefits planning and assistive technology services are emphasized. The agency needs to create a plan to address these required services.

#### ***DSHS/DVR Response to Item C***

DSHS/DVR will be implementing this recommendation and will announce its plan in early calendar year 2016.

### **Additional Input and Recommendations Item D**

DSHS/DVR's case management software and IT platform continue to lag behind other states. In order to better serve customers and provide an efficient and useful platform for staff, DSHS/DVR needs to overhaul its technology and business infrastructure.

#### ***DSHS/DVR Response to Item D***

DSHS/DVR will take this input under consideration in evaluating the efficiency and usefulness of existing case management software during the coming year.

## Summary of Consumer Satisfaction

### WSRC Summary

The WSRC and DSHS/DVR leadership both value learning from and using customers' experiences to shape decision making. The WSRC has decided to enhance its gathering of consumer satisfaction information by transforming how it will conduct its Customer Satisfaction Survey. This process will change from a survey conducted once every three years to an ongoing monthly survey of customers in all stages of DSHS/DVR services.

### DSHS/DVR Response

DSHS/DVR appreciates the WSRC's focus on customer satisfaction and strongly supports their decision to conduct customer surveys on a monthly basis. This will provide useful and substantial information on which to base more timely service delivery improvements.

## Summary of DSHS/DVR Responses

DSHS/DVR has taken substantive action on all recommendations and input provided by the WSRC. Of the items presented by the WSRC in this State Plan, WSRC Item Two was not implemented by DSHS/DVR due to predicted state revenue declines identified in budget forecasts for the 2017 - 2019 state biennium.

# GOALS, PRIORITIES, & STRATEGIES

*This section identifies the goals, priorities, and strategies that DSHS/DVR intends to achieve throughout the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle. Activities described herein align with Washington's strategic plan for workforce development as well as the operational components of this Combined State Plan. This alignment is intended to realize the letter and intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), to implement a coordinated service delivery system which supports the long-term labor market engagement of individuals with disabilities and improves services to businesses.*

These goals and priorities also reflect analyses of DSHS/DVR's performance as well as the needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR successfully passed six of the seven Standards and Indicators, failing one by a slim margin. However, DSHS/DVR has demonstrated consistent, measurable improvement over the last four federal years across all Standards and Indicators. Preliminary analysis indicates that DSHS/DVR's performance will remain strong under WIOA Performance Accountability.

The goals and priorities established in this State Plan reflect DSHS/DVR's ongoing commitments to customer service, successful outcomes, staff development, organizational system improvement, strong partnerships, and business engagement. These goals and priorities were collaboratively developed by DSHS/DVR and leadership of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

## Goal One: Improve Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities

Goal one reflects DSHS/DVR's focus on providing high-quality services that result in high-quality employment outcomes. Based on 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings and stakeholder input, these priorities emphasize the importance of supporting customers in high-quality employment which offers the pay and benefits that support financial independence.

### To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities and strategies:

- 1. Strengthen vocational assessment practices as the foundation for comprehensive services which meet customer needs, identify and address barriers to employment, and maximize outcomes.**
  - a. Utilize the new vocational assessment screen and process to improve service quality and to implement new WIOA requirements.
  - b. Expand knowledge and use of labor market information to support industry sector strategies.
  - c. Promote customer participation in training and career pathway programs, preparing them for high demand careers and helping businesses fill skill gaps.
  - d. Refine vocational assessment practices and provide ongoing staff training on how to use new tools and resources.
  - e. Evaluate customers' Assistive Technology (AT) needs and leverage Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAP) to provide assessment, consultation, and support statewide.
  - f. Utilize assessment results to identify self-directed job search customers and appropriate DSHS/DVR Business Specialist support services (e.g. assistance with résumé development, interviewing skills, and submitting applications).

- 2. Conduct outreach to key populations, including students and out-of-school youth with disabilities, to ensure that all Washingtonians with disabilities have access to services and supports needed to prepare for and obtain employment.**
  - a. Provide Pre-employment Transition Services designed to facilitate job exploration and other services such as counseling and self-advocacy training in the early stages of the school to work transition.
  - b. Broaden the population of individuals with disabilities served by DSHS/DVR through outreach which increases the representation of underserved or unserved populations, specifically emphasizing outreach to Washington’s Hispanic and Latino communities.
  - c. Target outreach, education, and marketing to individuals with disabilities who are currently employed to retain or advance, previous customers who may be unemployed and are seeking employment, students nearing completion of academic programs, individuals who have exhausted Unemployment Insurance benefits, and other underserved populations.
  - d. Utilize contracted translation and interpreter services, including American Sign Language services, to improve accessible and quality services to customers with limited English proficiency or who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- 3. Increase business engagement to improve employment for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs).**
  - a. Leverage affiliations, memberships, and strategic partnerships to promote the success of job seekers with disabilities (e.g. Society for Human Resource Management, Microsoft’s Specialisterne Project, and local chambers of commerce).
  - b. Increase visibility in Washington’s business community through methodical outreach and marketing.
  - c. Develop and implement tools to quantify business engagement outcomes.
  - d. Engage Business Specialists in the development and implementation of local-level industry sector strategies, and cross-program business engagement activities.
  - e. Collaborate with LWDBs to target business services for federal contractors and subcontractors.
  - f. Utilize Business Specialists to provide training for businesses on how to recruit, hire, retain, and advance skilled workers with disabilities.
- 4. Develop and implement integrated service delivery models in collaboration with WIOA core programs.**
  - a. Integrate DSHS/DVR services across workforce development programs, promoting quality customer services offered in-person and online.
  - b. Invest resources to create workforce development system navigators, who provide culturally competent services which match job seekers to the programs that best meet their needs.

## Goal Two: Improve the Quality of Customer Services

Goal two priorities reflect CSNA results and stakeholder input which challenge DSHS/DVR to provide better information on available services, improve service quality and timeliness, and increase the time customers spend with their counselors.

**To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities and strategies:**

- 1. Incentivize timely service delivery by implementing new performance measures for counselors which ensure that 90% of eligibility determinations will be completed within 60 days of customers’ application dates and that 90% of Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) are developed within 90 days of customers’ eligibility determination dates.**
  - a. Implement case management system improvements which streamline the eligibility determination, vocational assessment, and plan development processes.
  - b. Evaluate staff performance on new measures and provide targeted training and support as needed.

**2. Provide high-quality training and support, ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services.**

- a. Implement staff training focused on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and best practices to identify and address barriers employment.
- b. Modernize DSHS/DVR's training program to fully leverage new communication platforms and evidence-based practices.

**3. Through statewide case file reviews, build an organizational culture of quality to strengthen substantial counseling and guidance.**

- a. Utilize case file review results to determine where additional guidance and training are required and emphasize specific areas of need in the Advanced Best Practices curriculum.
- b. Implement staff recognition and appreciation throughout DSHS/DVR.
- c. Provide supervisors with the tools needed to deliver effective and ongoing coaching to their staff, using structured monthly coaching and reports to DSHS/DVR Area Managers.

## **Goal Three: Establish DSHS/DVR's Role in the Workforce Development System**

Goal three priorities will improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by Washington's workforce development system. As a core program, DSHS/DVR will contribute its value, expertise, and strengths to maximize outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These priorities align with the strategic and operational elements of this Combined State Plan and reflect the needs of individuals with disabilities served system-wide.

### **To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities and strategies:**

**1. Work with partners, at front-line and state levels, to ensure the workforce development system is both accessible and beneficial for all individuals with disabilities.**

- a. Target necessary improvements to the workforce development system's physical and digital infrastructure, based on customer feedback, customer outcomes, and annual One-Stop center accessibility review findings.
- b. Commit staff and resources to each workforce development region to ensure that DSHS/DVR is represented and that services are accessible system-wide.

**2. Lead cross-program staff training in areas such as accessibility, disability culture and awareness, and vocational rehabilitation services.**

- a. Develop and distribute informational materials for workforce development professionals which identify best practices in serving individuals with disabilities, including DSHS/DVR customers.
- b. Provide specific training for workforce development staff, based on customer feedback and annual One-Stop center accessibility review findings.

**3. Ensure DSHS/DVR customers get optimal benefit from the workforce development system by educating customers about other workforce development programs.**

- a. Develop and distribute informational materials to DSHS/DVR staff and customers which describe workforce development programs, highlighting services and eligibility criteria.

## Goal Four: Improve DSHS/DVR's Systems and Performance

Goal four reflects DSHS/DVR's commitment to improving the systems and practices which support DSHS/DVR staff and, in turn, affect customer service.

### To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities and strategies:

- 1. Develop and implement a communication plan to provide consistent internal standards for professional communication within DSHS/DVR.**
  - a. Establish a workgroup to develop an internal communication protocol which addresses the Who, What, Where, When and Why of all communication, including accountability, timelines, and follow-up.
  - b. Increase capacity and use of communication technology (e.g. video conferencing, video phones, and distance learning programs).
- 2. Redesign data management systems and output reports to support WIOA implementation, leverage federated workforce development data, and strengthen data-driven decision making.**
  - a. Implement new reports and tracking systems which align with WIOA performance measures and are designed for staff use.
  - b. Provide training on the data reports, performance measures, and tracking systems underpinning WIOA implementation.
  - c. Enhance data analysis capacity and tools to support data-driven decision making.

### *Basis for Establishing Goals, Priorities, and Strategies*

DSHS/DVR has established four goals to assure that high-quality services are provided to both job seekers with disabilities and to Washington's businesses. The methods by which these services will be provided, and maximized within available resources, are described in this section. Specific consideration is given to the innovation and expansion activities which seek to enhance the scope of services available to individuals with disabilities.

These strategies reflect in-depth analyses of DSHS/DVR customer service data, statewide demographic data, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings, research conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), and the ongoing input and recommendations from the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC).

Duplication of activities, strategies, and methods in the sections which follow is intentional; the coordinated efforts of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs to improve services to job seekers with disabilities and Washington's business community are not mutually exclusive. As an active core partner, DSHS/DVR will fully leverage all available resources to maximize the labor market engagement, self-sufficiency, and independence of all Washingtonians with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities are based on ongoing analyses of program performance, the results of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the feedback of customers and the Washington State Rehabilitation Council, findings of research activities, and preliminary evaluations of DSHS/DVR's performance under WIOA Section 116.

The results of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and subsequent updates contained in the Statewide Assessment description of this State Plan guided the collaborative development of DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities. DSHS/DVR's emphases on timely service delivery, high-quality employment outcomes, and targeted outreach to unserved and underserved populations are directly based on CSNA findings.

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities align with the strategic vision and the operational elements of this Combined State Plan. These goals and priorities promote improved employment retention, increased earnings, and strengthened educational progress for Washingtonians living with disabilities. The role of DSHS/DVR staff in coordinated business engagement and industry sector strategies is woven throughout this plan. By pursuing these goals and priorities, DSHS/DVR will deliver high performance on the performance accountability standards identified in Section 116.

These goals and priorities were established based on the full range of DSHS/DVR's evaluation and research activities. The activities include ongoing internal monitoring, program performance reporting conducted by the Department of Social and Health Services, evaluation studies coordinated by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, ad hoc research and program evaluation activities, and customer forums conducted by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

## **Assistive Technology Services**

Throughout the rehabilitation process, DSHS/DVR counselors assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address customers' barriers to employment. DSHS/DVR brochures and Customer Service Handbook provide in-depth information on AT services and devices. Full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) provide specialized AT assessment, consult with staff and customers, coordinate with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

## **Outreach & Equitable Access**

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 to assure an ongoing referral stream of individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. Individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities are consistently represented within the DSHS/DVR population at rates well above respective representation within the statewide population of individuals with disabilities. An in-depth analysis of this representation is provided in the Statewide Assessment section of this plan.

Individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino are, by contrast, underrepresented in the DSHS/DVR customer population. To better engage Washington's Latino communities, DSHS/DVR has taken steps including, but not limited to, appointing bilingual staff statewide, Spanish-language radio Public Service Announcements, a Spanish-language phone line, and Spanish-language printed and promotional materials. These efforts have resulted in increased Hispanic and Latino customers served.

DSHS/DVR has identified Goal One, Priority Two strategies and activities to specifically target equitable access for unserved and underserved populations. The activities include, but are not limited to: enhanced outreach to students with disabilities in partnership with OSPI, the Center for Change in Transition Services, and local education agencies; targeted outreach to Washingtonians with disabilities who identify as Hispanic or Latino; and new business partnerships which provide career pathways for highly skilled adults living with an autism spectrum disorder in Washington's technology industry. When served, these populations will experience equitable access to services and resources, including Supported Employment services, needed to achieve competitive employment outcomes within integrated settings.

## Pre-employment Transition Services & Coordination

DSHS/DVR will develop and implement Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Washington's regional and local education agencies to coordinate the provision of Pre-employment Transition Services. These new services will provide a continuum of services between school and adult life, providing students with disabilities the services and experiences necessary to enjoy meaningful employment, independence, and quality of life. Policy and guidance revisions, as well as new staff training, will support these services. An in-depth description of the significant changes to DSHS/DVR's services to students with disabilities is described in the Coordination with Education section of this plan.

## Community Rehabilitation Programs

DSHS/DVR will establish a workgroup of DSHS/DVR staff and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives to focus on improving service delivery partnerships. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening communication and coordination between local DSHS/DVR offices and CRPs and developing strategies to inform CRPs of changes or updates in DSHS/DVR policies and procedures which affect service delivery. A full description of DSHS/DVR's plans to improve its CRP partnerships is included in the Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations section of this plan.

## Program Improvement under WIOA Performance Accountability

DSHS/DVR will employ strategies to improve customers' employment retention, long-term labor market engagement, earned wages, education credential attainment, and vocational skill progress. Additional strategies will target improved services to businesses, as DSHS/DVR implements a dual-customer model, serving Washington's businesses as well as job seekers with disabilities.

### **DSHS/DVR will implement the following strategies to improve performance under WIOA Performance Accountability:**

- Support customers in developing vocational goals and training objectives which align with labor market demand as well as customers' skills, abilities, interests, and informed choice.
- Leverage the labor market exchange, labor market research tools, and industry sector strategies to ensure that customers' vocational goals are aligned with in-demand occupations to the greatest extent possible.
- Integrate and align DSHS/DVR services and career pathways programs.
- Increase use of Post-Employment Services to support customers in maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment through better communicating these services and their benefits.
- Provide training and technical assistance to businesses on best practices for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Support apprenticeships, paid internships, and on-the-job training opportunities to enhance customers' employability, in partnership with LWDBs and the business community.
- Utilize the results of the new comprehensive vocational assessment to evaluate customers' skills, abilities, interests, as well as potential barriers to successful participation in, or completion of, training programs.
- Complete required meetings at the end of every post-secondary term to review grades, progress, and support needs of customers participating in associate's, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs.

## **DSHS/DVR will utilize the following strategies to improve its services to businesses:**

- Engage Business Specialists in the development and implementation of LWDB industry sector strategies and cross-program business engagement activities.
- Lead coordinated engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to the skilled job seekers with disabilities they seek.
- Increase visibility in Washington's business community through a methodical outreach and marketing plan which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations (e.g. the Society for Human Resource Management), representation at career and recruitment fairs, and the provision of business training (e.g. Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodation trainings).

## **Assisting Workforce Development Partners in Serving Individuals with Disabilities**

DSHS/DVR plays significant roles on the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and LWDBs which contribute to strategies and activities that assist partners in serving individuals with disabilities. These roles will strengthen under WIOA. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) have created and signed a Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities.

## **Use of Title I Funds for Innovation & Expansion Activities**

DSHS/DVR will continue to fund the following innovation and expansion activities:

- Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) operations.
- High school transition programs established with six county developmental disabilities programs. Under this model, DSHS/DVR contracts with county-level developmental disabilities programs to place supported employment transition customers with developmental disabilities in permanent employment upon high school completion. The county program pays CRP subcontractors a monthly fee to provide community based assessment, job placement, and job coaching services. When the customer is placed into employment and begins extended services, DSHS/DVR pays the county program an outcome fee of \$8,670.00. As all county subcontractors are CRPs, these subcontractors receive a monthly service delivery fee from the county that is not outcome-based; these monthly fees differ from DSHS/DVR's milestone contract system, which provides payment only when outcomes are achieved.
- Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) comprehensive series of web-based on-demand training modules for CRP Supported Employment Specialists. 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. This training partnership, which includes the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, DSHS Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration, and other supported employment partners, provides a suite of on-demand training modules which supports CRPs in retaining highly-trained staff.
- Soft skills assessment and training curricula sharing with workforce development programs, community partners, and Tribal VR programs.
- Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss Center outreach activities which identify and connect students who are Deaf or hard of hearing with DSHS/DVR services.

# BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

*This section describes DSHS/DVR's contributions to coordinated business engagement activities. DSHS/DVR and its workforce development partners will embrace a dual-customer model, serving both Washington's businesses and Washingtonians living with disabilities.*

Businesses will have unprecedented access to talented and highly skilled job seekers with disabilities, while enjoying DSHS/DVR's training and technical assistance supports. Concurrently, DSHS/DVR and its partners will provide Washingtonians living with disabilities with the full breadth of state-of-the-art rehabilitation, training, and employment services needed to thrive in Washington's workplaces and communities.

This dual-customer model will close skill gaps for businesses, promote the economic self-sufficiency of Washingtonians living with disabilities, and contribute to a more prosperous Washington.

## Businesses & Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In coordination with workforce development partners at the state and local level, DSHS/DVR establishes the following business engagement objectives for 2017 – 2020:

- Engage in the development and implementation of coordinated business engagement, industry sector strategies, and career pathways programs.
- Utilize DSHS/DVR Business Specialists to assist with the recruitment and referral of qualified job seekers with disabilities to meet businesses' demands.
- Lead coordinated LWDB engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to skilled job seekers with disabilities.
- Increase visibility through a methodical outreach and marketing plan which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations, representation at career and recruitment fairs, and the provision of training services.
- Support and expand innovative partnerships, such as Microsoft's Specialisterne Project, which partners DSHS/DVR and Washington's businesses to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities in high-skill and high-demand occupations.

## Businesses & Transition Services

Pre-employment transition services provide value to both students and businesses. In the dual-customer model, pre-employment transition services will engage Washington's businesses in actively molding the future workforce. By exposing students with disabilities to hands-on and realistic work experiences, these students will enter the workforce well-prepared to meet business' skill needs and expectations. As a result, business will experience higher productivity, better engagement, and reduced turnover.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with its workforce development, education, and community partners to:

- Build relationships with businesses who will work with students and youth by developing internships and on-the-job training programs.
- Develop business training and outreach materials which address hiring youth and students with disabilities.
- Promote the development and expansion of on-site job exploration and internship programs, such as Project Search, statewide.
- Partner with businesses, leveraging pre-employment experiences to prepare youth for the realities and expectations of the 21st Century workplace.

# COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION

*The 2014 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 profoundly enhance expectations for coordination between DSHS/DVR and education officials to provide early job exploration and work-based learning opportunities for secondary students with disabilities.*

DSHS/DVR has developed a long-range plan to develop and strengthen the education-vocational rehabilitation infrastructure for the coming four years.

## Pre-employment Transition Services

With the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandate that state vocational rehabilitation programs allocate 15% of federal funds to provide five required Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to all students with disabilities, it is imperative that DSHS/DVR develops a strategic, thoughtful, and intentional plan to meet the needs of secondary students with disabilities statewide. These five required activities 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.

The draft Codes of Federal Regulations (CFRs) have expanded the population of students who receive services from DSHS/DVR. Secondary students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans who receive Pre-ETS may be either eligible for DSHS/DVR services or potentially eligible for services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities, or as individualized and intensive services for students with higher support needs.

Previously, DSHS/DVR has recommended that students engage services in their second-to-last or last year of high school. WIOA draft CFRs specifically note that services may begin as early as age 14, if students have transition IEPs. While not all students receiving Pre-ETS will apply for DSHS/DVR services, early engagement is expected and encouraged.

Students with higher support needs may apply for DSHS/DVR services and receive Pre-ETS on an individualized basis. These students are able to receive Pre-ETS in services to groups while concurrently receiving individualized services from DSHS/DVR. Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) for students and youth with disabilities may include projected or generally described employment goals.

## Coordinated Services for Students and Youth: Goals & Objectives

Strengthen and enhance the DSHS/DVR and education agency partnership at state and local levels so that students receive a seamless continuum of transition services.

- Work with the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to include guidelines and expectations for coordinating the provision of Pre-ETS and other transition services.
- Update DSHS/DVR's Memorandum of Understanding with OSPI to include definitive federal guidance regarding the provision of Pre-ETS and required coordination with education entities.
- Develop memoranda of understanding for transition services with local education agencies, through Washington's nine Educational Service Districts, which includes delineation of respective roles and responsibilities, including the financial responsibilities, of each entity.
- Provide vocational rehabilitation training and technical assistance to local education agency teachers and staff regarding post-school transition planning.

Partnership with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) will strengthen DSHS/DVR's partnerships with education agencies. DSHS/DVR-CCTS partnership activities include:

- Establish interagency transition councils in each Educational Service District that include local DSHS/DVR and educational staff and community partners.
- Develop pilot transition projects in each Educational Service District.
- Develop and provide individual online education portfolios that provide updated educational and employment progress for students.
- Provide training and technical assistance to DSHS/DVR staff, teachers, and community partners.
- Provide gap analysis and outcome data regarding coordinated services between DSHS/DVR and local education agencies.
- Partner with education and community partners to present a yearly statewide transition conference, beginning in 2017, that is focused on services to all students with disabilities.
- Increase student access to group and individualized transition services from DSHS/DVR.
- Assign DSHS/DVR counselors and staff as liaisons to individual schools, and provide training and technical assistance to staff in building and maintaining established presence in schools.
- Provide DSHS/DVR Student and Youth Transition Handbooks to students, families, teachers, and community partners.
- Develop interagency agreements and service contracts with organizations to provide group-based Pre-ETS.
- Develop statewide Pre-ETS provision agreements with higher education, including building Pre-ETS programs in partnerships with trades and technical schools, community colleges, and four-year universities.
- Develop and maintain a DSHS/DVR student transition website that provides information for students and their families, DSHS/DVR staff, and school personnel.
- Provide ongoing transition best practices guidance, training and technical assistance to DVR supervisors, counselors, and staff. Guidance will include policy regarding ensuring that student access to individualized services is provided in a simple and engaging manner, that students may be served earlier than the second to last or last year of high school in order for them to more adequately prepare for post-secondary employment, and that summer work-based learning experiences are provided for students as part of Pre-ETS.
- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved disability populations, including those with 504 plans, those with emotional-behavioral challenges, students who are deaf or hearing, those who have specific learning disabilities, as well as other disability populations who often do not receive services. Outreach activities include media, opportunities for participation in group-based Pre-ETS activities, individual outreach at schools, DVR relationship building and coordination with education officials, presentations and career fairs for students, youth, families, schools, and community partners.
- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved populations that include tribal youth, justice-involved youth, homeless youth, and students and youth receiving foster care. Outreach activities include media, opportunities for participation in group-based Pre-ETS activities, individual outreach at schools, DSHS/DVR relationship building and coordination with education officials, presentations and career fairs for students, youth, families, schools, and community partners.
- Solicit proposals for Project Search development, and become a funding partner with current Project Search programs in Washington State that serve students with disabilities.

- Strengthen DSHS/DVR participation in current School-to-Work programs statewide by providing increased training and technical assistance for School-to-Work partners, including earlier DVR input into assessment and employment planning for students.
- Contract with Centers for Independent Living to enhance and expand core independent living services, focusing on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, Centers for Independent Living have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of the Independent Living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and how engage with legislators about disability issues.

## **Agreements and Consultation with Education**

As part of the current formal interagency agreement between DSHS/DVR and OSPI, DSHS/DVR consults with and provides technical assistance to staff at secondary schools and local educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.

DSHS/DVR is currently partnering with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) to both revise the existing DSHS/DVR-OSPI agreement and develop new memoranda of understanding with local education agencies. These agreements will define partners' roles in pre-employment transition services, collaborative training activities, and consultation and technical assistance which supports educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities.

## **DSHS/DVR and Individualized Education Plans**

DSHS/DVR has designated counselor liaisons which work closely with local education agencies statewide; every high school in Washington has a designated DSHS/DVR counselor liaison, including tribally operated secondary schools. DSHS/DVR liaisons maintain close collaborative relationships with students, families, educators, and stakeholders. Their activities include, but are not limited to:

- Ongoing consultation in the development of transition IEPs
- Coordination of IPE and IEP services for students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services
- Training and outreach events with students, families, and other stakeholders
- Dissemination of informational materials, such as the DVR Transition Handbook
- Develop memoranda of understanding with local education agencies which define the roles and responsibilities of both parties jointly serving students and youth with disabilities. These agreements will include steps to improve referral linkages for IEP and 504 students, guidelines concerning the provision of pre-employment transition services, and the roles of DSHS/DVR staff in the development of IEPs.

## Financial Resources and Personnel

### Financial Responsibilities

DSHS/DVR provides any financial resources and services needed to establish eligibility for students and youth with disabilities. In addition, funds are made available for students' activities primarily related to employment and pre-employment transition services. Activities primarily related to education are funded by educational agencies.

### Personnel

DSHS/DVR, OSPI, and local education agencies maintain lists of DSHS/DVR liaisons on public-facing web sites. DSHS/DVR liaison counselors conduct outreach and ongoing consultation to teachers, students, families, and stakeholders.

## Outreach and Identification Activities

The current agreement between DSHS/DVR and OSPI identifies outreach activities to increase the number of students with disabilities who engage in DSHS/DVR services. In addition, this agreement specifies that DSHS/DVR services should be available to all students with transition IEPs well before students prepare to exit secondary education.

Outreach and engagement activities include:

- An OSPI representative is a member of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council
- DSHS/DVR counselors are assigned as liaisons to each high school in the state
- DSHS/DVR and OSPI share training and information materials for cross-program professional development
- DSHS/DVR provides outreach and education about DSHS/DVR services to underserved populations, including students with disabilities

# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

## Supported Employment Goals & Title VI Funds

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows designated state units to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services up to 48 months. DSHS/DVR has selected a 24-month timeframe for these services. However, this will be revised if regulatory requirements establish a mandatory 48-month timeframe.

## Supported Employment Services

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce.

The State of Washington has applied for a Medicaid 1115(c) Waiver that is pending approval. If approved, the waiver will fund supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able DSHS/DVR will expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

## Transitions to Extended Services

DSHS/DVR customers receiving Supported Employment services transition from ongoing support services to extended services when stable, satisfactory job performance is achieved. The timeframe for this transition is within 24 months of customers beginning employment, unless a longer timeframe has been specified in the IPE. While WIOA amends the Rehabilitation Act to permit DSHS/DVR to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, DSHS/DVR has chosen not to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities.

## Partners & Agreements

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA). DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR.

Substantial resource reductions within the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery - Mental Health (DBHR-MH), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with mental health disabilities, has limited State capacity to provide extended services to this population. Diligent efforts continue to address these reductions. DSHS/DVR continues its collaboration with DBHR-MR, the Mental Health Employment Consortium, and the Washington Community Mental Health Council to expand the availability of extended services through alternative resources and innovative approaches. These efforts intend to establish cooperative agreements with all Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs) responsible for county-level delivery of community mental health services.

DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, mental health, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services.

During the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with DBHR-MH to leverage the strong state-level partnership to facilitate local-level agreement development. In addition, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration to explore funding of extended services to be provided for individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities who require supported employment.

Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long term funding source for extended services. In response, DSHS/DVR has encouraged supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces.

### **DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services:**

- Participate in an interagency service committee which supports initiatives and increased employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.
- Train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources.
- Provide technical assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace.
- Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies.

# PARTNERSHIPS, AGREEMENTS, & INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

## State and Federal Partnerships

### Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

DSHS/DVR and WDVA have procedures for referring DSHS/DVR customers with military service to WDVA to determine eligibility for any state or federal Veterans' benefits. This collaboration has increased the use of Veterans' benefits as comparable services for DSHS/DVR customers who are veterans with disabilities.

### United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA)

DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with the regional USDVA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) and its regional offices to facilitate improved service delivery for customers receiving USDVA benefits by formalizing referral procedures, designating local referral liaisons, and coordinating services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

### Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

DSHS administers a wide range of programs which include, but are not limited to, Medicaid services, substance abuse recovery, long term care and disability services, children's services, economic assistance services, and juvenile justice services. DSHS/DVR continues close collaboration throughout DSHS.

### DSHS Community Services Division (CSD)

CSD administers the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Program (formerly known as the General Assistance - Unemployable (GAU) Program), Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program, and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program. These programs provide time-limited income assistance and other support services to low-income families and individuals. Washington DSHS/DVR continues to have an interagency agreement with the CSD that defines mutual roles and practices for serving joint customers.

### DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)

DBHR combines the former Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, referred to as DBHR - Chemical Dependency (DBHR-CD), with the Mental Health Division, referred to as DBHR - Mental Health (DBHR-MH). DBHR-CD contracts with counties to deliver outpatient chemical dependency treatment and directly contracts for residential treatment services. DBHR-MH contracts with regional entities for the delivery of community mental health services and directly operates two state psychiatric hospitals.

- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers at the local level that are funded through DBHR-CD contracts with each county.
- DSHS/DVR and DBHR-MH have signed a memorandum of collaboration that establishes methods for Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to be provided as extended services for joint DSHS/DVR supported employment customers.
- DBHR-MH has become a Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network and is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those mental health customers who require a supported employment model.
- DSHS/DVR is participating with DBHR-MH in conducting a pilot project at two locations that is designed to integrate the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported employment with DSHS/DVR supported employment services.
- DSHS/DVR has assigned liaison counselors that work itinerantly from several Mental Health agencies across the state. The counselor works from the mental health center approximately one day per week, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for mental health consumers.

## **DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with employment service providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers.

- DSHS/DVR and DDA leadership meet on a regular basis, and are co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers and community rehabilitation programs that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DDA customers.
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

## **DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration (AL TSA)**

AL TSA provides long-term care through personal care attendant services, Kinship Care, Roads to Community Living, “money follows the person” policies, New Freedom Services, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Council, and the Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP). DSHS/DVR and AL TSA will develop a cooperative agreement for serving joint customers.

## **DSHS Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR)**

JR provides rehabilitative services to justice-involved youth. DSHS/DVR and JR have a cooperative agreement to jointly serve JR youth who are eligible for Pre-employment Transition Services and other DSHS/DVR services. Through coordinated services, JR youth with disabilities will receive services supporting community re-entry along career pathways.

## **DSHS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)**

ODHH coordinates with DSHS/DVR’s Statewide Deaf Services Coordinator on multiple projects including accessibility and accommodations for DSHS/DVR customers. ODHH manages the Sign Language Interpreter Contract and values feedback from all sources to improve the quality of interpreter services. ODHH is the managing agency for DSHS/DVR’s contract for Video Relay System (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) technologies. DSHS/DVR is represented on the ODHH Advisory Committee.

## **State Board for Community & Technical Colleges**

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) oversees the operation of thirty-nine Community and Technical Colleges across the state. DSHS/DVR will develop cooperative agreements with SBCTC programs authorized, and not authorized, by WIOA to jointly serve students with disabilities who require VR services to achieve competitive employment outcomes.

## **Health Care Authority**

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all DSHS/DVR customer recipients. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR is working to develop a cooperative agreement with HCA, DBHR, and DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HWD to assist qualified individuals in continuing to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

## **Tribal Programs**

DSHS/DVR and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) have a joint memorandum of understanding with Washington's eight Tribal 121 programs. This joint memorandum outlines how all partners will ensure effective communication, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation in serving individuals with disabilities who are tribal members in Washington. The agreement, updated on an annual basis, outlines procedures for referrals, joint cases, financial responsibility, shared training opportunities, information sharing, and communication. Tribal 121 directors meet annually with DSHS/DVR and DSB directors in a government-to-government collaboration to promote partnership, maximize resources, and ensure high service quality.

Through DSHS, DSHS/DVR continues its cooperative working relationships and service delivery commitments with all federally recognized tribes in Washington, including those that do not operate federally funded Tribal VR programs. DSHS/DVR participates as a member on the DSHS Indian Policy Advisory Committee. This includes annual and quarterly meetings to review our partnership and identify service delivery improvements for individuals with disabilities who are members of federally recognized tribes as well as those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

## **Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)**

The DSHS/DVR Director participates as a member of the GCDE and partners with committee members on initiatives.

## **Centers for Independent Living**

DSHS/DVR currently contracts Title VII, Part B funds to four independent living centers statewide. These centers use Part B funds to enhance and expand core independent living services with a focus on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, independent living centers have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment for youth with disabilities in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of independent living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and how engage with legislators about disability issues.

## **Washington Workforce Association**

The Washington Workforce Association (WWA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization comprised of Washington's twelve LWDBs. The WWA partners with state, regional, and national organizations advocating for a coordinated and fully funded workforce development system focused on the needs of job seekers and businesses. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the WWA have created and signed a Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities in Washington's One-Stop Centers.

## **Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities**

The Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities (ACHS-DD) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization of the thirty nine County Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Coordinators across the state who contract with DSHS/DDA to deliver residential, employment and other services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR will collaborate with ACHS-DD to initiate cooperative agreements for the provision of supported employment extended services with each CDD program.

## **Washington State Business Leadership Network (WSBLN)**

The WSBLN is a network of employers who educate and support businesses to hire, retain, and improve customer service for people with disabilities.

## **Community Employment Alliance**

The Community Employment Alliance is a membership organization comprised of CRPs. DSHS/DVR participates in meetings to share information, hear concerns and collaborate on issues affecting employment services.

## **Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council**

In the late 1990s, DSHS/DVR was the primary sponsor of a demonstration grant to identify gaps in providing services to individuals who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). DSHS/DVR continues to be a represented member of the TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council. This group discusses TBI-related policy issues, system development, and the need for services to meet the needs of TBI survivors, family members, prospective employers, and community members. The TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council has identified gaps in housing, a lack of resources, and a need for support group facilitator training. This Council has successfully encouraged the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation that adds fees to specific traffic violations (e.g. negligent driving and speeding) which correlate with increased risk of injury accidents and TBIs. These collected fees are used to help fund TBI-related programs and resources. DSHS/DVR continues to be an active partner in addressing the needs of individuals who have been, or will be affected by, traumatic brain injuries.

## **University of Washington Rehabilitation Program**

Since 2006, DSHS/DVR and the University of Washington Rehabilitation Medicine Unit have collaborated to maintain an on-site Rehabilitation Medicine-DSHS/DVR liaison role. This mutually beneficial relationship improves inpatient and outpatient care at the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) by providing UWMC patients with direct access to DSHS/DVR services during their hospital treatment. The UWMC is designated as the only regional rehabilitation medicine center in the Pacific Northwest for the treatment of spinal cord injuries and other severe disabling medical conditions. Early introduction in the medical setting provides DSHS/DVR with comprehensive insight into patient needs and makes the referral process more efficient. This relationship provides UWMC patients with additional resources for education, support, and funding. The DSHS/DVR liaison works to coordinate DSHS/DVR orientation and intake procedures for individuals referred from UW Rehab Medicine; determines eligibility for DSHS/DVR services; provides information and referral; participates in UWMC team staffing to coordinate DSHS/DVR services with the interdisciplinary team treatment; upon release from the hospital, assists with transitioning the individual to a VR Counselor near their home; learns about extensive medical and other resources available through the UW Medical School; and shares resources with other DSHS/DVR counselors.

## **Partnership with Assistive Technology Act of 1998 Section 4 Program**

DSHS/DVR does not have a formal written agreement with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP), the state program carrying out activities under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. However, DSHS/DVR does maintain a close collaborative relationship with WATAP, which includes DSHS/DVR representation on WATAP's Advisory Council.

DSHS/DVR customers will continue to have access to assistive technology devices, services, and consultations. DSHS/DVR counselors will assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address all customers' barriers to employment as part of DSHS/DVR's standardized vocational assessment process. Three full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) will continue to provide customers with specialized AT assessments, consult with staff and customers regarding a full spectrum of AT services and products, coordinate service delivery with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources about advancements in AT devices.

To ensure that DSHS/DVR staff are informed of ongoing developments in the AT field, assistive and rehabilitative technology will continue to be a core focus of the redesigned DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Academy curriculum.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

## **Partnerships with Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture Programs**

DSHS/DVR has not entered into agreements with programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **Partnerships with Non-educational Agencies Serving Out-of-school Youth**

DSHS/DVR has not entered into cooperative agreements with non-educational entities not carrying out activities under the state workforce development system who serve out-of-school youth.

## **State Use Contracting Programs**

DSHS/DVR has not entered into state use contracts agreements.

# COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

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

## CRP Contract & 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 services 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 on 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 CRP performance and service quality.
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.
5. Disseminate best practice guidance to DSHS/DVR staff regarding communication and collaboration with local CRPs.

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 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.

# STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

*US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, DSHS/DVR case service data, DSHS/DVR customer survey responses, 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings, Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) special education enrollment statistics, WorkSource participation data (Washington's One-Stop Centers), and Social Security Administration (SSA) data are presented to evaluate the vocational rehabilitation service needs of Washingtonians living with disabilities. This report is not intended to be exhaustive; these data represent many of the social, economic, and customer service factors which affect DSHS/DVR and the individuals it serves.*

## Washingtonians Living with Disabilities

(Source: American Community Survey, ACS\_14\_1YR\_S1810)

907,417 individuals with disabilities reside in Washington, representing 13% of the statewide population. Disability affects gender proportionally; 13.12% of men and 12.98% of women report living with a disability.

Estimates of disability prevalence across selected racial or ethnic identities in Washington indicate the highest prevalence of disability among individuals who identify as Native American or Alaska Native alone, 16.6%; followed in descending order by individuals who identify as White alone, 13.9%; individuals who identify as Black or African American alone, 13%; individuals who identify with two or more racial identities, 11.2%; individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 10.7%; and individuals who identify as Asian alone, 8.3%. 7.7% of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race report living with a disability. An additional 18,838 (7.7%) of Washingtonians who do not identify with any aforementioned racial or ethnic identity report living with a disability.

Of the 488,620 working age Washingtonians with disabilities aged 18 to 64, estimates allowing for individuals to report multiple disabilities indicate that 118,268 individuals live with hearing difficulties, 84,526 live with vision difficulties, 219,260 live with cognitive difficulties, 215,083 live with ambulatory difficulties, 77,319 live with self-care difficulties, and 157,666 live with independent living difficulties.

## Labor Force Participation

(Source: ACS\_14\_1YR\_B18120)

488,620 (11.1%) working age individuals (ages 18 to 64) in Washington report living with a disability. These working age individuals with disabilities represent the primary segment of the state population who may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services.

ACS estimates 184,137 working age individuals with disabilities are currently employed, 37.69% of this population. An additional 30,743 individuals with disabilities are engaged in the labor force but are currently unemployed. The estimated 214,880 individuals with disabilities engaged in the labor force (both employed and unemployed) represent 6.40% of Washington's 3,359,714 labor force participants. 273,740 working age individuals with disabilities do not participate in the labor force, representing 56.02% of this population. By contrast, 19.23% of working age Washingtonians without disabilities do not participate in the labor force.

ACS data indicate that the labor force participation of Washingtonians living with disabilities continues to exceed nationwide estimates. 37.69% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities are employed, compared to 34.36% nationwide; 43.97% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities participate in the labor force, compared to 40.62% nationwide; and 56.02% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities do not participate in the labor force, compared with 59.37% nationwide.

184,137 (37.69%) of working age Washingtonians with disabilities are employed while 3,143,204 (75.99%) of working age Washingtonians without disabilities are employed. To close this employment gap, an additional 187,182 individuals with disabilities would need to obtain employment. DSHS/DVR served 20,089 cases in FFY 2014 and 19,707 cases in FFY 2015.

## Disability and Poverty

(Source: American Community Survey, ACS\_14\_1YR\_B23024)

Consistent with nationwide data, Washingtonians with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty. ACS annual income estimates of Washingtonians aged 20-64 years indicate that 25.95% of Washingtonians with disabilities have income below poverty level, compared to 10.59% of Washingtonians without disabilities. Individuals with disabilities comprise 23.67% of the total population of Washingtonians with income below poverty level while only comprising 9.49% of Washingtonians with income at or above poverty level.

## Comparing DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Case Service Data to External Sources

In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR closed 9,371 cases for which eligibility was determined. DSHS/DVR's footprint, and the rehabilitation needs of Washingtonians with disabilities, can be approximated by comparing these case data to ACS 2014 estimates.

## Comparisons by Geographic Locations

(Source: American Community Survey, ACS\_14\_1YR\_B18120)

ACS 1-year estimates require a minimum population of 60,000 to accurately estimate in a given geographic area, allowing for accurate estimates in 19 of Washington's 39 counties. These 19 counties account for 93.04% of Washington's working age population and 90.86% of working age individuals with disabilities. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR closed 92.30% of its cases where eligibility was determined in these counties. Comparing county-level distribution of working age individuals with disabilities to case closure data indicates DSHS/DVR's service coverage, including potential gaps, across regions.

Of the counties compared in the chart on page 28, three key findings affecting DSHS/DVR service delivery emerged:

1. Service delivery capacity is disproportionately low in rural and remote regions.
2. Service delivery capacity is disproportionately low throughout Southwestern Washington, including Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, and Lewis counties.
3. The largest disparity between the working age disability population and DSHS/DVR service delivery occurs in Pierce County (-3.95%). With over 62,977 working age individuals with disabilities, Pierce County is the second largest county by disability population in Washington.

ACS\_14\_1YR\_B18120 Estimates and DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Closures, by County

County	DSHS/DVR Location(s)	Number of Working Age Individuals with Disabilities	Percent of Working Age Individuals with Disabilities	Number of DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Case Closures	Percent of DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Case Closures
Statewide	(All)	488,620	N/A	9,443	N/A
Benton	Kennewick	12,862	2.63%	315	3.34%
Chelan	Wenatchee	3,959	.81%	104	1.10%
Clallam	Port Angeles	6,869	1.41%	161	1.70%
Clark	Vancouver	30,843	6.31%	398	4.21%
Cowlitz	Kelso	13,041	2.67%	164	1.74%
Franklin	Kennewick	4,147	0.85%	78	0.83%
Grant	Moses Lake	4,960	1.02%	114	1.21%
Grays Harbor	Aberdeen	8,162	1.67%	97	1.03%
Island	Mt. Vernon	5,092	1.04%	72	0.76%
King	Kent, Bellevue, Redmond, SeaTac, Seattle Mercer, Seattle North	110,444	22.60%	2,488	26.35%
Kitsap	Silverdale	21,956	4.49%	462	4.89%
Lewis	Centralia	9,144	1.87%	114	1.21%
Pierce	Puyallup, Tacoma	62,977	12.89%	838	8.87%
Skagit	Mt. Vernon	10,074	2.06%	185	1.96%
Snohomish	Arlington, Everett, Lynnwood	47,034	9.63%	946	10.02%
Spokane	Spokane	43,503	8.90%	742	7.86%
Thurston	Tumwater	16,773	3.43%	507	5.37%
Whatcom	Bellingham, Whatcom	16,209	3.32%	482	5.10%
Yakima	Yakima, Sunnyside, Wapato	15,914	3.26%	463	4.90%
All Other	Clarkston, Colville, Omak, Port Townsend, Shelton, Walla Walla	44,657	9.14%	713	7.55%

## Supported Employment Services

(Source: DSHS/DVR Case Service Data, STARS Database)

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows designated state units to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services up to 48 months. DSHS/DVR has selected a 24-month timeframe for these services. However, this selected timeframe will be revised if regulatory requirements establish a mandatory 48-month timeframe.

## Social Security Beneficiaries

(Sources: Social Security Administration, SSI Recipients by State and County, 2014; Social Security Administration, Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2014; American Community Survey, ACS\_14\_1YR\_B18120)

Comparing Social Security Administration (SSA) Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) recipient data for individuals aged 18 to 64 years, ACS labor force participation estimates, and DSHS/DVR case service data allows for a comparative evaluation of DSHS/DVR's services to SSI and SSDI recipients.

### SSI Recipients

98,797 working age individuals, approximately 20% of working age individuals with disabilities receive SSI. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 4,594 eligible individuals receiving SSI (23.68%).

### SSDI Recipients

168,298 workers in Washington receive SSDI, 34.4% of the statewide population of working age individuals with disabilities. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 4,632 eligible individuals receiving SSDI (23.88%).

## Rehabilitation Service Needs by Gender, Race, & Ethnicity

### Comparisons by Gender

Males continue to be overrepresented in Washington's disability populations. This overrepresentation exceeds national estimates. ACS estimates indicate that of individuals with disabilities 18 years of age or younger, 63.1% are male and 36.8% are female (nationwide, 62.2% are male, 37.7% are female). Of working age individuals with disabilities, aged 18 to 64, 51.5% are male and 48.4% are female (nationwide, 49.7% are male and 50.2% are female). Of individuals with disabilities aged 65 and older, males account for 45.1% while females account for 54.8%. Males are overrepresented in the 65 years of age and older population when compared to national estimates (nationwide, 43.4% are male and 56.5% are female).

Women continue to be underrepresented in DSHS/DVR's customer population. Data on the 9,371 cases closed by DSHS/DVR during FFY 2015 for which eligibility was determined shows that 5,174 (55.2%) of these were male, while 4,197 (44.7%) of these customers were female. When compared to the gender distribution of working age Washingtonians with disabilities (i.e. 51.5% male, 48.4% female), DSHS/DVR case data indicate inequitable access for women living with disabilities.

It should be noted that addressing this gender gap may be a substantial challenge as DSHS/DVR increases outreach and services to greater numbers of students with disabilities. In Washington and nationwide, men are significantly overrepresented among individuals with disabilities aged 18 years or younger; this overrepresentation extends to special education enrollment and, therefore, students with disabilities.

## Comparisons by Race and Ethnicity

ACS estimates of disability distribution across selected racial or ethnic identities indicate that the majority of Washingtonians with disabilities identify as White alone, 82.59%; followed in descending order by individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race, 7.13%; individuals who identify as Asian alone, 5.02%; individuals who identify with two or more racial identities, 4.63%; individuals who identify as Black or African American alone, 3.46%; individuals who identify as a racial identity not listed herein, 2.08%; individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 1.71%; and individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 0.52%.

DSHS/DVR has historically tracked a more specific and diverse range of racial and ethnic identities than federal or state reporting requires. Driven by the needs of Washington's diverse communities, this is best exemplified by the nine unique ethnic categories which roughly equate to the federal definition of Asian alone and the four distinct ethnicities which, in sum, form the federal category Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone.

DSHS/DVR case service data indicate that of eligible customers closed in FFY 2015, 69.65% identify as White (compared to 82.59% statewide); followed in descending order by individuals who identify as two or more racial identities, 9.02% (4.63% statewide); individuals who identify as Black or African American, 8.83% (3.46% statewide); individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race, 5.71% (7.13% statewide); individuals who identify as Asian alone, 2.96% (5.02% statewide); individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 2.05% (1.71% statewide); individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 0.93% (0.52% statewide); and individuals who chose not to disclose their racial or ethnic identity to DSHS/DVR, 0.86%.

Comparing these data indicates that five of the seven identified racial and ethnic minority populations are represented within DSHS/DVR's customer population at rates which exceed the statewide disability population. Individuals who identify as two or more racial identities, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander are proportionally better represented at DSHS/DVR. However, Washington's two largest racial or ethnic minority groups, individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino and individuals who identify as Asian, are disproportionately underrepresented in the DSHS/DVR customer population.

## Unserved and Underserved Populations

Comparing DSHS/DVR case service data to ACS estimates, publicly available data published by OSPI, and CSNA findings provides strong indications of Washington's unserved and underserved populations. The key points included below draw upon analyses described in greater depth elsewhere in this section.

- Women living with disabilities: ACS estimates indicate that women represent 48.4% of working age individuals with disabilities. By contrast, 44.7% of eligible DSHS/DVR customers served during FFY 2015 identified as female.
- Individuals living with disabilities who identify as Hispanic or Latino: ACS estimates indicate that 7.13% of Washingtonians with disabilities identify as Hispanic or Latino. By contrast, DSHS/DVR customers who identify as Hispanic or Latino represented 5.71% of eligible individuals served in FFY 2015.
- Individuals with disabilities residing in Pierce County: ACS estimates indicate that Pierce County is the second largest county by disability population in Washington, representing 12.89% of the statewide population. By contrast, 8.87% of eligible DSHS/DVR customers were served in Pierce County, the largest disparity by geographic region in the state.
- Students with disabilities: Publicly available OSPI data indicate that 48,307 students aged 14 to 21 received special education services during the 2012 - 2013 school year. During FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 1,396 eligible students with disabilities. Additional analyses indicate that, for an 18-month period (July 2014 through December 2015), 802 eligible students with disabilities served by DSHS/DVR graduated or completed secondary education. Of these 802 students, 250 received IPE services prior to completing IEP services. In sum, these data indicate substantial service gaps for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities.

- Individuals with mental health disabilities, veterans with disabilities, high-functioning adults living with an autism spectrum disorder, and aging individuals with disabilities: Key informant interviews, conducted as part of the 2014 CSNA, identified four populations unserved or underserved by DSHS/DVR. These structured interviews also identified recommendations and opportunities to expand services to these populations. Based on these recommendations, DSHS/DVR launched collaborative endeavors described elsewhere in this Combined State Plan (e.g. Microsoft's Specialisterne Project and expanded collaborations with mental health service providers).

## DSHS/DVR Customers and the State Workforce Development System

At the drafting of this Combined State Plan, DSHS/DVR does not maintain record-level data sharing agreements with Washington's workforce education providers (i.e. OSPI and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges). As a result, DSHS/DVR cannot currently provide verified participation data of DSHS/DVR customers in workforce education programs. However, DSHS/DVR does maintain data sharing protocols with the state workforce agency, the Employment Security Department, which report verified DSHS/DVR customer participation data in workforce development services authorized under WIOA Titles IB and III.

Analysis of DSHS/DVR customer participation in WorkSource services (Washington's One-Stop centers) indicates regional variation in service and outcome volumes.

*DSHS/DVR Eligible Customers' WorkSource Participation, October - December 2015*

DSHS/DVR Administration Area	Area Description	Numbers of Customers Served by DSHS/DVR	Numbers of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource	Percent of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource
Area 1	Largest geographic region, serving Eastern Washington; includes the cities of Spokane, Yakima, and Kennewick	2,533	112	4.42%
Area 2	Largest region by general population, serving the North Puget Sound region; includes the cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, and Bellingham	3,408	214	6.27%
Area 3	Diverse geographic region, serving the South Puget Sound region, the Olympic Peninsula, and Southwestern Washington; includes the cities of Tacoma, Olympia, Bremerton, and Vancouver	3,710	165	4.44%
Statewide	Includes all areas	9,651	491	5.08%

DSHS/DVR Administration Area	Workforce Development Areas	Numbers of DSHS/DVR Closed Rehabilitation Customers	Numbers of Numbers of DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Customers Served by WorkSource	Percent of Numbers of DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Customers Served by WorkSource
Area 1	Benton–Franklin WDC, Eastern Washington Partnership WDC, North Central Washington WDC, South Central Washington WDC, Spokane Area WDC	140	44	31.42%
Area 2	Northwest WDC, Snohomish County WDC, Seattle–King County WDC	333	63	18.91%
Area 3	Olympic Consortium WDC, Pacific Mountain WDC, Seattle–King County WDC, Southwest Washington WDC	282	55	19.50%
Statewide	Includes all workforce development areas	755	162	21.45%

## Washingtonians Who Are Students with Disabilities

(Source: OSPI K-12 Data and Reports, Students Served in Special Education - Special Education)

Current publicly available data published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports special education enrollment by Educational Service District and primary disability for the 2012-2013 school year. These enrollment figures indicate the Pre-employment Transition Services target population.

For students aged 14-21, OSPI data indicate steady increases in special education enrollment, from 37,726 during the 2004-2005 school year to 48,307 in the 2012-2013 school year. Students living with an autism spectrum disorder are the largest growing special education population, growing more than four-fold from 2004-2005 to 2012-2013, 850 students to 3,673, respectively. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 1,396 students with disabilities who were determined eligible for services. Based on available data, it is reasonable to estimate that DSHS/DVR currently serves less than three percent of potentially eligible students with disabilities statewide.

DSHS/DVR evaluated the service needs of transition youth with disabilities as part of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which was conducted prior to the passage of WIOA. An evaluation of the needs of students and youth with disabilities, including the projected need for pre-employment transition services statewide, is being conducted in partnership with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). This CCTS partnership is also being leveraged to develop memoranda of understanding with local education agencies which will identify the extent to which pre-employment transition services are coordinated with services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

## Establishing, Developing, or Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

DSHS/DVR has not established or developed CRP programs. Information on collaborative research, service delivery improvement, and training activities is described in detail in the Cooperative Agreements with Nonprofit Organization section of this State Plan.

## 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey Results

DSHS/DVR's most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), conducted in partnership with the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and the University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), was published in FFY 2014.

Between September 2013 and February 2014, CCER sent online needs assessment surveys to DSHS/DVR customers, staff, and service providers. A CSNA Steering Committee comprised of DSHS/DVR, WSRC, and CCER staff developed the survey questions. All questions were the same for each survey group. The following summarizes key results.

### CSNA Customer Survey

The online survey was distributed to 10,774 current and recently closed DSHS/DVR customers. A total of 1,552 individuals responded for a response rate of approximately 15.0%. This included responses from 1,047 current customers and 505 recently closed customers.

*Customers identified the DSHS/DVR services they most frequently require:*

- Placement in to a job (56.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (53.0%)
- Community college or other vocational training (41.0%)
- Job coaching at work (39.0%)
- Customers identified the most frequent challenges to receiving DSHS/DVR services:
  - Need more time with the VR Counselor (36.0%)
  - Wait a long time for services to begin (30.0%)
  - Do not understand all the services that are available (30.0%)
  - Difficulty developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (30.0%)

## CSNA Staff Survey

The online survey was distributed to 247 DSHS/DVR staff. 147 individuals responded for a response rate of approximately 60.0%.

*Respondents most frequently identified services that customers require from DSHS/DVR:*

- Vocational counseling and guidance (86.0%)
- Mental health counseling and treatment (78.0%)
- Placement in to a job (77.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (66.0%)
- Transportation (61.0%)
- Job coaching at work (58.0%)
- Social Security benefits planning (51.0%)
- Respondents identified customers' most frequent challenges receiving services from DSHS/DVR:
- Customer health issues prevent customer from regularly meeting with VR Counselor (58.0%)
- Customer does not understand all the services that are available (50.0%)
- Customer disagrees with VR services required to achieve employment goal (25.0%)
- Getting to DSHS/DVR office using public transportation (23.0%)

## CSNA Service Provider Survey

The online survey was distributed to organizations and agencies which jointly serve DSHS/DVR customers. 355 respondents completed the survey. A response rate could not be calculated as the survey was distributed to organizations, not individual participants. Service provider responses came from WorkSource staff, Community Rehabilitation Programs, developmental disabilities programs, and mental health providers.

*Respondents identified the DSHS/DVR services that customers most frequently require:*

- Placement in to a job (74.0%)
- Job coaching at work (69.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (66.0%)
- General work attitude and behavior (57.0%)
- Vocational counseling and guidance (56.0%)

*Respondents identified customers' most frequent challenges receiving DSHS/DVR services:*

- Customer does not understand all the services that are available (63.0%)
- Customers wait a long time for services to begin (31.0%)
- Customer disagrees with what VR services are required to achieve their employment goal (24.0%)
- Need more time with the VR Counselor (24.0%)

## DSHS/DVR Monthly Customer Satisfaction Survey

Monthly surveys are mailed to all customers closed-rehabilitated or closed-other-after-plan. The survey measures agreement with a list of statements, using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents complete the survey by hand and mail responses to DSHS/DVR. Random tracking numbers are assigned to each survey, ensuring confidentiality during data entry while allowing results to be linked to case management records. This summary includes standard format aggregate results by survey type.

### Closed Rehabilitated Survey Responses

A majority of closed rehabilitated respondents answered with strong agreement or agreement to all satisfaction survey responses.

*Over 90.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:*

- DVR treated me with courtesy and respect. (93.94%)
- Overall, DVR helped me. (91.50%)
- I was given enough information to understand how DVR could help me with employment. (91.09%)
- I chose where to get services in my DVR plan. (90.91%)
- DVR answered my questions. (90.63%)
- DVR explained what services were available to help me. (90.35%)
- DVR listened to me. (90.20%)

*80.0% - 90.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:*

- DVR does good work. (89.76%)
- I chose my own job goal. (88.26%)
- I like the work I do. (88.07%)
- I use my skills and abilities that are most important to me in my job. (86.0%)
- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (84.11%)
- Overall, I am satisfied with my job. (83.77%)
- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (81.77%)
- DVR returned my phone calls quickly. (80.50%)

*50.0% - 80.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:*

- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (74.45%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (71.81%)
- My pay is enough for my basic needs. (68.95%)
- I am satisfied with my benefits (medical, dental, etc.). (59.87%)

## Closed-Other-After-Plan Survey Responses

As with the closed-rehabilitated survey, a majority of closed-other-after-plan respondents answered with strong agreement or agreement to all satisfaction survey responses. However, overall percentages scores are lower, indicating closed-other customers provided less favorable responses. Special consideration has been given to areas of most common disagreement, as these respondents did not achieve successful closures.

*70.0% - 80.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:*

- DVR treated me with courtesy and respect. (80.0%)
- DVR returned my phone calls. (77.44%)
- I chose where to get services in my DVR plan. (74.75%)
- I was given enough information to understand how DVR could help me with employment. (74.57%)
- I chose my own job goal. (72.84%)
- DVR answered my questions. (72.22%)
- DVR listened to me. (70.33%)

*Fewer than 60.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:*

- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (58.47%)
- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (57.8%)
- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (52.15%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (52.13%)

*Respondents most commonly strongly disagreed or disagreed with:*

- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (32.48%)
- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (29.66%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (29.48%)
- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (29.31%)

Respondents were asked to select the main reason why they chose to stop receiving services before achieving an employment outcome. The following lists the percentage of responses by each reason offered.

- My health condition worsened. (28.64%)
- It took too long to get the services I needed. (17.27%)
- I was not satisfied with the services I received. (16.82%)
- DVR did not have services to meet my needs. (15.0%)
- I decided not to get a job. (10.91%)

Respondents that indicated they were not satisfied with services were requested to select the reason for their dissatisfaction. The following lists the percentage of responses by each reason offered.

- It took too long to get services. (32.33%)
- The services were not helpful. (27.07%)
- The available services were not what I needed. (24.06%)
- I did not get along with DVR staff. (10.53%)
- The location of the DVR Office was not convenient. (6.02%)

# ANNUAL ESTIMATES

*This section identifies the number of customers DSHS/DVR expects to serve and projected service costs, beginning in Program Year 2017. As the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires state vocational rehabilitation programs to shift from a federal year (FFY) to a program year (PY) reporting cycle, FFY data is including along with PY 17 projections.*

It is difficult to project the effect of WIOA's new programmatic requirements on services and associated costs; integrated workforce development service delivery and Pre-employment Transition Services will likely increase both the number of customers served and DSHS/DVR's overall service expenditures.

## Applications & Eligibility Determinations

While WIOA effects are unknown, DSHS/DVR projects that targeted outreach activities will result in increased applications in PY 2017.

*DSHS/DVR Applications: FFY 2011 - FFY 2015*

FFY	Applications	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	11,198	-10.4%
2012	10,217	-8.8%
2013	9,734	-4.7%
2014	9,728	>-1%
2015	9,450	-2.9%

For PY 2017, DSHS/DVR is on target to determine eligibility for approximately 8,800 individuals. This is a slight increase from FFY 2015.

*DSHS/DVR Eligibility Determinations: FFY 2011 - FFY 2015*

FFY	Eligibility Determinations	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	9,753	11.0%
2012	9,007	-7.7%
2013	8,667	-3.8%
2014	8,685	>1%
2015	8,616	>-1%

## Supported Employment Estimates

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

## Available Funds and Case Service Costs

Adequate funds are available to serve all 3,025 individuals currently eligible for services and the 6,098 Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) being served. DSHS/DVR has adequate funds to cover the costs of all projected eligibility determinations and post-employment services.

*DSHS/DVR Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs: FFY 2011 - FFY 2015*

FFY	Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	\$5,727	6.1%
2012	\$6,101	6.5%
2013	\$6,775	11.1%
2014	\$6,698	-1.1%
2015	\$6,910	3.2%

While overall service volumes decreased, service costs increased. The average cost of a rehabilitation closure increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015, the fourth such increase in the last five years. The steady increase in average rehabilitation costs over the last five years is significant, a \$1,183 increase from FFY 2011 to FFY 2015. Said differently, the average FFY 2015 rehabilitation costs DSHS/DVR 120.65% of FFY 2011 costs.

DSHS/DVR estimates the average cost to support a closed-rehabilitated customer during PY 2017 will remain consistent with FFY 2015 levels. This average cost figure includes all case service costs (i.e. costs of services provided from application to case closure) for cases closed-rehabilitated during the timeframe.

6,211 IPEs were being served at the start FFY 2015. This carry-over from the prior year was 7.0% decrease.

FFY	IPEs Carried-over from Prior Years	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	7,870	-3.6%
2012	7,580	-3.7%
2013	7,175	-5.3%
2014	6,670	-7.0%
2015	6,211	-6.9%

DSHS/DVR estimates that 5,675 new IPEs will be developed in PY 2017. With an average expenditure per IPE per year of approximately \$2,053, costs for new IPEs will total an estimated \$11,651,000. This will leave DSHS/DVR with sufficient funds to pay for current IPEs, pre-plan, and post-plan services. To achieve 5,675 new IPEs, DSHS/DVR will continue to increase caseload size and align this increase with commensurate financial and staff resources.

### Risk to Available Resources

As WIOA mandates that DSHS/DVR allocate 15% of its federal grant funds to provide Pre-employment Transition Services for students with disabilities, DSHS/DVR estimates that the remaining 85% of grant funds may be inadequate to meet the projected needs of adult customers. DSHS/DVR will continually monitor expenditures and caseload movement to ensure resources are available to effectively serve all eligible individuals.

### PY 2017 Cost Estimates

Priority Category	Title	Estimated Funds	Estimated Cases	Average Case Service Cost
Not applicable	Title I	\$ 28,000,000	20,550	\$ 1,362
Not applicable	Title VI	\$ 440,000	1,450	\$ 304
Totals	\$ 28,440,000	22,000	\$ 1,666	

# COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

## Personnel Data, Vacancies, & Projections

DSHS/DVR employs a total of 253 field service personnel to serve approximately 20,000 individuals per year. Personnel providing direct services to customers are employed in eight distinct classifications. DSHS/DVR's direct service personnel are chiefly comprised of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) and Rehabilitation Technicians (RTs), representing DSHS/DVR's professional and paraprofessional personnel, respectively.

*DSHS/DVR Personnel Levels and Vacancies by Classification, December 1, 2015*

Classification	Personnel	Vacancies
VRC 1	14	7
VRC 2	48	7
VRC 3	56	2
VRC 4	5	0
RT 1	75	3
RT 2 (18 Business Specialists)	21	3
Supervisor	23	1
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	2	1

*DSHS/DVR Projected New Staff Needs by Personnel Classification, 2016 – 2020*

Personnel Classification	Projected New Staff, 2016 - 2020
VRC 1	6
VRC 2	23
VRC 3	28
VRC 4	3
RT 1	33
RT 2	10
Supervisor	11
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	1

# Recruitment, Preparation, & Retention of Qualified Personnel

## Higher Education Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Western Washington University (WWU) offers the only graduate program in Washington that directly prepares vocational rehabilitation professionals. Currently 37 students are enrolled in the Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling program. In FFY 2015, 19 graduates completed this program and attained the credentials for certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

*WWU Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Participants and Sponsorships, FFY 2015*

<b>Students Enrolled</b>	<b>37</b>
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	3
<b>Graduates</b>	<b>19</b>
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	9

DSHS/DVR's FTE allotment remains capped at 318.5 FTEs until June 30, 2017. The division is able to recruit all field service vacancies as they occur but may not exceed this FTE cap. Approval by the DSHS Secretary is required to fill any newly established exempt or program management positions, as part of ongoing budget savings policies.

DSHS/DVR will maintain recruitment linkages and concentrated efforts with regional higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs. These include:

- Western Washington University
- University of Idaho
- Portland State University
- Western Oregon University
- San Diego State University
- Fresno State University
- Utah State University

DSHS/DVR will also continue to send recruitment announcements to higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs nationwide.

Recruiting qualified candidates in sufficient numbers to fill VRC positions is a continuing challenge. The national shortage of qualified VRC applicants has significantly affected DSHS/DVR's ability to fill vacancies in a timely manner, especially in rural locations. In response, DSHS/DVR has broadened its list of qualifying master's degrees to include psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities). While the list of qualifying master's degrees has broadened, the required competencies that a VRC candidate must demonstrate have remained unchanged.

Per Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) revisions to Rehabilitation Act CSPD requirements, DSHS/DVR will incorporate new VRC Bachelor's level education qualifications in to the VRC classification series. It is anticipated that this will result in a broader recruitment pool and more timely appointments to vacant positions.

A particular focus of recruitment continues to be attracting candidates who identify as African-American, Latino, and American Indian, as these individuals are presently under-represented among DSHS/DVR personnel. Targeted recruitment will continue in collaboration with Latino community based organizations, American Indian VR Programs and other Tribal organizations, as well as African-American community based organizations.

To ensure new employees start successfully, DSHS/DVR continues to use a comprehensive employee onboarding program. Used by supervisors when new employees are hired, this program ensures that individuals receive adequate orientation and training to perform their roles and responsibilities. DSHS/DVR continues to offer staff advancement opportunities and will adopt a formal succession plan by October 1, 2017. This plan will include a number of elements that encourage staff to prepare and compete for future leadership training, introductory courses on supervision, mentoring and networking activities, and other advancement opportunities.

## Personnel Standards

In accordance with 101(a)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, DSHS/DVR maintains consistent standards for all rehabilitation personnel. These standards include prior education and experience requirements as well as specific core competencies. All current DSHS/DVR counseling personnel (Field Services Administrator, Area Managers, VR Supervisors, and VRCs) hold credentials that are consistent with either the state-based VRC registration requirements or the national certification standards of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

DSHS/DVR will continue to apply educational qualifications for new hires into VRC 2, VRC 3, VRC 4, and VR Supervisor classifications that require the following credentials:

- A master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities; or
- CRCC Certification; or
- A master's degree in a closely related field, plus 18-quarter (12-semester) credit hours in specified rehabilitation counseling courses at the graduate level.

DSHS/DVR will propose revised education qualifications at the Bachelor's level as an entry-point in to the VRC classification series, while higher level positions within the series will continue to require a Master's degree or CRCC certification. A proposal for this revision will be submitted to the Office of Financial Management State Human Resources for approval and will be subject to collective bargaining prior to implementation.

## Professional Development - 21st Century Education & Experience

DSHS/DVR completes an annual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) with each employee that covers the period October 1 to September 30. The PDP is a standard State of Washington tool used to evaluate job performance and emphasize individualized staff development needs. Specific development needs identified for each employee are to be addressed in the following year. In addition to determining individual training needs, DSHS/DVR compiles results to plan overall training and developmental priorities conducted staff-wide. While specific priorities evolve year-to-year, DSHS/DVR consistently addresses assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology. New and ongoing training and continuous improvement activities specifically target the development of staff competencies using labor market and industry sector data.

DSHS/DVR requires all VRCs to participate in comprehensive in-service trainings on an ongoing basis which address assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology. The Rehabilitation Academy, DSHS/DVR's in-service training platform, features standard training modules. The Basic Curriculum must be completed by all VRCs within 12 months of appointment.

## Rehabilitation Academy: Basic Curriculum

1. Vocational Rehabilitation Process
2. Special Programs
3. Employment Outcomes
4. Benefits Planning
5. Rehabilitation Law Review
6. Motivational Interviewing
7. Medical Aspects of Disability

The ongoing redesign of all in-service training curricula to be competency-based, focused on contemporary case management practices, and available using web-based and other distance-learning methods has demonstrated initial success. Statewide WIOA implementation training, designed and conducted by DSHS/DVR's Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee, successfully leveraged in-person and web-based platforms to educate staff on competencies and best practices which support initial WIOA implementation. This success prompted numerous stakeholders to request in-person and web-based WIOA trainings, which DSHS/DVR provided. Stakeholder training participants included Tribal VR directors, workforce development professionals, DSHS staff, and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) staff.

DSHS/DVR continues to provide training via video conferencing equipment at 21 office locations statewide. This technology permits larger numbers of staff to receive more timely training while reducing travel costs.

## Knowledge Translation

DSHS/DVR has not developed standard procedures for the dissemination of significant knowledge assets throughout the organization. Designing and implementing such procedures is included in DSHS/DVR's planned redesign of its training platform and curricula.

### Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

DSHS/DVR continues to assure full communication access for all individuals with limited English proficiency. In addition to bi-lingual DSHS/DVR staff, contracted interpreter and translation services are available. DSHS/DVR forms and publications are available in Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese and translations to other languages are provided as needed. Individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing may communicate with DSHS/DVR staff at all locations via video phone, video relay, voice relay, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, real-time captioning, augmentative listening devices, and Ubi-Duo devices. DSHS/DVR's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) provide effective and culturally competent services for customers who are Deaf.

## Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

DSHS/DVR has worked closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to coordinate personnel development activities and has an interagency agreement with OSPI to address mutual issues. The DSHS/DVR-OSPI agreement will be amended and expanded to all regional and local education authorities. This expansion will facilitate the required coordination with education and provision of Pre-employment Transition Services, as required under WIOA. In addition, these agreements will identify necessary training for DSHS/DVR and education staff regarding new services, new coordination, and best practices in serving students with disabilities.

# EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS

*This section provides an evaluation of DSHS/DVR’s implementation of the goals and priorities established in the previous state plan, the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan. This evaluation includes data analysis, performance and activity summaries, and descriptions of performance challenges and their effects on DSHS/DVR progress. Special consideration is given to Supported Employment services. Lastly, a description of funded innovation and expansion activities is included.*

## FFY 2015 Evaluation: Goals, Strategies, & Barriers

DSHS/DVR rehabilitated 3,191 customers in FFY 2015, supporting these individuals with disabilities in achieving gainful employment. This was an increase in closed-rehabilitated outcomes of 386 (12.0%) from the previous year.

In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR accepted 9,450 applications, a decrease of 284 (3.0%) from applications accepted during FFY 2014; 8,616 individuals were determined eligible for services, a decrease of 51 (1.0%); and 4,947 new Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) were developed, a decrease of 432 (9.0%) from this prior year.

The continued reduction in applications and eligible individuals during FFY 2015 occurred at a slower pace than in FFY 2014 due to increased outreach in select locales. DSHS/DVR’s concern regarding reduced applications prompted statewide outreach initiatives. Preliminary analysis indicates these outreach activities have been moderately successful.

While overall vocational rehabilitation (VR) service volumes decreased, service costs increased. The average cost of a rehabilitation closure increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015, the fourth such increase in the last five years. The steady increase in average rehabilitation costs over the last five years is significant, a \$1,183 increase from FFY 2011 to FFY 2015. Said differently, the average FFY 2015 rehabilitation costs DSHS/DVR 120.65% of FFY 2011 costs.

DSHS/DVR continues to closely monitor its fiscal resources to assure maximum case service capacity is maintained.

*DSHS/DVR Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs: FFY 2011 - FFY 2015*

FFY	Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	\$5,727	6.1%
2012	\$6,101	6.5%
2013	\$6,775	11.1%
2014	\$6,698	-1.1%
2015	\$6,910	3.2%

## Goal One: Provide Timely, Individualized Services to DSHS/DVR Customers that Result in Employment Outcomes that Meet the Customer's Needs.

### Priorities & Evaluation

1. 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 and want 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.
  - Evaluation: Outreach plans were developed and implemented by local DSHS/DVR offices to reach these targeted populations. Overall, the success of these plans was mixed and continued emphasis is being placed on reaching these underserved populations. Efforts to coordinate outreach with the Employment Security Department and LWDBs proved to be more challenging than anticipated and will be a focus of improvement throughout development and implementation of this Combined State Plan.
2. Strengthen efforts to assist customers in learning lifelong job seeking skills so they know how to get and keep jobs when DSHS/DVR is no longer in their lives, including how to be an effective self-advocate to obtain needed reasonable accommodations on the job.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists across the state to assist customers in successfully conducting a self-directed job search. These specialists assist customers in learning lifelong job seeking skills (e.g. how to find job openings and submit successful applications, resume development, how to prepare for and effectively respond to interview questions, and how to request a reasonable accommodation).
3. Improve communication and the continuity of communication with customers while they are developing and implementing IPEs, so that individuals better understand what services are available, where they are in the process, and whether they are making progress towards their employment goal.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR published a Customer Handbook that contains extensive information designed to inform and guide individuals through each step of the VR process. The handbook is given to every customer and reviewed periodically during counseling and guidance sessions so the individual understands where they are in the VR process and whether they are making progress towards their employment goal.
4. Place greater emphasis and reinforce the customer's active role in the VR process, including better assistance to customers who require job search and placement services, especially those who conduct a self-directed job search.
  - Evaluation: Use of the Customer Handbook as a counseling and guidance tool reinforces the customer's involvement throughout the VR process. In addition, the Business Specialists that have been hired are specifically providing intensified support for customers who require assistance with job search and placement.
5. Increase DSHS/DVR's ability to assist customers to achieve higher wage jobs with health benefits.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR Counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).

- 6.** Improve the statewide consistency of timely, individualized services to customers who have a broad range of needs and capabilities.
  - Evaluation: Use of the new Customer Handbook is designed to improve the statewide consistency of services by assuring that customers fully understand the VR process and scope of services that are available to them. Closer monitoring of case movement and various management reports has improved the timeliness of service delivery.
- 7.** Improve the organizational culture to focus even more on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and addressing each individual's barriers to employment throughout the VR process.
  - Evaluation: Use of the new Customer Handbook as counseling and guidance tool is designed to foster more emphasis on customer service. In addition, DSHS/DVR has operationalized expanded and improved elements of a comprehensive vocational assessment that include cultural elements and more complete identification of an individual's barriers to employment throughout the VR process.
- 8.** Use the Lean process to identify ways that DSHS/DVR counselors can provide more counseling and guidance to customers.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not conduct a Lean process to identify ways that DSHS/DVR counselors can provide more counseling and guidance to customers.
- 9.** Continue serving a racially and ethnically diverse customer population that reflects the demographics of the state.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR continued to serve a mix of customers that fully reflects the diversity of the state. Identified gaps in key demographic populations were addressed through targeted outreach.
- 10.** More fully utilize Independent Living (IL) and Assistive Technology (AT) services to assist customers in reducing or eliminating their disability barriers to employment. Assure that DSHS/DVR effectively utilizes AT within its offices to accommodate individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR revised and strengthened procedures to assure that IL and AT services are fully utilized to assist customers in reducing or eliminating their disability barriers to employment. In addition, DSHS/DVR as installed AT devices in all of its offices to accommodate individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and provided training to staff on use of these devices.
- 11.** Keep customers better informed of where they are in the VR process as they progress towards their employment goal.
  - Evaluation: Use of the new Customer handbook as a counseling and guidance tool assures that customers are kept informed of where they are in the VR process as they progress towards their employment goal.
- 12.** Provide more timely and thorough Benefits Planning to customers who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) so they can make better informed choices about the types of jobs they seek and amount of hours they will work.
  - Evaluation: All DSHS/DVR counselors have been trained to provide Benefits Planning to their customers who receive SSI. In addition, four DSHS/DVR Benefits Specialists provide Benefits Planning to customers who receive SSDI or both SSDI/SSI. Plans are underway to hire 12 Benefits Technicians who will provide additional Benefits Planning capacity statewide.

- 13.** Improve and expand services to enhance earnings, employee benefits and career advancement for customers, including individuals served through supported employment.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).
- 14.** Conduct annual statewide case record reviews of case service practices to determine consistency and adherence with Federal/state requirements.
  - Evaluation: FFY 2014 Statewide Case Review findings (conducted in FFY 2015 using FFY 2014 closures) were compiled in an extensive report and distributed to staff statewide. These findings have influenced WIOA implementation, case management software upgrades, and new staff trainings.
- 15.** Use case review results to identify and implement improvements in quality and consistency of services.
  - Evaluation: FFY 2014 Statewide Case Review findings (conducted in FFY 2015 using FFY 2014 closures) were compiled in an extensive report and distributed to staff statewide. These findings have influenced WIOA implementation, case management software upgrades, and new staff trainings.
- 16.** In light of the limited and highly competitive job market, make more use of available labor market and post-secondary training information to improve vocational assessments and assist customers in better selecting employment goals that match the availability of real jobs.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).
- 17.** Increase collaboration within the WorkSource, Washington's One-Stop centers, to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for DSHS/DVR services by better leveraging DSHS/DVR services with Workforce Investment Act and other workforce development programs.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR jointly developed principles of collaboration with the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) that is comprised of the LWDB directors across the state. These principles lay the foundation for collaboration within the One-Stop system to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for DSHS/DVR services, and are the basis for LWDB memoranda of understanding with DSHS/DVR that operationalize integrated service delivery.
- 18.** Increase collaboration with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to improve coordination of DSHS/DVR services with SBCTC workforce programs and Adult Basic Education programs.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not increase collaboration with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to improve coordination of DSHS/DVR services with SBCTC workforce programs and Adult Basic Education programs. However, this continues to be a priority and DSHS/DVR will develop a cooperative agreement with the SBCTC to improve coordination.

## Effective Strategies

- Filling 18 Business Specialists 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.

## Performance Barriers

DSHS/DVR staff capacity for program improvement projects has been overtaxed by WIOA implementation. As a result, many priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized to accommodate WIOA implementation (e.g. efforts to coordinate outreach and increase collaboration with ESD and SBCTC were reprioritized, as WIOA administrative responsibilities have occupied respective program staff). This Combined State Plan refocuses these collaborative efforts beginning in 2016.

## Goal Two: Strengthen DSHS/DVR's Workforce and Improve its Overall Organizational Systems.

### Priorities & Evaluation

- 1.** Redesign the overall in-service training program to assure that DSHS/DVR staff receives timely and accurate training and skill development as a foundation for consistent service delivery practices.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR continues to redesign the in-service training program, leveraging all staff WIOA trainings to develop new curricula and platforms. DSHS/DVR developed and implemented an initial phase of WIOA implementation trainings to all staff statewide. These trainings addressed WIOA Performance Accountability, Pre-employment Transition Services, the aforementioned Customer Handbook, and DSHS/DVR's new vocational assessment platform. In addition, DSHS/DVR conducted numerous digital follow-up sessions, using WebEx, to ensure staff issues were address and that implementation remained consistent statewide. In addition to WIOA trainings, DSHS/DVR collaborated with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) to conduct a three-day In-Service Training for all staff. The training curriculum covered all aspects of service delivery and the event itself included a staff appreciation event in which each DSHS/DVR staff member was recognized.
- 2.** In accordance with the DSHS/DVR Cultural Competency Plan, appoint a total of four individuals to VRC positions from minority groups: one each who is African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic. Appoint one individual to a VRC position who is a Disabled Veteran and one who is an individual with a disability.
  - Evaluation: Of the targeted groups, DSHS/DVR appointed all to VRC positions except for a Disabled Veteran.
- 3.** Develop and implement an action plan that responds to key areas of concern identified through the 2013 DSHS/DVR Employee Survey.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR implemented an action plan that responded to key areas of concern identified through the 2013 DSHS/DVR Employee Survey, focusing on better and more timely communication of key organizational changes and staff recognition.
- 4.** Develop and implement a DSHS/DVR succession plan that addresses long range attrition at all levels of the organization.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not develop a succession plan during FFY 2015. Instead, efforts focused on WIOA implementation.

## Effective Strategies

- Significant staff and resource investments in training, by the DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee and by DSHS/DVR in partnership with CCER.
- Continued 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.

## Performance Barriers

DSHS/DVR must improve and refine its recruitment practices to attract candidates from targeted groups; it has proven challenging to recruit individuals for counselor positions who are African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or a Disabled Veteran. DSHS/DVR staff capacity has been overtaxed by WIOA implementation. As a result, priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized (e.g. development of a DSHS/DVR succession plan). Such priorities will be reassessed during the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, as staff capacity allows.

## Goal Three: Distinguish DSHS/DVR's Role in the Disability and Employer Communities and Leverage Partnerships to Maximize Resources and Support for DSHS/DVR Customers and Individuals with Disabilities.

### Priorities & Evaluation

1. Enhance and build partnerships that advance opportunities for individuals with disabilities to rapidly obtain employment, including supported employment.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide to assist customers in successfully conducting self-directed job searches. These specialists work closely with WorkSource Business Teams to identify job opportunities for DSHS/DVR customers. In addition, they assist DSHS/DVR customers in submitting timely employment applications, preparing for interviews, and requesting reasonable accommodations. In addition, DSHS/DVR has been actively involved with the Microsoft Corporation to fill 200 supported employment positions on its main campus in Redmond, Washington; virtually all of these positions will be filled by DSHS/DVR customers. A similar relationship has been forged between DSHS/DVR and web-based retailer Amazon to fill non-supported employment positions with DSHS/DVR customers at its distribution center in Kent, Washington.
2. Develop relationships with employers to create opportunities for customers to gain work experience through internships and obtain regular jobs that pay well with benefits.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide who do extensive outreach and marketing to local businesses, and work closely with WorkSource Business Teams.
3. Market DSHS/DVR to employers by categorizing the similar employment goals of customers and strategically targeting employers in corresponding occupations.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide who do extensive outreach and marketing to local businesses, utilizing reports that group customer employment goals by category as a basis for targeting outreach to businesses in corresponding occupations.
4. Increase understanding and awareness of DSHS/DVR services in local communities.
  - Evaluation: Outreach plans were developed and implemented by local DSHS/DVR offices to serve a broader array of underserved populations and promote increased awareness of available VR services.
5. Maximize DSHS/DVR local-level knowledge of community programs and services that could benefit DSHS/DVR customers.
  - Evaluation: Local DSHS/DVR Supervisors used unit meetings to broaden their staff's knowledge of community resources to benefit customers.

6. Collaborate with disability and employment partners to sponsor events that focus on disability recruitment, hiring and retention issues such as mentoring, disability awareness, reasonable accommodation, customized employment, transportation, independent living, benefits issues, etc.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR collaborated with the Community Networks Program (a statewide consortium of local organizations) to fund over 50 local projects and events focusing on disability recruitment, hiring and retention, including events focusing on the employment of students and youth with disabilities.
7. Bring together employers, 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.
  - Evaluation: This activity occurred sporadically in some locales but was not implemented on a statewide basis due to staff turnover in the statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position. The position was responsible for facilitating this priority and became vacant during FFY 2015. It took time to recruit and hire a new incumbent; during this period it was not possible to fully implement this priority.
8. Support the DSHS/DVR Business 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.
  - Evaluation: The statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position became vacant and was re-hired during FFY 2015. The new Business Services Manager is reinvigorating the team and providing extensive support to develop ongoing business relationships.
9. Serve on local WorkSource Business Service Teams to market DSHS/DVR job seekers to employers.
  - Evaluation: This activity occurred sporadically in some locales but was not implemented on a statewide basis due to staff turnover in the statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position. The position was responsible for facilitating this priority and became vacant during FFY 2015. It took time to recruit and hire a new incumbent; during this period it was not possible to fully implement this priority.
10. Conduct regular meetings and information sharing with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) at the local level to improve communication and better support service delivery coordination.
  - Evaluation: Every local DSHS/DVR unit conducted information sharing meetings with CRPs on a quarterly basis.

## Effective Strategies

- Filled 18 Business Specialists positions to conduct employer outreach and serve on WorkSource Business Teams.
- 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.

## Performance Barriers

While local Business Specialists provided valuable services to customers and businesses statewide, key priorities were not accomplished due to the vacant Business Services Manager position. With the recent hire of a new Business Services Manager, DSHS/DVR has set ambitious goals for its coordinated business engagement platform in this Combined State Plan.

## **FFY 2015 Goal Four: Increase Outreach to Improve and Strengthen DSHS/DVR's Connection and Relationship with Employers.**

### **Priorities & Evaluation**

- 1.** Increase DSHS/DVR's visibility with and connection to Washington employers. Continue to expand the network capabilities of DSHS/DVR's Employment Services Team.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide that have significantly increased DSHS/DVR's visibility with and connection to local businesses, actively engaging to promote employment opportunities for DSHS/DVR customers.
- 2.** Actively participate in the national employer relations model sponsored by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and integrate these activities into state-level initiatives. Implement the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR worked closely with CSAVR to implement TAP and train all DSHS/DVR Counselors to assist customers in using the portal as an element of their job search activities.
- 3.** Increase the number of customers who participate in internships that lead to competitive employment.
  - Evaluation: The number of DSHS/DVR customers participating in internships decreased in FFY 2015. The reasons for this decline will be studied and renewed efforts made to increase customer internships, particularly for students and youth with disabilities.
- 4.** Actively use the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation NET system for developing employer relationships and increasing employment opportunities.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR actively participated in the NET throughout FFY 2015 and used it to make contact with national employers doing business in Washington.
- 5.** Market DSHS/DVR to employers by attending local employment expos, job fairs, employer association meetings, and employment events or conferences.
  - Evaluation: Business Specialists regularly market DSHS/DVR to local employers statewide by attending employment expos, job fairs, employer association meetings, and employment events or conferences.
- 6.** Increase the number of DSHS/DVR customers placed into state or Federal government jobs and with private employers that are Federal contractors.
  - Evaluation: DSHS/DVR was designated by the state Human Resources Office to coordinate the Supported Employment in State Government (SESG) Program, which enables state agencies to establish and hire supported employment positions without the position counting towards their FTE allotments. Primary recruitment to fill SESG position is aimed at DSHS/DVR customers. In addition, DSHS/DVR has worked with the Department of Services for the Blind and Employment Security Department to add a feature on WorkSource website that will permit job matching between applicants with disabilities and employers that are Federal contractors or sub-contractors who must meet Section 503 hiring requirements.

### **Effective Strategies**

- Filled 18 Business Specialists statewide to conduct employer outreach and serve on WorkSource Business Teams.
- DSHS/DVR continues to implement outreach strategies targeting mid-sized and smaller businesses on an ongoing basis.

### **Performance Barriers**

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving priorities outlined under goal four.

## **FFY 2015 Supported Employment Evaluation: Goals, Strategies, & Barriers**

### **Priorities & Evaluation**

DSHS/DVR's goal in FFY 2015 was to serve approximately 1445 customers in supported employment and to achieve approximately 254 successful rehabilitations. This goal was exceeded by achieving 362 supported employment rehabilitations in FFY 2015.

### **Effective Strategies**

- Continued use of a model of service delivery in partnership with county developmental disability programs and community rehabilitation programs
- Continued active marketing of customers to local businesses

### **Performance Barriers**

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving these goals and priorities.

## **FFY 2015 Funded Innovation and Expansion Activities**

During FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR reserved funds for the Washington State Rehabilitation Council and Washington State Independent Living Council. Additional funded innovation and expansion activities are listed.

- Continued implementation of high school transition programs established with six county developmental disabilities programs to place supported employment transition customers with developmental disabilities in permanent employment upon high school completion. The county program pays CRP subcontractors a monthly fee to provide community based assessment, job placement, and job coaching services. When the customer is placed into employment and begins extended services, DSHS/DVR pays the county program an outcome fee of \$8,670.00. As all county subcontractors are CRPs, these subcontractors receive a monthly service delivery fee from the county that is not outcome-based; these monthly fees differ from DSHS/DVR's milestone contract system, which provides payment only when outcomes are achieved.
- Investment in the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) comprehensive series of web-based on-demand training modules for CRP Supported Employment Specialists to support CRP staff development. 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. This training partnership, which includes the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, DSHS Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration, and other supported employment partners, provides a suite of on-demand training modules which supports CRPs in retaining highly-trained staff.
- Development and launch of an assessment tool and training curriculum that will provide DSHS/DVR customers with training to 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.
- Expanded availability of the WorkStrides Career Exploration Workshop to customers on a statewide basis. It is presently available at select DSHS/DVR locations and continues to be expanded statewide.

## DSHS/DVR Performance on WIOA Indicators

To establish performance targets for program years 2017 and 2018, DSHS/DVR analyzed customers' quarterly earnings and job retention outcomes. Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board supported this process by analyzing education outcomes and provided DSHS/DVR with aggregate results. These data resources have been utilized to report DSHS/DVR performance on the Performance Accountability indicators established in WIOA Section 116.

WIOA Measure	PY 2012	PY 2013	PY 2014	PY 2015*
Employment Two Quarters after Exit	unavailable	49.56%	46.81%	52.44%*
Employment Four Quarters after Exit	unavailable	43.91%	45.23%	53.06%*
Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit	unavailable	\$3,060.50	\$3,072.00	\$3,077.00*
Credential Attainment	54.68%**	55.39%**	58.20%**	unavailable
Skill Gains	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable
Business Engagement	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable

\*Based on partial year data, including two quarters

\*\*Based on averages of quarterly outcome aggregates, does not reflect yearly actuals



