

# DSHS/DVR 2016 – 2020 State Plan

## Input of the State Rehabilitation Council

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### **Draft Federal Guidance**

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;
2. the Designated State Unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and
3. the Designated State Unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

## Introduction

This section has been jointly developed by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and 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.

## Summary of Input and Recommendations

**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*** 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 actions had been completed and approved, including DSHS/DVR's current organizational placement within the Department of Social and Health Services.

**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*** 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*** DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation. The WSRC Executive Director has been actively involved in development of the 2016-2020 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** 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 2016-2020 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** 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** 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** 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*** DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation.

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

**WSRC 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*** 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.

**WSRC 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*** DSHS/DVR is implementing this recommendation, as described in the staff development section of the 2016-2020 VR State Plan.

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

**WSRC 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** 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** 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.

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