

# VR Portion of WIOA State Plan for the State of West Virginia FY-2018

## Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

---

\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

### a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

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;**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) received input from the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) members and chairman regarding the Unified State Plan to be submitted by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners in 2018. The input and the agency responses are reported below.

##### Observation 1

The agency strives to educate the general public regarding the WV DRS office locations to ensure knowledge and the continuum of agency services and programs. The agency utilizes newspaper articles, statewide magazine advertisements, community events, social media and public broadcasting as a means to assure awareness of the available services within WV DRS in all areas of the state.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends this practice be continued with a continuing emphasis directed into underserved areas of the State.

##### Observation 2

A priority for WV DRS is reaching students during their secondary education (9th — 12th grades) for it is imperative to start early in identifying career paths. Establishing an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) early to outline a vocational goal area and necessary services needed to support this goal is important for a student's success when transitioning from High School to the next phase of life whether this being continuing education or employment. The agency has

VR counselors assigned to all secondary schools in West Virginia with offices physically located in high schools in West Virginia — Brooke, Cabell Midland, Huntington, John Marshall, Parkersburg South, Preston County, Wheeling Park and Woodrow Wilson High Schools.

Uncertainties continue that once students are preparing to leave the secondary school system and move forward into higher education that students, parents and their advisors/counselors may not be fully aware of services available through DRS. Placing Pathways banners at all West Virginia high schools will also increase awareness of available transition resources for students.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends working with high schools and/or vocational schools to establish VR offices to be physically located on the campus of those selected schools. This would provide more access to VR counselors and assistance to those students and their families in an effort to gain applicants for services at an earlier age as funding allows.

### Observation 3

With the demographics and cultural backgrounds of West Virginia, effective communication must be innovative. Finding the most efficient avenue to educate students and their families regarding available WV DRS services and programs is a continuing challenge. Effective, good communication is a key factor.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that WV DRS:

- continues to keep students and their families abreast about services and programs offered by the agency through social media; and,

- increase visibility of and access to VR staff assigned to their respective schools by making school presentations, using VR displays, exhibiting posters in prominent locations and having an increased presence at Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other transition planning meetings.

### Observation 4

The partnership between WV DRS and the Department of Education is imperative for the successful transition of students into the workforce. To reinforce this partnership, the need for preserving open communication is a vital component to assure students are referred to vocational rehabilitation at a younger age and have an informed understanding of community based services offered by WV DRS.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends this component be continued to strengthen knowledge of policies, referral processes as well as emerging trends and practices on an annual basis.

### Observation 5

Transportation issues persist as a state and national concern. The lack of personal and public transportation in many areas of our state continues to be a repeated challenge. WV DRS offers varying opportunities for instruction in learning to drive when barriers are present. All West Virginia high schools currently offer their students driver's education classes.

Recommendation: Considering the long-term goal for all students is to be employed, the Council suggests that VR counselors stress that Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) include driver's education assessments for students with disabilities who may require accommodations in order to

drive. This may require occupational and/or developmental visual evaluations. Any driver education instructor in the state should be supplied with the information available outlining the agency's driving program that offers technical and adaptive support or training.

#### Observation 6

In looking toward the future, the agency expects an influx of youth who have drug and/or alcohol related issues and will need services. The agency is not only concerned about the youth having substance related disorders of their own, but also the long term effects of prenatal opiate exposure. This will be an area that will require VR staff to have more diverse training in these specialized programs and skill sets.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that the Agency continues to provide staff with the training and technical assistance needed to expand their knowledge of drug addiction related diseases.

#### Observation 7

With the national trend focusing on working more closely with individuals who are within the corrections system who have disabilities, WV DRS has implemented a position for a Behavioral Health and Corrections Specialist. The focus will be on individuals with mental illness or other cognitive disabilities. Even though the agency works with the correctional system, providing more in depth, early intervention services to this underserved group of individuals will be of benefit.

Recommendation: The WVSRC recommends that the Agency continue to expand relationships with the Behavioral Health and Corrections communities in order to expand opportunities for these individuals with disabilities being served by these Agencies.

#### Observation 8

In the past when funding allowed, WV DRS has conducted VR State Conferences every two years. Speakers from a myriad of areas have been brought to this conference to expand knowledge, update staff on new regulations, changes in the law and bring new creative ideas for program and service delivery. These conferences also provided the opportunity for the VR staff from throughout the state to spend several days sharing experiences, understanding agency issues, Client Assistance Program (CAP) training, talking with guest speakers while networking with administrative staff and their peers.

Recommendation: Promoting team building and giving the opportunity for an educational experience to enhance job performances is vital to the continuing success of the agency and enriching staff. The Council encourages the agency to continue this means of edification and reinforcement for staff, as funding permits. Agency Quality Assurance professionals should keep staff abreast of emerging practices, policy changes and trends in the respective districts.

### CONSUMER SATISFACTION

As part of its program improvement efforts, DRS continues to support the implementation of consumer satisfaction surveys of its clients to ensure quality services for DRS consumers. WVSRC conducts the consumer satisfaction surveys (with full DRS assistance and cooperation). WVSRC is primarily responsible for completion of the consumer satisfaction survey for VR

consumers. DRS continues to provide and supplement fiscal and human resources needed for its successful completion.

WVSRC members selected a survey method that allows former DRS clients and individuals who were not accepted for VR services to be contacted via mail surveys as soon as they exit DRS from various VR statuses throughout the fiscal year. Selected Highlights of the 2017 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of DRS Clients as reported by WVSRC are presented below.

The latest consumer satisfaction report, entitled, Consumer Satisfaction: Report of Survey Findings, was prepared by the WVSRC in November 2017. The findings were based on consumer satisfaction information gathered from 284 responses across the six DRS districts. Respondents to the consumer satisfaction survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their interactions with DRS. The ratings were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Respondents were provided an option to indicate replies that were neutral or that the survey item was not applicable.

Overall, the level of satisfaction remains high despite a slight decrease from the previous results. This may be due to a 35% reduction in the number of respondents coupled with a larger number of respondents with unsuccessful case closures. Most often, consumers whose cases were closed successfully report higher levels of satisfaction than those who were closed as unsuccessful. Major findings of the consumer satisfaction survey include: respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (85%), their questions were answered clearly by DRS (82%), they were involved in their plan development (70%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (76%), and they received the services they needed (70%). Respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (76%) and their counselors told them about job opportunities (70%). Consumers also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (85% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (83%), and the overall experience with DRS (77%).

The consumers were asked to recall which client's rights information had been explained to them. There were 228 individuals who responded that at least one right had been explained (80% of the sample). Most individuals indicated that they had received several rights explanations. The most commonly explained rights to consumers were (1) their participation in developing the rehabilitation plan (90%) and (2) knowing about all of the services that were available (76%). When asked about needs that were not met by rehabilitation services, 109 of the 189 consumers who responded to this question reported that they had no additional needs (58%). Consumers who did report additional needs most commonly requested education/training, employment—related services, medical services, and transportation—related services.

Overall, the responses in this sample are very similar to the responses from the previous year. There had been a noticeable reduction in reported satisfaction over the past 5 reports, but this year, the responses appear to have stabilized. To maintain high quality of services and promote a greater satisfaction level for our consumers, DRS welcomes and considers compliments, complaints, suggestions, and recommendations that our clients reported in the consumer satisfaction survey.

The WVSRC and DRS were also interested in examining the pattern of responses for transitioning youth (clients who were age 24 or younger). Youth surveys were color—coded so the participants could be isolated. Their responses formed a subset of 99 returned surveys.

Overall, youth satisfaction remained lower than the responses of the whole group. Transitioning youth respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (62%), their questions were answered clearly by DRS (69%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (66%), and they received the services they needed (59%). Youth respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (69%), DRS counselors helped them develop a plan to get a job (67%), and their counselors told them about job opportunities (79%). Transitioning youth also reported ratings for accessibility of local offices (77% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (71%), and the overall experience with DRS (65%).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning discussions occur on a monthly basis at DRS Executive Management Group meetings, which include representatives of the SRC and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Needs assessment results are shared with the SRC and SILC. DRS Goals and Priorities were presented at meetings of the SRC, where the SRC has opportunities for input. The SRC meetings include a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from the Client Assistance Program, SILC, and other state agencies. In February 2018, DRS held public "Q and A" Sessions in Morgantown, WV and Charleston, WV to receive comments and questions from VR stakeholders pertaining to the Vocational Rehabilitation section of the Unified State Plan. To ensure transparency and public awareness regarding the Program Year (PY) 2018 VR section of the Unified State Plan, DRS posted a draft version on the agency's website for review.

On April 16, 2018, the agency Director received a letter from the SRC Chairperson to address the change in the Designated State Agency from The West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts to the West Virginia Department of Commerce (effective July 1, 2018). The SRC Chairperson stated that "The letter is to inform you that the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (WV SRC) supports the change in the Designated State Agency (DSA) from the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts to the West Virginia Department of Commerce effective July 1st, 2018. The WV SRC looks forward to our continuing relationship with the agency and working with you and your staff. If the Council can be of any assistance during this transition period, we are readily available and eager to collaborate in any way needed. We value the rapport the Council has maintained with WV DRS over the years and look forward to our continuing partnership."

## **2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and**

### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 1

DRS agrees with the recommendation to continue efforts to inform the general public about the availability of DRS services. In recent years, the agency has focused on reaching out to stakeholders of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including potentially underserved/unserved areas of the state. DRS utilizes the latest technology for this purpose, including a web map that includes turn—by—turn directions to each office to help potential consumers more easily find DRS field offices. Additional activities include the sponsoring of community events and statewide radio advertisements. In Program Years (PYs) 2018-2019, DRS plans to continue to identify efficient and cost-effective ways to reach out to consumers with disabilities, including potentially underserved/unserved populations using various methods such

as cross-promotion among the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners (WorkForce WV, WV Adult Education, and DRS) within the WV workforce development system. Additionally, with the ongoing implementation of the WIOA, an additional focus for DRS is to reach out to students with disabilities, including their parents and service providers in the community. These outreach activities are discussed below in later responses.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 2

DRS agrees that it is important for students with disabilities to begin the vocational rehabilitation process as early as appropriate. DRS is open to the recommendation and has requested that counselors identify any possible opportunities for embedded VR offices within high schools. If opportunities arise, DRS will move forward to establish offices, where appropriate and agreed upon by both parties.

In support of this aim, DRS has a vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to each high school in the state. During PYs 2016-2017, DRS placed large banners in high schools in all 55 WV counties and in almost every high school in the state. These banners provide information on DRS' PathwaysWV.org website for students with disabilities. The website also provides access to additional information on ways to access services from DRS.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 3

DRS agrees that effective, good communication is a key factor in making sure that students with disabilities and their families are aware of DRS services and programs that are available for eligible individuals as they begin preparing for post—secondary school goals. DRS engages in a variety of outreach activities to ensure widespread information dissemination that is beneficial for students with disabilities preparing to leave the school setting. These activities include sponsoring community events, attending job fairs, passing out brochures, student—focused radio advertisements, and speaking to classrooms.

In PYs 2016-2017, DRS collaborated with the WV Department of Education to develop and provide students and parents with disability-related and transition resource guides. These guides were initially distributed by the WV Department of Education to all students in special education, with future distributions for all 6th and 9th graders in special education each year. These guides serve as a marketing/recruiting tool for DRS in addition to providing valuable resource information to students and parents. DRS has also collaborated with the Mid—Ohio Valley Workforce Board to assist in developing and disseminating an employment guide to each high school guidance counselor and DRS counselor working with high school students in the region's nine counties.

Additionally, the agency has a counselor assigned to each high school in West Virginia as well as liaisons assigned to institutions of higher education around the state. This on—site presence assists the agency in developing and maintaining working relationships, on a personal level, with students and school staff. Counselors provide outreach materials, including a specialized brochure for transition students. The brochure highlights the DRS Transition program, including eligibility requirements and available services. The brochure has the agency's website address where additional information about the DRS Transition program is available. DRS will continue to explore new, effective methods of information dissemination to secondary schools and institutions of higher education. Furthermore, DRS will continue to consult with state and local

education officials regarding the use of newsletters and registration packets to inform students and their families about DRS services.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 4

DRS agrees with the Council's recommendation to continue to strengthen the link between the agency and the public school system, as this link is considered vital to the continued referral of students with disabilities. DRS continues to maintain a strong connection and working relationship with the West Virginia Department of Education, as well as the county—level Boards of Education. The agency has updated its Memorandums of Understanding with the WV Department of Education and all 55 County Boards of Education to reflect changes concerning Section 511 and pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). With the implementation of WIOA, DRS has increased collaborative efforts with school staff at the state and local level, particularly regarding the provision of pre—employment transition services to high school students with disabilities beginning in the tenth grade.

Since 2015, DRS has partnered with the WV Department of Education for Graduation 20/20, aimed at increasing the high school graduation rates of students with disabilities. In 2016, DRS Counselors, LEA staff, and Regional Educational Service Agency staff participated in multiple cross-training events to learn about pre-ETS, and to develop ideas for collaborative provision. Existing projects and programs in the state were highlighted, some of which were later duplicated in other areas. DRS Counselors joined local Graduation 20/20 teams across the state; Pre-ETS activities were coordinated and used as a strategy to not only promote graduation, but also encourage competitive, integrated employment for all students with disabilities.

In consultation with DRS, the WV Office of Special Education amended its policies to demonstrate compliance with WIOA Section 511, and include pre-ETS on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Additionally, the WV Department of Education plans to reduce the age at which Transition must be addressed on the IEP from 16 to 14 by the year 2019. Therefore, education and VR partners demonstrate alignment of not only WIOA and IDEA regulations, but also a shared vision of all students with disabilities offered the same transition service opportunities. After the implementation of the new policies, DRS and WV Department of Education staff conducted cross-trainings across the state. Those in attendance were County Special Education Directors, teachers, principals, IEP Specialists, and case managers. Staff were instructed on how to involve DRS Counselors in the coordination and provision of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities through the Transition Services Planner. Additionally, staff were instructed on how and when to use and distribute other transition materials for the tracking of and referral to pre-ETS and other transition services.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 5

DRS agrees that driving and transportation in general are often a barrier to employment for West Virginians with disabilities of all ages. DRS continues to seek solutions to transportation issues and maintains this as an agency goal and priority. DRS will continue to make sure that consumers are aware of these options and continue to identify targeted solutions to the varied transportation issues for West Virginians with disabilities, focusing specifically on individualized transportation solutions. During the initial phase of the vocational rehabilitation process, DRS counselors discuss transportation—related issues with consumers. Counselors work with consumers to address and resolve any identified disability—related employment

barriers; services to circumvent barriers are included in Individualized Plans for Employment and may include transportation services.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 6

DRS agrees with the issues raised by the SRC regarding the potential increase in the number of consumers having drug and/or alcohol related issues. In addition to the implementation of a Behavioral Health and Correction Specialist at the state level, DRS has been proactive in this area in recent years by providing training to counselors. Training has occurred at the State Training Conference in the past and will continue to take place at future conferences and/or training events, as appropriate. This training will assist counselors in enhancing their service provision to individuals with addiction by providing an overview of the disease of addiction and an examination of historic, current, and future treatment modalities.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 7

DRS agrees with the SRC about the importance of working with organizations and individuals with behavioral health issues and previous incarcerations, including individuals in juvenile detention programs. As mentioned, the agency has implemented a Behavioral Health and Corrections Specialist to focus on outreach and comprehensive service provision to these individuals. The specialist will continue to develop and maintain working relationships with related national and state organizations, assist in the training of counselors in these specialized areas, and ensure that the agency is providing quality and timely services to these individuals. In PYs 2016-2017, DRS has worked with many agencies and organizations relating to behavioral health and corrections including the WV Division of Corrections, the Office of Institutional Education Programs, the WV Bureau for Medical Services, the WV Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities, the Governor's Summit on Alcohol and Drug Use in Higher Education, the WV Behavioral Health Planning Council, and the WV Division of Juvenile Services.

#### DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 8

DRS agrees that the Annual State Training Conference is extremely valuable for agency staff members. The conference provides expert speakers, training sessions, and networking opportunities for field staff from across the state. Additionally, it is an enriching experience for staff members to meet others from across the state. The conference promotes cohesiveness among VR staff, as well as promoting team building, in order to serve consumers with disabilities statewide. Due to budget constraints, the Annual State Training Conference will only be held when funding is available. However, the agency will continue to provide training sessions and networking opportunities to staff members through the Quality Assurance Unit and District meetings, as appropriate.

### **3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.**

The agency is basically in agreement with the input and recommendations provided by the SRC. Please see the previous section for the full DRS responses to the SRC input and recommendations.

### **b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness**



When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

**1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;**

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

**2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

**3. All State plan requirements will apply**

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

**c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

**1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) maintains cooperation and coordination with various agencies and entities. This section describes DRS association with agencies or entities that are not in the statewide workforce development system, education officials, private non—profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, and supported employment and extended services providers for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

DRS continues relationships with many agencies and organizations that are not in the statewide workforce development system and whose functions, in some capacity, involve the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. The association with other organizations occurs with varying degrees of involvement depending upon joint initiatives that may be planned and/or that may occur within any given year. Generally, DRS representatives may be included in advisory functions for other agencies, as are other agencies with the strategic planning that occurs within DRS. Some examples include:

—A DRS representative is actively involved with the West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council in the monitoring and oversight of behavioral health services in the state. The DRS representative participates in quarterly Council meetings and serves on various sub—committees.

—DRS representatives participate with the West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council. DRS maintains a close working relationship with the staff and members of this Council and has provided support and received effective feedback for its work.

—DRS is represented on the State’s Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT), a group (including agencies not under the state workforce development system) centered around WorkForce WV to provide on—going attention to addressing issues that will build and continually improve the statewide Workforce Development System (WDS). The team is the single State—level interagency group for addressing issues or concerns regarding building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of the overall WDS in WV. DRS participates in regular, monthly meetings of the ICT, and is one of the signatories of the ICT Memorandum of Understanding, which is drafted annually. The ICT membership includes:

—WorkForce WV — WV Employment Service

—Bureau of Senior Services — State Unit on Aging

—Council for Community and Technical College

—Department of Education — Adult Education and Literacy Activities, Postsecondary Vocational Education, and Office of Institutional Programs

—Department of Education and the Arts — Division of Rehabilitation Services

—Department of Health and Human Resources — Bureau of Children and Families, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Food Stamp Employment and Training

—Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety — Division of Corrections

—Development Office — Community Development Division and Business Industry Development

—DRS has a good working relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at the district level, which allows direct referrals of appropriate veterans from VA facilities to its rehabilitation technology unit for assistive technology and rehabilitation engineering services. Furthermore, DRS maintains liaisons for all VA offices in WV.

## **2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

With respect to state programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS has a memorandum of understanding with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED). The purpose of this MOU is to delineate the working relationship between DRS and the CED in order to provide effective services to individuals with disabilities, ensuring statewide coverage of assistive technology needs.

## **3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

Although DRS does not maintain a formal agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development, it provides

rehabilitation services as necessary to eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers with disabilities. Another available resource is the WV AgrAbility Project, a USDA—funded program established to assist farmers and farm families who need to find ways to accommodate their disabilities in order to remain active in agriculture.

#### **4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

DRS works with a variety of non—educational agencies serving out—of—school youth. The primary coordinated activities serving this population are with WIOA partners — WorkForce WV and the regional workforce development boards. DRS strives to coordinate referrals and services to eligible out—of—school youth served by the WIOA youth programs that are overseen by WorkForce WV and the regional workforce development boards. These partnerships allow for improved service delivery through the blending of resources and expertise among the agencies. For example, sharing costs allows DRS and other agencies to enhance outreach efforts, serve increased numbers of out—of—school youth, and improve outcomes for participants.

In addition to DRS' reliance on WIOA partners in serving out—of—school youth, the agency continues to use community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that have become a DRS—acknowledged vendor, to support the needs of this population across the state.

DRS also maintains communication and works with other non—educational agencies that serve out—of—school youth in order to introduce and provide VR services. These agencies include Youth Reporting Centers under the WV Division of Juvenile Services and Peer Support Centers, funded by the WV Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities. Youth Reporting Centers are community—based centers provide intervention programs for at—risk youth and also provide reintegration services for youth returning to the community. The Peer Support Centers provide a variety of support services for qualifying youth with behavioral health conditions.

#### **5. State use contracting programs.**

West Virginia's State Use Program was created by the legislature in 1984 and strengthened in 1989. The program allows employment opportunities to be created for citizens with disabilities through nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Programs. The State Use Law allows these programs and their clients to produce commodities and perform services for various state agencies without requiring competitive bidding. Prices charged for these special commodities and services are established by the governor—appointed Committee for the Purchase of Commodities and Services from the Handicapped.

The Governor's Committee consists of six (6) members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member is selected by the Governor to serve as chairperson. Members represent the following:

- a private citizen who is conversant with the problems incidental to the employment of persons with disabilities
- a representative of a producing nonprofit workshop
- a representative of the Division of Rehabilitation Services
- a representative of the Department of Administration who is knowledgeable in the purchasing requirements of the state

—a representative of private business who is knowledgeable in the activities involved in the sale of commodities or services to governmental entities, and

—a representative of organized labor who is knowledgeable in matters relating to employment of people with disabilities.

Members serve two year terms. There is also an ex—officio, non—voting member of the committee who is appointed by the Director of the Purchasing Division. This person serves as the Executive Secretary. There are no geographical or political party constraints on who may be appointed.

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with significant disabilities. As of November 2015, there are 68 DRS—acknowledged parent company CRPs in West Virginia located at 97 service sites. Many of these CRPs participate in state use contracting programs. DRS maintains working relationships with non—profit CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community—based assessment, and/or work skills assessment. CRPs also provide employment readiness services such as life skills and work adjustment, job site training, and extended employment assessment. While respecting freedom of choice, DRS encourages work center programs to expand community—based programs for these individuals. Any CRP meeting the DRS acknowledgment process will be permitted under a written Vendor Acknowledgment to bill for services provided to DRS consumers. In order to become a DRS—acknowledged vendor, an applicant must request, complete, and return a Vendor Acknowledgment Packet. Upon receipt of the completed packet, a recommendation to acknowledge or not acknowledge will be made to the DRS Director.

The Vendor Acknowledgment Packet contains an application for Vendor Acknowledgment to provide supported employment services, an annual data summary that provides the agency’s name, address, contact information, a checklist of those DRS services they will be providing, and a Vendor Acknowledgment form addressing conditions of and payment for services rendered to DRS consumers.

A signed Vendor Acknowledgment indicates that the vendor agrees to follow conditions set forth regarding standards, anti—discrimination, indemnification, and conditions/standards of operation. The acknowledgment is good for one year.

#### **d. Coordination with Education Officials**

Describe:

##### **1. DSU's plans**

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has cooperative agreements with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE) Office of Special Programs, the WVDOE Division of Technical and Adult Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, local education agencies, and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the

Blind. The cooperative agreements between DRS and WVDOE, both at the state and the local levels, assure that each student with a disability in the state who needs special education, vocational education, and/or vocational rehabilitation services is identified and that the appropriate services, including pre—employment transition services, are made available to the individual. The cooperative agreements cover:

1. Determination of DRS responsibility;
2. Student/consumer referrals;
3. Joint development of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE);
4. Services;
5. Coordinated planning and payment of services;
6. Confidentiality of information;
7. Subminimum wage employment (per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act);
8. Local agreements;
9. General supervision; and
10. Dispute resolution.

Prior to the 2015—2016 school year, the DRS director sent letters to each high school principal and special education director in West Virginia. The letter detailed changes in vocational rehabilitation service provision to high school students with disabilities since the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The most significant change relates to providing pre—employment transition services to high school students with disabilities. The letter described these services and the further collaboration between DRS and school staff to better serve students with disabilities.

DRS offices are located in some of the state’s largest schools. Additionally, counselors visit every high school in the state to initiate rehabilitation services needed for transition from school to work. This allows the counselor to develop a collaborative relationship and assist the student in identifying goals, services, and service providers related to employment options prior to transition. In FY 2015, DRS re—structured its counselor assignments to increase service availability to students with disabilities. There are now 44 rehabilitation counselors assigned to work with the state’s 55 local education agencies and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. DRS’ school counselors specialize in providing pre—employment transition services (PETS) to students with disabilities. Of these 44 PETS counselors, 43 work solely with high school students and have no other assignments. Expected benefits include increased counselor presence in schools, increased IEP meeting attendance, increased provision of PETS, and an increase in outreach and awareness of VR services to high school students with disabilities.

School (PETS) rehabilitation counselors also are invited to participate in IEP meetings. During these meetings the counselor describes DRS services, policies, and procedures as appropriate. The DRS counselor determines the student’s eligibility and order of selection category utilizing information generated from the school, the student, and DRS. Prior to or shortly after the

student's IEP transition meeting occurs, IPE development begins so both the student and counselor have an idea of what rehabilitation services will be necessary to meet the student's vocational goal. Therefore, if the student needs additional training or assessment prior to vocational goal determination, this information is already collected so that planned rehabilitation services may begin. IPE development and approval for students with disabilities, including those able to be served if DRS is on an order of selection, will begin as early as appropriate during the transition process, but before the student, determined to be eligible, leaves the school setting.

In 2016, DRS will partner with Community Access, Incorporated to implement a program to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program will address the five mandated PETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the Student Transition to Employment (STEP) program. The project will assist school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community—based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project will help level the playing field between resource—rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders will be a component of the project. A concerted effort will be made to include historically under—served groups including students in the foster care system, those returning from out—of—state placements, and those students on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) track. The project has the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community—based work exploration programs;
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers;
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WVDOE staff; and
4. To develop a statewide cross—sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

DRS also assists WVDOE with Graduation 20/20, a West Virginia initiative that uses a data driven intervention framework developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC—SD) to address issues that have negatively impacted school completion. Graduation 20/20 utilizes the innovation configuration on evidence—based transition practices and predictors of post school success to guide professional learning which was published by the Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center. The program, using tools from NDPC—SD and CEEDAR, trains local school—based teams and team leaders to diagnose the causes of dropout and develop site—specific improvement plans and strategies.

Information about the DRS school program is widely disseminated to education professionals, as well as students and their parents. An updated fact sheet and new brochure explaining DRS transition services is available. DRS has negotiated an agreement with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission for its consumers who attend in—state public colleges and universities. The agreement describes the financial responsibility of DRS and the appropriate public institution of higher education, provides procedures to resolve interagency disputes, and coordinates policies and procedures to ensure timely delivery of vocational rehabilitation

services. To better serve individuals in post—secondary school, DRS has liaisons assigned to 43 post—secondary community/technical colleges, 4—year colleges, and universities across the state.

DRS also coordinates with the WVDOE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, a WIOA core partner, to better serve individuals receiving adult education. The agencies have a formal MOU and collaborate at the state and local level. The MOU includes screening students for potential disabilities, including learning disabilities, and the collaboration between WVDOE and DRS to provide necessary accommodations (e.g., assistive technology, interpreters) for eligible individuals. DRS will evaluate the disability or disabilities and provide specific recommendations regarding testing accommodations, recommendations for instructional accommodations and recommendations for job accommodations. If it is found that the student requires assistive technology (which includes information technology products such as software application, operating systems, web—based information applications, web accessibility, video equipment, multimedia products, and office equipment) then WVDOE and DRS will share, as appropriate, the cost for this technology. If it is determined that the person has a hearing disability and it is deemed necessary that an interpreter, CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation), note—taker, or other appropriate accommodations be provided, then WVDOE and DRS will share the cost. WVDOE will only hire qualified interpreters who are registered through the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

While the MOU covers the partnership statewide, there are numerous collaborative activities at the local level. DRS and Adult Education are collaborating with a university to assist adult education students in transitioning to post—secondary education through a curriculum that teaches time management, a basic math refresher, and any other identified needs for individuals with disabilities returning to post—secondary education. DRS, WorkForce WV, and Adult Education also collaborate in workforce development region 2 as part of WIOA One—Stop Management Partner meetings with local development groups to better identify and facilitate needed services for the local area. In DRS Districts 4 and 6, DRS has partnered with Adult Education to increase efforts to reach potential VR consumers being served by Adult Education and the Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success (SPOKES) program. SPOKES was created by WV Adult Education under a contract between (a) the WVDOE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development and (b) the WV Department of Health and Human Resources, in collaboration with the Workforce Development Boards.

## **2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

### **A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

The formal agreement includes the following:

#### **DETERMINATION OF AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

Education, through participation in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), has assured the United States Department of Education (USDE) that it has established general

supervisory authority over all education programs administered within the State. General supervisory authority means that:

1. All programs serving eligible students meet all requirements of IDEA 2004;
2. All programs serving eligible students within the state must meet State standards; and
3. Funds which support services to eligible school age students with disabilities, including state and local education funds and funds under Title V, Title VI, Title IX, and Title XX of the Social Security Act, will continue to provide any and all services provided by these funds prior to the passage of IDEA 2004; and no program will alter eligibility requirements for participating in federal, state, and local programs in order to increase the financial responsibility of agencies receiving IDEA 2004 funds. Part B of IDEA does not limit the responsibility of agencies other than educational agencies for providing for and paying for some or all of the costs of a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities in the State.

Education has responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. Students with disabilities shall have equal access to services, which are normally provided by public schools for non—disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

Transition services are defined in IDEA 2004 as a coordinated set of activities for a student with an exceptionality that are designed within a results—oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post—school activities, including post—secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

For students with disabilities ages 16 to 21, who are preparing to graduate or have exited school, the responsibility for vocational services rests with Rehabilitation. This provision also applies to all other school age students who meet eligibility requirements for Rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation will provide services, which are legally the responsibility of Rehabilitation for those individuals determined to be eligible for services.

Eligibility for Rehabilitation services is determined by the following criteria:

- An individual must have a physical or mental impairment which, for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment for employment; and
- The individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition services. The IEP and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives, and planned services for effective and successful transition to post—school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.



IDEA 2004 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, require the individual's participation in the development of the IEP and IPE, respectively, and emphasize informed choice. Identification of transition services for the IEP is focused on a coordinated set of activities which considers the student's preferences and interests. Likewise, the IPE is developed with the assistance of a rehabilitation counselor who guides the individual in identifying goals through reviewing assessments, individual strengths, resources, interests, and needs. Education must provide both awareness and exploration activities in the areas of living, learning, and work to support decisions about post school outcomes. This interagency cooperation assures seamless transition services that prepare the student to pursue adult goals.

Rehabilitation and Education will assist students and parents in understanding the differences of entitlement services provided by Education and eligibility for Rehabilitation services. Every student is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA 2004. The provision of Rehabilitation services is offered to individuals with disabilities based on a determination of their eligibility as previously defined. The participation of Rehabilitation counselors in the IEP process will assist students and parents in understanding the differences and facilitate the provision of educational and rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation and Education will utilize a variety of activities to provide outreach, both jointly and individually, for eligible students with IEPs, students with 504 plans, and others with disabilities not currently receiving services. Activities may include participation in career/job fairs, presentations to students and parents, website links, brochures, surveys, conferencing between Rehabilitation School Counselors and School Counselors, and regularly scheduled contact with individual schools. Professional development activities between Education and Rehabilitation shall be provided and facilitated by state staff, including support of regional transition teams, participating in topic specific learning events and book studies.

**B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

The formal agreement includes the following:

**DETERMINATION OF AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

Education, through participation in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), has assured the United States Department of Education (USDE) that it has established general supervisory authority over all education programs administered within the State. General supervisory authority means that:

1. All programs serving eligible students meet all requirements of IDEA 2004;
2. All programs serving eligible students within the state must meet State standards; and
3. Funds which support services to eligible school age students with disabilities, including state and local education funds and funds under Title V, Title VI, Title IX, and Title XX of the Social Security Act, will continue to provide any and all services provided by these funds prior to the passage of IDEA 2004; and no program will alter eligibility requirements for participating in federal, state, and local programs in order to increase the financial responsibility of agencies receiving IDEA 2004 funds. Part B of IDEA does not limit the responsibility of agencies other

than educational agencies for providing for and paying for some or all of the costs of a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities in the State.

Education has responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. Students with disabilities shall have equal access to services, which are normally provided by public schools for non—disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

Transition services are defined in IDEA 2004 as a coordinated set of activities for a student with an exceptionality that are designed within a results—oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post—school activities, including post—secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

For students with disabilities ages 16 to 21, who are preparing to graduate or have exited school, the responsibility for vocational services rests with Rehabilitation. This provision also applies to all other school age students who meet eligibility requirements for Rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation will provide services, which are legally the responsibility of Rehabilitation for those individuals determined to be eligible for services.

Eligibility for Rehabilitation services is determined by the following criteria:

- An individual must have a physical or mental impairment which, for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment for employment; and
- The individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition services. The IEP and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives, and planned services for effective and successful transition to post—school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.

IDEA 2004 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, require the individual's participation in the development of the IEP and IPE, respectively, and emphasize informed choice. Identification of transition services for the IEP is focused on a coordinated set of activities which considers the student's preferences and interests. Likewise, the IPE is developed with the assistance of a rehabilitation counselor who guides the individual in identifying goals through reviewing assessments, individual strengths, resources, interests, and needs. Education must provide both awareness and exploration activities in the areas of living, learning, and work to support decisions about post school outcomes. This interagency cooperation assures seamless transition services that prepare the student to pursue adult goals.

Rehabilitation and Education will assist students and parents in understanding the differences of entitlement services provided by Education and eligibility for Rehabilitation services. Every student is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA 2004. The

provision of Rehabilitation services is offered to individuals with disabilities based on a determination of their eligibility as previously defined. The participation of Rehabilitation counselors in the IEP process will assist students and parents in understanding the differences and facilitate the provision of educational and rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation and Education will utilize a variety of activities to provide outreach, both jointly and individually, for eligible students with IEPs, students with 504 plans, and others with disabilities not currently receiving services. Activities may include participation in career/job fairs, presentations to students and parents, website links, brochures, surveys, conferencing between Rehabilitation School Counselors and School Counselors, and regularly scheduled contact with individual schools. Professional development activities between Education and Rehabilitation shall be provided and facilitated by state staff, including support of regional transition teams, participating in topic specific learning events and book studies.

**C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

The formal agreement includes the following:

**DETERMINATION OF AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY**

Education, through participation in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), has assured the United States Department of Education (USDE) that it has established general supervisory authority over all education programs administered within the State. General supervisory authority means that:

1. All programs serving eligible students meet all requirements of IDEA 2004;
2. All programs serving eligible students within the state must meet State standards; and
3. Funds which support services to eligible school age students with disabilities, including state and local education funds and funds under Title V, Title VI, Title IX, and Title XX of the Social Security Act, will continue to provide any and all services provided by these funds prior to the passage of IDEA 2004; and no program will alter eligibility requirements for participating in federal, state, and local programs in order to increase the financial responsibility of agencies receiving IDEA 2004 funds. Part B of IDEA does not limit the responsibility of agencies other than educational agencies for providing for and paying for some or all of the costs of a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities in the State.

Education has responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. Students with disabilities shall have equal access to services, which are normally provided by public schools for non—disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

Transition services are defined in IDEA 2004 as a coordinated set of activities for a student with an exceptionality that are designed within a results—oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post—school activities, including post—secondary education, vocational education, integrated

employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

For students with disabilities ages 16 to 21, who are preparing to graduate or have exited school, the responsibility for vocational services rests with Rehabilitation. This provision also applies to all other school age students who meet eligibility requirements for Rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation will provide services, which are legally the responsibility of Rehabilitation for those individuals determined to be eligible for services.

Eligibility for Rehabilitation services is determined by the following criteria:

—An individual must have a physical or mental impairment which, for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment for employment; and

—The individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition services. The IEP and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives, and planned services for effective and successful transition to post—school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.

IDEA 2004 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, require the individual's participation in the development of the IEP and IPE, respectively, and emphasize informed choice. Identification of transition services for the IEP is focused on a coordinated set of activities which considers the student's preferences and interests. Likewise, the IPE is developed with the assistance of a rehabilitation counselor who guides the individual in identifying goals through reviewing assessments, individual strengths, resources, interests, and needs. Education must provide both awareness and exploration activities in the areas of living, learning, and work to support decisions about post school outcomes. This interagency cooperation assures seamless transition services that prepare the student to pursue adult goals.

Rehabilitation and Education will assist students and parents in understanding the differences of entitlement services provided by Education and eligibility for Rehabilitation services. Every student is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA 2004. The provision of Rehabilitation services is offered to individuals with disabilities based on a determination of their eligibility as previously defined. The participation of Rehabilitation counselors in the IEP process will assist students and parents in understanding the differences and facilitate the provision of educational and rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation and Education will utilize a variety of activities to provide outreach, both jointly and individually, for eligible students with IEPs, students with 504 plans, and others with disabilities not currently receiving services. Activities may include participation in career/job fairs, presentations to students and parents, website links, brochures, surveys, conferencing between Rehabilitation School Counselors and School Counselors, and regularly scheduled contact with individual schools. Professional development activities between Education and Rehabilitation shall be provided and facilitated by state staff, including support of regional transition teams, participating in topic specific learning events and book studies.

**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATION**

Education assumes responsibility for all expenses incurred in the provision of special education and related services to achieve FAPE when those services, including assistive technology devices and services, are necessary for the student's educational program or course of study, as well as participation in school activities and during the pendency of any interagency dispute.

**Private Insurance Funds:** With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible student under this part, Education may access a parent's private insurance only if the parent provides informed consent consistent with federal regulations pursuant to IDEA 2004. Each time Education proposes to access the parent's private insurance, it must:

1. Obtain written parental consent; and
2. Inform the parent that their refusal to permit the district to access the private insurance does not relieve the district of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost.

**Public Insurance Funds:** Education may use the Medicaid or other public insurance benefits programs in which a student participates to provide or pay for services required. With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible student under this part, Education may not:

1. Require parents to sign up for or enroll in public benefits or insurance programs in order for their child to receive FAPE under IDEA regulations;
2. Require parents to incur an out-of-pocket expense, such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay incurred in filing a claim for services provided pursuant to this part, but may pay the cost that the parent otherwise would be required to pay; and
3. Use a student's benefits under a public benefits or insurance program if that use would (a) decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit; (b) result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and that are required for the child outside of the time the child is in school; (c) increase premiums or lead to the discontinuation of benefits or insurance; or (d) risk loss of eligibility for home and community-based waivers, based on aggregate health-related expenditures.

To access a student's public insurance (e.g., Medicaid reimbursement), the district must obtain and maintain documentation of parent/adult student consent specifying the records to be disclosed; the services to be provided; and the extent, frequency, and duration of the services. The district must also obtain parent/adult student consent if billable services (i.e., type, amount, and/or duration) are revised at any time. The parents must be informed that their refusal to consent to the release of information does not relieve the district of its responsibility to ensure that all services are provided at no cost to the parents.

If Education is unable to obtain parental consent to use the parent's private insurance, or public benefits or insurance when the parents would incur a cost for a service specified on their child's IEP, the district may use Part B funds to pay for services to ensure FAPE. To avoid financial cost to parents who otherwise would consent to use private insurance or public benefits or insurance if the parent would incur a cost, the district may use its Part B funds to pay the cost the parents otherwise would have to pay to use the parents' benefits insurance (e.g., the deductible or co-pay amounts).

Proceeds from public or private insurance will not be treated as program income as pursuant to 34 CFR §80.25(2). If a district spends reimbursements from Federal funds (e.g., Medicaid) for services under this part, those funds will not be considered "State or local" funds for purposes of the maintenance of effort provisions of Part B of IDEA 2004.

#### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation may be responsible for services that occur outside of the school environment that are vocationally oriented and are specifically intended to prepare the student for post—secondary training or work. Rehabilitation is not responsible for payment of any service that has not been directly agreed to during the development of a student's IEP and is not included as a service on a student's IPE for Rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation is not responsible for career development activities that are part of a School to Work initiative within the school system. The responsibility for implementing the requirements of Department of Education Policy 2510 remains with the school system.

The transference to the student of assistive technology devices that have been purchased by the Local Education Agency (LEA) will occur consistent with the surplus equipment policies and regulations in existence within each LEA. After the student has exited the school system, Rehabilitation may reimburse the LEA at a rate in accordance with the surplus equipment policy, dependent upon the student's continued need or desire for the equipment, the condition of the equipment, and its future usefulness.

#### **D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**

At present, DRS has representation in all high schools in all 55 WV counties. DRS counselors/staff regularly communicate with local school personnel to promote the awareness and usage of VR services. When permitted, DRS school counselors maintain an office in high schools to strengthen the DRS resolve to serve students with disabilities. DRS continually sponsors grants and activities to educate all stakeholders in high schools about VR services and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

The cooperative agreement includes references that each student with a disability in the state who needs special education and/or vocational rehabilitation services should be promptly identified and the appropriate transition services are made available to the individual.

Education has responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. Students with disabilities shall have equal access to services, which are normally provided by public schools for non—disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition services. The IEP and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives, and planned services for effective and successful transition to post—school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.

## **e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

### **Cooperative Agreements with Private Non—Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers**

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to individuals with significant disabilities. As of November 2015, there are 68 DRS—acknowledged parent company CRPs in West Virginia located at 97 service sites. There are also an additional 29 Student Transition to Employment Project vendors that focus on serving students with disabilities.

DRS maintains working relationships with non—profit CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community—based assessment, and/or work skills assessment. CRPs also provide employment readiness services such as life skills and work adjustment, job site training, and extended employment assessment. While respecting freedom of choice, DRS encourages work center programs to expand community—based programs for these individuals.

Any CRP meeting the DRS acknowledgment process will be permitted under a written Vendor Acknowledgment to bill for services provided to DRS consumers. In order to become a DRS—acknowledged vendor, an applicant must request, complete, and return a Vendor Acknowledgment Packet. Upon receipt of the completed packet, a recommendation to acknowledge or not acknowledge will be made to the DRS Director.

The Vendor Acknowledgment Packet contains an application for Vendor Acknowledgment to provide supported employment services, an annual data summary that provides the agency’s name, address, contact information, a checklist of those DRS services they will be providing, and a Vendor Acknowledgment form addressing conditions of and payment for services rendered to DRS consumers.

A signed Vendor Acknowledgment indicates that the vendor agrees to follow conditions set forth regarding standards, anti—discrimination, indemnification, and conditions/standards of operation. The acknowledgment is good for one year.

CRPs also provide services, including pre—employment transition services (PETS), to students with disabilities. CRPs can also supplement work exploration activities and provide opportunities for VR consumers, especially students, statewide. DRS also utilizes school personnel as CRP vendors as part of the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP). These teacher/vendors work with students outside of school hours to provide them with CRP services such as community based assessment, work skills assessment, work adjustment training, job placement, and job coaching. The students benefit from working with a trusted adult who is already familiar with the student’s strengths and weaknesses. This eliminates the need for new and/or additional assessment by the service provider. Furthermore, this program allows DRS to ensure services are available in rural areas. DRS has made it an agency goal and priority to expand CRP service availability.

## **f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) continues to concentrate efforts on educating interested parties regarding the process of becoming a non—traditional provider source for supported employment services. A variety of supported employment provider choices are needed, particularly due to the rural nature of the state.

DRS continues to focus on providing technical assistance and coordinating training for vendors of supported employment services, DRS staff members, and staff members of other public and private agencies. DRS keeps current on changes and advances in supported employment through documented research, literature, and reviews of best practices.

Other agencies with which DRS collaborates for the provision of time—limited supported employment services are:

1. West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council funds;
2. West Virginia Title XIX—Home and Community—Based Waiver Program for intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) recipients; and
3. Social Security Administration work incentives programs.

In implementing school—to—work transition services for individuals exiting the school system, DRS also collaborates with family resource networks.

Through a combined effort with other disability organizations, \$100,000 was appropriated by the West Virginia Legislature for supported employment follow—along services (extended supported employment services). DRS serves as the fiscal agent for these funds. DRS has created program guidelines governing the use of state—appropriated funds for extended services under the supported employment program created by state statute in 1993. The sole use of the state funds attached to this program is to provide extended services for individuals not eligible from any other funding source. All providers of supported employment services may access these funds for individuals who are eligible under the guidelines. At the end of FY 2015, DRS had sponsored 67 individuals in the extended supported employment program so they could maintain and retain their jobs within the community. This figure represents the cooperative efforts of 13 CRPs.

Agreements between DRS and all acknowledged providers of supported employment services document collaboration for extended services. Each agreement details the time—limited and extended services that DRS will secure through the vendor.

Extended services specified in the agreement will be provided by the vendor and include, at minimum, monitoring two hours per month (no more than eight) at the job site of each individual unless the individual can be better served through off—site monitoring. If off—site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, it must, at a minimum, consist of two hours per month with the individual and at least one contact with the employer during those hours. The vendor also agrees



to provide other support services as needed and specified in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

In addition to the basic vendor agreement identifying the time—limited and extended services to be mutually provided by DRS and the vendor, DRS has attempted to collaborate with other agencies and organizations to provide funding for extended services.

These sources of extended supported employment services are:

1. West Virginia Title XIX—Homes and Community—Based Waiver Program for I/DD recipients;
2. DRS program funds for persons receiving extended services at DRS—acknowledged CRP work centers; and
3. Social Security Administration programs such as Impairment Related Work Experience and Plan for Achieving Self Support for approved Social Security recipients.

DRS continues its efforts to expand the number of acknowledged vendors of supported employment services, particularly in areas underserved and unserved within the current system. As of November 2015, the number of supported employment service providers was 68, an increase of 30 providers since FY 2006.

## **g. Coordination with Employers**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

### **1. VR services; and**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) believes that coordination with employers is integral to improving the workforce development system. Gathering/collecting information about employer needs, which will also be shared with other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, allows DRS to provide training and other services to vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers in order to meet business needs and expectations of current and future workers. To optimize its coordination with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for consumers with disabilities, DRS takes a multi—faceted approach. DRS utilizes its own personnel in addition to partnering with WorkForce West Virginia to coordinate with employers across the state. Additionally, DRS has specific programs/strategies to identify employment and career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities, including the provision of pre—employment transition services. The strategies that DRS uses are described below.

DRS has an in—house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability—related information, services, and pre—screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 12 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability—related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. In the previous fiscal year, employment

specialists contacted 1,575 employers, attended 25 job fairs, coordinated with WorkForce WV, participated in rapid response events, attended local workforce development board (WDB; formerly known as workforce investment board, or WIB) meetings, and provided Job Clubs for students with disabilities.

Sample of services provided to employers:

- Pre—screened qualified applicants to reduce employers’ cost of recruitment and hiring.
- Consultation, recommendation, and training for retention of employees who acquire a disability.
- Technical assistance on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
- Accessibility options and solutions.
- Employer on—site disability awareness training.
- Information on tax credits available to employers.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists contact employers to identify current and future job openings. To complement this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

- Staffing services;
- Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities;
- Financial incentives;
- Accessibility assessments;
- Accommodating employees with disabilities;
- Basic disability etiquette;
- Attitudinal barriers;
- Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Locating a DRS office; and
- Where to find additional resources.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS—employer interaction with employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job—ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through

positive working relationships, 19 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

DRS also coordinates with employers through participation and membership in various community and regional organizations. These activities range from employer—specific organizations to public—private partnerships and allow DRS to better understand the needs of employers while jointly developing employment—related activities. Some of these partnerships include:

—Regional WDBs;

—Beckley—Raleigh Chamber of Commerce;

—Fayette County Chamber of Commerce;

—Weirton Area Chamber of commerce;

—Employer engagement and worksite tours for VR consumers through partnerships with community colleges such as Mountwest and Bridge Valley; and

—Employer tours through partnerships with high school and adult vocational/technical centers including South Branch Career and Technical Center and James Rumsey Technical Institute.

To raise awareness of DRS' services available to employers and potential VR consumers, the agency engages in a statewide marketing campaign. To directly target business professionals, DRS has full—page advertisements in West Virginia Executive Magazine, West Virginia's premier business publication. The agency also purchases radio advertisements across the state. Several of these ads are specifically directed toward businesses and outline the previously detailed employer services that DRS can provide. DRS also sponsors community events to ensure awareness among the general public.

Another key strategy to coordinate with employers is through collaboration with WorkForce WV, a WIOA core partner. WorkForce WV is the state agency that oversees numerous U.S. Department of Labor programs. This partnership takes place at all levels, including local offices, regional workforce development boards, and state level Interagency Collaboration Team meetings. These partnerships have been of great benefit for West Virginians with disabilities seeking training and employment.

Because of the services it provides, WorkForce WV has the largest database of both job seekers and job openings in the state. DRS is able to tap into these resources to identify current employment opportunities for VR consumers, identify needs of employers across the state, and utilize detailed labor market information to assist individuals (including students) with disabilities in identifying future career opportunities. This allows VR consumers to identify potential employment opportunities and any training or other VR services that are required for the job. Additionally, job—ready VR consumers can create an account with WorkForce WV to match with employers seeking workers with specific skills they already possess.

## **2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

In addition to the previously—described activities, the Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career

exploration opportunities for students with disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

Employment specialist services, including PETS, provided to students with disabilities:

- POWER job shadowing program
- Transition Fairs
- Job Readiness Workshops
- Job Clubs
- Interviewing
- Resume Preparation
- Application Assistance
- Dressing for an Interview/Employment
- Job Retention and Good Work Habits
- Job search and employer contacts
- Assist students in locating employment opportunities and assisting with applying to openings
- Advocating on the student's behalf to employers when requested by the student

## **h. Interagency Cooperation**

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### **1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;**

DRS maintains an memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Medical Services (BMS), the state agency responsible for the State Medicaid plan under the title XIX of the Social Security Act; this is also known as the Waiver program. An advisory group for the program is constituted with the WV Developmental Disability Council (WVDDC). DRS has a position on the council. DRS and BMS interact as part of this advisory group through the WVDDC. The primary involvement of the XIX Medicaid Waiver program in fostering competitive, integrated employment outcomes through vocational rehabilitation is by mandating referral to DRS and providing ongoing support funding for those cases closed by DRS in Supported Employment. The WVDDC also advises

BMS on policy development and meeting unmet needs of those participating in the XIX Medicaid Waiver program.

In addition to interacting with XIX Medicaid Waiver staff as part of the WVDDC meetings, DRS participates in two subcommittees; Employment First and Medley Management. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for intellectually/developmentally disabled (IDD) individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the Bureau for Behavioral Health on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. These are often individuals that are also XIX Medicaid Waiver eligible. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

DRS counselors will, at the time of application, gather information regarding an individual's third party resources, including Medicaid. If it is determined that the individual receives Medicaid benefits, BMS will provide all Medicaid—covered services to the individual, regardless of that individual's continued status with DRS. If an individual is approved to receive services from DRS, and begins to receive Medicaid benefits at a later time, BMS will provide all Medicaid—covered services to the individual from that time forward.

Individuals receiving services from BMS will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BMS expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time. Similarly, DRS consumers who are Medicaid—eligible will be referred to BMS.

DRS also maintains an MOU with the Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities (BBHFF), the State agency with primary responsibility for providing services and supports for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. DRS interacts with both BBHFF and its subsidiary, DIDD.

DRS, BBHFF, and DIDD agree to interact in the following ways to facilitate delivery of services, including extended services, to individuals with the most significant disabilities: —The DIDD program manager and DRS will interact regularly as part of the WV Developmental Disability Council (WVDDC) meetings, as well as the Employment First and Medley Management committees. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for IDD individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the BBHFF on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

—The BBHFF administers several Customized Employment grants with vendors of DRS. BBHFF and DRS will jointly train the Community Rehabilitation Programs receiving these grants as well as DRS staff working with these programs.

—BBHFF and DRS will work together in mediating problems in cases being served jointly in the programs.

—DRS will meet monthly with BBHMF staff to review applicants for an Unmet Needs funding program to foster assistance to IDD individuals where traditional funding sources do not provide needed supports.

—Individuals receiving services from BBHMF or DIDD will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BBHMF or DIDD expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time.

In order to provide quality and timely vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with behavioral health conditions who qualify, DRS collaborates with the BBHMF and its partners. BBHMF is the federally designated Single State Authority for mental health and substance use disorders and operates under the auspices of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. The primary programs within BBHMF and their partners that DRS works with are as follows:

—The Office of Consumer Affairs and Community Outreach (CACO), is charged with providing collaborative support to the clinical section of the Office of Programs through the provision of legislative tracking, disaster coordination and response, development and operation of a Consumer Advisory Council, coordination of BBHMF training activities, researching and circulating information on evidence—based and emerging best practices, development of health promotion and wellness campaigns, researching and applying for high priority discretionary grants, and by providing a centralized response to requests for assistance and patient grievances. DRS maintains a relationship with this office and has worked together on anti—stigma campaigns, supporting recovery coaching and peer support, and training in the area of mental health first aid and medication assisted treatment.

—The Division of Adult Behavioral Health assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health and co—occurring needs of adults and transitional age youth, enabling them to live, learn, work, and participate actively in their communities. The Division establishes standards to ensure effective and culturally competent care to promote recovery. The Division sets policy, promotes self—determination, protects human rights, and supports mental health training and research. DRS maintains a relationship with this office and has teamed up with them on several efforts, such as having them present on “Behavioral Health Connections” at the DRS 2014 Statewide Training Conference, assisting them in the planning of their 2015 Integrated Behavioral Health Care Conference and exhibiting at that conference whereby information regarding DRS was disseminated to approximately 700 behavioral health professionals, and serving as a subject matter expert on their Clinical Adult Review Process (CARP), which looks at the needs of individuals transitioning out of state psychiatric facilities.

—The Division of Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health is the Single State Authority for Children’s Mental Health charged with monitoring and improving the children’s behavioral health service delivery system. The Division is responsible for overseeing the implementation and evaluation of the federal block grant. The Division works collaboratively across all child serving systems, at both the state and local level, to ensure access to quality behavioral health services and supports for children and adolescents with and/or at risk for serious emotional disturbances. The Division provides leadership and technical assistance to facilitate an effective system of care for children and their families. DRS continues a working relationship with this office and their partners and, for example, has been working with the Expanded School Mental

Health Steering Team Initiative. DRS has also worked together with The Family Advocacy, Support, & Training (FAST) program which is a statewide parent and youth network that engages families in the planning, management, and evaluation of their child's mental health treatment and service needs.

—The Division on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, an operating division of BBHFF within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, is charged in code with being the Single State Authority primarily responsible for prevention, control, treatment, rehabilitation, educational research, and planning for substance abuse related services. DRS cooperates with this office to share resources and circulate information that comes from attending the Governor's Regional Substance Abuse Task Force meetings, such as the WV Substance Abuse Services Directory and 844—HELP4WV, the first statewide 24—hour substance abuse call line.

—The Olmstead Coordinator is a part of the WV Department of Health & Human Resources & Office of the Inspector General. Olmstead v. L.C. (1999) is a landmark United States Supreme Court decision upholding the civil rights of people with disabilities (including those with behavioral health conditions that result in disability) to receive services and supports in the most integrated setting in the community. DRS is one of the required state agencies to participate in quarterly Olmstead Council meetings. Currently, the DRS Program Specialist for Behavioral Health and Corrections is the designated representative to communicate information regarding the agency's activities.

—The West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council (WVBHPC) is a unified voice that promotes wellness, recovery, and resiliency for all West Virginians. The primary purpose of the WVBHPC is to advocate for and evaluate the provision of community—based behavioral health services. BBHFF and DRS are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the council and attend quarterly meetings working together and with others to accomplish the goals of the WVBHPC.

## **2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and**

DRS maintains an memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Medical Services (BMS), the state agency responsible for the State Medicaid plan under the title XIX of the Social Security Act; this is also known as the Waiver program. An advisory group for the program is constituted with the WV Developmental Disability Council (WVDDC). DRS has a position on the council. DRS and BMS interact as part of this advisory group through the WVDDC. The primary involvement of the XIX Medicaid Waiver program in fostering competitive, integrated employment outcomes through vocational rehabilitation is by mandating referral to DRS and providing ongoing support funding for those cases closed by DRS in Supported Employment. The WVDDC also advises BMS on policy development and meeting unmet needs of those participating in the XIX Medicaid Waiver program.

In addition to interacting with XIX Medicaid Waiver staff as part of the WVDDC meetings, DRS participates in two subcommittees, Employment First and Medley Management. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for intellectually/developmentally disabled (IDD) individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management

committee provides oversight and advice to the Bureau for Behavioral Health on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. These are often individuals that are also XIX Medicaid Waiver eligible. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

### **3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.**

In addition to interacting with XIX Medicaid Waiver staff as part of the WVDDC meetings, DRS participates in two subcommittees, Employment First and Medley Management. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for intellectually/developmentally disabled (IDD) individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the Bureau for Behavioral Health on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. These are often individuals that are also XIX Medicaid Waiver eligible. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

DRS counselors will, at the time of application, gather information regarding an individual's third party resources, including Medicaid. If it is determined that the individual receives Medicaid benefits, BMS will provide all Medicaid—covered services to the individual, regardless of that individual's continued status with DRS. If an individual is approved to receive services from DRS, and begins to receive Medicaid benefits at a later time, BMS will provide all Medicaid—covered services to the individual from that time forward.

Individuals receiving services from BMS will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BMS expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time. Similarly, DRS consumers who are Medicaid—eligible will be referred to BMS.

DRS also maintains an MOU with the Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities (BBHFF), the State agency with primary responsibility for providing services and supports for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. DRS interacts with both BBHFF and its subsidiary, DIDD.

DRS, BBHFF, and DIDD agree to interact in the following ways to facilitate delivery of services, including extended services, to individuals with the most significant disabilities: —The DIDD program manager and DRS will interact regularly as part of the WV Developmental Disability Council (WVDDC) meetings, as well as the Employment First and Medley Management committees. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for IDD individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the BBHFF on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.



—The BBHHF administers several Customized Employment grants with vendors of DRS. BBHHF and DRS will jointly train the Community Rehabilitation Programs receiving these grants as well as DRS staff working with these programs.

—BBHHF and DRS will work together in mediating problems in cases being served jointly in the programs.

—DRS will meet monthly with BBHHF staff to review applicants for an Unmet Needs funding program to foster assistance to IDD individuals where traditional funding sources do not provide needed supports.

—Individuals receiving services from BBHHF or DIDD will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BBHHF or DIDD expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time.

In order to provide quality and timely vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with behavioral health conditions who qualify, DRS collaborates with the BBHHF and its partners. BBHHF is the federally designated Single State Authority for mental health and substance use disorders and operates under the auspices of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. The primary programs within BBHHF and their partners that DRS works with are as follows:

—The Office of Consumer Affairs and Community Outreach (CACO), is charged with providing collaborative support to the clinical section of the Office of Programs through the provision of legislative tracking, disaster coordination and response, development and operation of a Consumer Advisory Council, coordination of BBHHF training activities, researching and circulating information on evidence—based and emerging best practices, development of health promotion and wellness campaigns, researching and applying for high priority discretionary grants, and by providing a centralized response to requests for assistance and patient grievances. DRS maintains a relationship with this office and has worked together on anti—stigma campaigns, supporting recovery coaching and peer support, and training in the area of mental health first aid and medication assisted treatment.

—The Division of Adult Behavioral Health assures and provides access to services and supports to meet the mental health and co—occurring needs of adults and transitional age youth, enabling them to live, learn, work, and participate actively in their communities. The Division establishes standards to ensure effective and culturally competent care to promote recovery. The Division sets policy, promotes self—determination, protects human rights, and supports mental health training and research. DRS maintains a relationship with this office and has teamed up with them on several efforts such as having them present on “Behavioral Health Connections” at the DRS 2014 Statewide Training Conference, assisting them in the planning of their 2015 Integrated Behavioral Health Care Conference and exhibiting at that conference whereby information regarding DRS was disseminated to approximately 700 behavioral health professionals, and serving as a subject matter expert on their Clinical Adult Review Process (CARP), which looks at the needs of individuals transitioning out of state psychiatric facilities.

—The Division of Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health is the Single State Authority for Children’s Mental Health charged with monitoring and improving the children’s behavioral health service delivery system. The Division is responsible for overseeing the implementation

and evaluation of the federal block grant. The Division works collaboratively across all child serving systems, at both the state and local level, to ensure access to quality behavioral health services and supports for children and adolescents with and/or at risk for serious emotional disturbances. The Division provides leadership and technical assistance to facilitate an effective system of care for children and their families. DRS continues a working relationship with this office and their partners and for example has been working with the Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team Initiative. DRS has also worked together with The Family Advocacy, Support, & Training (FAST) program which is a statewide parent and youth network that engages families in the planning, management, and evaluation of their child's mental health treatment and service needs.

—The Division on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, an operating division of BBHMF within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, is charged in code with being the Single State Authority primarily responsible for prevention, control, treatment, rehabilitation, educational research, and planning for substance abuse related services. DRS cooperates with this office to share resources and circulate information that comes from attending the Governor's Regional Substance Abuse Task Force meetings, such as the WV Substance Abuse Services Directory and 844—HELP4WV, the first statewide 24—hour substance abuse call line.

—The Olmstead Coordinator is a part of the WV Department of Health & Human Resources & Office of the Inspector General. Olmstead v. L.C. (1999) is a landmark United States Supreme Court decision upholding the civil rights of people with disabilities (including those with behavioral health conditions that result in disability) to receive services and supports in the most integrated setting in the community. DRS is one of the required state agencies to participate in quarterly Olmstead Council meetings. Currently the DRS Program Specialist for Behavioral Health and Corrections is the designated representative to communicate information regarding the agency's activities.

—The West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council (WVBHPC) is a unified voice that promotes wellness, recovery, and resiliency for all West Virginians. The primary purpose of the WVBHPC is to advocate for and evaluate the provision of community—based behavioral health services. BBHMF and DRS are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the council and attend quarterly meetings working together and with others to accomplish the goals of the WVBHPC.

## **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

### **1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

#### **A. Qualified Personnel Needs.**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category; DRS is committed to providing a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) that complies with Section 101(a)(7)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and Section 721(a)(7)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. Members of the State Rehabilitation Council are afforded the opportunity to review and comment upon this entire section, particularly the DRS plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, DRS personnel standards, and staff development needs and activities.

Provisions of this section should assist in recruiting and retaining qualified staff members to ensure skilled personnel are available to provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, these endeavors will help ensure an improved level of competence and expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities, allowing them to reach employment.

The Human Resources Unit is primarily responsible for performing DRS personnel administration activities in keeping with guidance from the West Virginia Division of Personnel (WVDOP), Rehabilitation Services Administration, Social Security Administration, and other appropriate bodies. The DRS Staff Development Unit administers the in—service training grant program. The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit also works closely with the Field Services Unit to ensure quality and timely training for new field counselors and rehabilitation services associates (RSAs).

The following narrative describes the DRS CSPD and policies, procedures, and activities relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained for DRS operations.

#### DRS Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development Needs

Statistics and information utilized for personnel planning are maintained in several databases within the Human Resources Unit. Staffing and salary information is available from the State of West Virginia Financial Information Management System (FIMS) and wvOASIS. These databases allow DRS administrators to review salary, pay grade, job title, reporting unit, and personal employee information. Such information is available to DRS Assistant Directors and District Managers who use it for planning, hiring negotiations, and pay equity. Information about DRS retirees also may be obtained from these databases.

The Human Resources Senior Manager periodically (at least monthly) maintains and provides statistical data to the DRS Director. The data are a list of the number of individuals under various classifications who are employed by DRS in the provision of rehabilitation services. This includes a ratio of the number of counselors to the number of consumers served each year. DRS estimates the ratio of consumers served (13,551) to the number of counselors (102) will be 133 in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2017.

Each year the DRS Director receives a summary report that estimates and projects the number of such personnel that will be needed during the next five—year period. In November 2015, DRS had 102 counselors in various offices across the state. Of the 102 counselors, DRS had 64 Rehabilitation Counselors, 26 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, and 12 Certified Rehabilitation

Counselors. The DRS believes its existing counselors and field staff members are needed to provide services to consumers who are currently in the DRS system.

DRS had several unfilled positions as of November 2015: 12 Rehabilitation Counseling positions, 5 Senior Rehabilitation Counselor positions, and 8 Certified Rehabilitation Counselor positions. Each unfilled position is being used to expand the number of field counselors when needed.

A breakdown by personnel category, including the number of personnel in relation to the estimated number of individuals served in FY 2017, is as follows (information current as of November 2015):

—Rehabilitation Counselors, 82 total positions, 11 vacancies, and 12 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 191.

—Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, 31 total positions, 3 vacancies, and 9 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Senior Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 484.

—Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, 15 total positions, 0 vacancies, and 6 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Certified Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 903.

—Fiscal personnel, 16 total positions, 1 vacancy, and 4 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Fiscal personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 903.

—Administrative Services personnel, nine total positions, zero vacancies, and two projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Administrative Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 1,506.

—Field Services personnel, 160 total positions, 15 vacancies, and 44 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Field Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 93.

—Support Services personnel (e.g., human resources, rehabilitation technology unit), 65 total positions, 3 vacancies, and 23 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Support Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 219.

—Information Technology personnel, eight total positions, two vacancies, and two projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Information Technology personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 2,259.

—Other personnel (e.g., vocational instructors, technical analysts), 21 total positions, 2 vacancies, and 6 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of other personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 713.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Each year the DRS Director receives a summary report that estimates and projects the number of such personnel that will be needed during the next five-year period. In January 2018, DRS had 109 counselors in various offices across the state. Of the 109 counselors, DRS had 52

Rehabilitation Counselors, 24 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, 13 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, and 20 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees to provide services to consumers who are currently in the DRS system. DRS had several unfilled positions as of January 2018: 15 Rehabilitation Counseling positions, 5 Senior Rehabilitation Counselor positions, 1 Certified Rehabilitation Counselor position, and 2 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee positions. Each unfilled position will be filled to expand the number of field counselors when needed.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

DRS expects to see a decrease in the number of consumers in its caseload system, from 12,251 individuals in FY 2017 to a projected 8,133 individuals in FY 2022. DRS administrators believe that the expected future caseload size will be managed by existing counseling personnel and the gradual filling of the 23 vacant counselor positions over the next five years. Additionally, DRS employs 48 RSAs to assist Counselors with their caseloads, in order to more efficiently meet the needs of consumers. The following information presents a range of the number of counselors and other agency personnel projected to leave DRS employment after becoming eligible for early retirement under the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System by FY 2022. Of the 17 counselors who will be eligible, there will be 6 Rehabilitation Counselors, 7 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, and 4 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. DRS continues to experience a gradual retirement of counselors and other personnel. The agency expects this trend will continue over the coming years.

## **B. Personnel Development**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by West Virginia University (WVU) and Marshall University, WVU reports 49 students enrolled in the Rehabilitation Counseling graduate program and 8 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 52 enrolled students and 22 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 66 students and 68 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. The report from Marshall University shows 120 students and 42 graduates in Counseling graduate programs. It also reports 83 students and 55 graduates in Psychology graduate programs.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by West Virginia University (WVU) and Marshall University, WVU reports 49 students enrolled in the Rehabilitation Counseling graduate program and 8 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 52 enrolled students and 22 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 66 students and

68 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. The report from Marshall University shows 120 students and 42 graduates in Counseling graduate programs. It also reports 83 students and 55 graduates in Psychology graduate programs.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by West Virginia University (WVU) and Marshall University, WVU reports 49 students enrolled in the Rehabilitation Counseling graduate program and 8 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 52 enrolled students and 22 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 66 students and 68 graduates in the 2016—2017 period. The report from Marshall University shows 120 students and 42 graduates in Counseling graduate programs. It also reports 83 students and 55 graduates in Psychology graduate programs.

## **2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

**DRS Recruitment Efforts** DRS will continue its efforts to recruit and advance employees of traditionally under—represented groups such as people with disabilities, seniors, women, and members of racial or ethnic minority groups. **DRS Re—training Efforts for Existing Rehabilitation Professionals** DRS is in full compliance with the CSPD requirement and its standard to employ only rehabilitation counselors who (1) possess a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a counseling—related field, or (2) are employees who have two years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. As stated above, DRS makes no exceptions to the state standard when hiring new rehabilitation counselors. Therefore, the agency provides for existing personnel to receive the training necessary to meet requirements of the state standard. As part of its non—discriminatory employment practices, DRS ensures that all personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. The DRS affirmative action plan is updated annually and the agency has formally adopted this policy of non—discriminatory employment practices.

## **3. Personnel Standards**

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

**A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

To ensure a high standard of competency and credentials for its qualified rehabilitation professionals, DRS has established job classifications. The lowest standard for Rehabilitation Counselors requires a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, social work, or closely related behavioral science field; or two years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Senior Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling—related field; and (2) two years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid professional experience in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Certified Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling—related field; (2) current national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or Certified Vocational Evaluator or current West Virginia licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor; and (3) at least three years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid professional experience as a rehabilitation counselor.

DRS has established the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. An employee in this position is under direct supervision and performs work at the entry level in a probationary, training capacity which is intended to qualify the employee for specific duties for this position. The employee may become eligible for the position of Rehabilitation Counselor after two years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Minimum qualifications for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position are a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university in counseling and guidance, social work, nursing, special education, or related behavioral science or human service field; or a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with three years of full—time or equivalent part—time experience in the position of Rehabilitation Services Associate.

DRS strives to recruit graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation like the one at WVU, but it does not require the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential as the minimum qualification for a new counselor. Graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling are eligible for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which sets the national standards for quality rehabilitation counseling services in the U.S. DRS encourages the achievement of CRC by existing counselors and gives special preference to applicants with the CRC credential and qualified applicants with disabilities and from minority backgrounds.

The DRS standard is specific to rehabilitation counselors only and is consistent with registration requirements of WVDOP—the DRS state hiring authority. WVDOP administers and scores unassembled examinations to potential rehabilitation counselor candidates.

To ensure that counselors and other personnel remain up—to—date with evolving labor force needs and the needs of individuals with disabilities, DRS provides ongoing training opportunities for its field staff in group and individual settings. This occurs through educational activities such as the State training conference, periodic district—level training sessions, continuing education credit opportunities (Certified Rehabilitation Counselor), and training sessions by DRS Quality Assurance Specialists and DRS Employment Specialists. These activities allow DRS counselors

and field staff to enhance their knowledge of labor force needs and ultimately better serve individuals with disabilities.

Individuals not meeting the above personnel standards for rehabilitation professionals are ineligible to interview for vacant rehabilitation counseling positions. Classification specifications for each position utilized by DRS are available through the WVDOP website:

[http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job\\_seekers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job_seekers/Pages/default.aspx).

When employing new rehabilitation counselors, DRS makes no exceptions to its standard and provides the training necessary to meet requirements of the state standard only to existing personnel. These efforts are described later in this section.

Should qualified candidates be unavailable, the DRS Director, Assistant Directors, Human Resources Manager, and the Unit Manager or District Manager may re—assess staffing/consumer needs and re—assign qualified employees to assume duties of the vacant position. Qualified DRS retirees may also be re—hired on a contractual/intermittent basis until permanent qualified employees can be hired.

The career ladder for advancement within the rehabilitation counseling ranks requires additional experience and credentials as well as increased responsibilities.

#### DRS Requirements for Qualified Rehabilitation Paraprofessionals

In order to more efficiently meet the needs of its consumers, DRS upgraded several clerical positions to paraprofessional status. A Rehabilitation Services Associate must be a high school (or equivalent) graduate and have at least four years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid experience in paraprofessional or responsible clerical office support work, which requires familiarity with casework procedures and delivery of direct consumer services in a state vocational rehabilitation services agency. A bachelor’s degree from an accredited four year college or university may be substituted for the required experience. The WVDOP specification for the Rehabilitation Services Associate position may be accessed at [http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job\\_seekers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job_seekers/Pages/default.aspx).

A Rehabilitation Services Associate assists qualified rehabilitation counselors in several ways: providing information about the rehabilitation process and services available to interested applicants and members of the general public; obtaining information needed to complete the application process; initiating vocational diagnostic interviews; arranging medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations for DRS consumers; and assisting consumers in applying for student financial aid.

DRS employed 48 Rehabilitation Services Associates as of January 2018. These paraprofessionals are assigned to DRS offices throughout West Virginia. To ensure statewide coverage, at least one is located within each DRS district.

#### System of Staff Evaluation

DRS requires that each permanent employee receive an annual job performance evaluation. Work performance of probationary employees is reviewed upon completion of the third and sixth (and for certain job classifications, twelfth) months during a probationary period. This evaluation system enables DRS to monitor the job performance of all staff members and identify areas of weakness and skill deficiencies that need training or remediation, as well as areas of strong



performance. The evaluation also provides a systematic method of determining training needs for all staff members.

**B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

To ensure a high standard of competency and credentials for its qualified rehabilitation professionals, DRS has established job classifications. The lowest standard for Rehabilitation Counselors requires a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, social work, or closely related behavioral science field; or two years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Senior Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling—related field; and (2) two years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid professional experience in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Certified Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling—related field; (2) current national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or Certified Vocational Evaluator or current West Virginia licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor; and (3) at least three years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid professional experience as a rehabilitation counselor.

DRS has established the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. An employee in this position is under direct supervision and performs work at the entry level in a probationary, training capacity which is intended to qualify the employee for specific duties for this position. The employee may become eligible for the position of Rehabilitation Counselor after two years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Minimum qualifications for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position are a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university in counseling and guidance, social work, nursing, special education, or related behavioral science or human service field; or a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with three years of full—time or equivalent part—time experience in the position of Rehabilitation Services Associate.

DRS strives to recruit graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation like the one at WVU, but it does not require the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential as the minimum qualification for a new counselor. Graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling are eligible for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which sets the national standards for quality rehabilitation counseling services in the U.S. DRS encourages the achievement of CRC by existing counselors and gives special preference to applicants with the CRC credential and qualified applicants with disabilities and from minority backgrounds.

The DRS standard is specific to rehabilitation counselors only and is consistent with registration requirements of WVDOP—the DRS state hiring authority. WVDOP administers and scores unassembled examinations to potential rehabilitation counselor candidates.

To ensure that counselors and other personnel remain up—to—date with evolving labor force needs and the needs of individuals with disabilities, DRS provides ongoing training opportunities for its field staff in group and individual settings. This occurs through educational activities such

as the State training conference, periodic district—level training sessions, continuing education credit opportunities (Certified Rehabilitation Counselor), and training sessions by DRS Quality Assurance Specialists and DRS Employment Specialists. These activities allow DRS counselors and field staff to enhance their knowledge of labor force needs and ultimately better serve individuals with disabilities.

Individuals not meeting the above personnel standards for rehabilitation professionals are ineligible to interview for vacant rehabilitation counseling positions. Classification specifications for each position utilized by DRS are available through the WVDOP website:  
[http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job\\_seekers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job_seekers/Pages/default.aspx).

When employing new rehabilitation counselors, DRS makes no exceptions to its standard and provides the training necessary to meet requirements of the state standard only to existing personnel. These efforts are described later in this section.

Should qualified candidates be unavailable, the DRS Director, Assistant Directors, Human Resources Manager, and the Unit Manager or District Manager may re—assess staffing/consumer needs and re—assign qualified employees to assume duties of the vacant position. Qualified DRS retirees may also be re—hired on a contractual/intermittent basis until permanent qualified employees can be hired.

The career ladder for advancement within the rehabilitation counseling ranks requires additional experience and credentials as well as increased responsibilities.

#### DRS Requirements for Qualified Rehabilitation Paraprofessionals

In order to more efficiently meet the needs of its consumers, DRS upgraded several clerical positions to paraprofessional status. A Rehabilitation Services Associate must be a high school (or equivalent) graduate and have at least four years of full—time or equivalent part—time paid experience in paraprofessional or responsible clerical office support work, which requires familiarity with casework procedures and delivery of direct consumer services in a state vocational rehabilitation services agency. A bachelor’s degree from an accredited four year college or university may be substituted for the required experience. The WVDOP specification for the Rehabilitation Services Associate position may be accessed at  
[http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job\\_seekers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.personnel.wv.gov/job_seekers/Pages/default.aspx).

A Rehabilitation Services Associate assists qualified rehabilitation counselors in several ways: providing information about the rehabilitation process and services available to interested applicants and members of the general public; obtaining information needed to complete the application process; initiating vocational diagnostic interviews; arranging medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations for DRS consumers; and assisting consumers in applying for student financial aid.

DRS employed 48 Rehabilitation Services Associates as of January 2018. These paraprofessionals are assigned to DRS offices throughout West Virginia. To ensure statewide coverage, at least one is located within each DRS district.

#### System of Staff Evaluation

DRS requires that each permanent employee receive an annual job performance evaluation. Work performance of probationary employees is reviewed upon completion of the third and sixth

(and for certain job classifications, twelfth) months during a probationary period. This evaluation system enables DRS to monitor the job performance of all staff members and identify areas of weakness and skill deficiencies that need training or remediation, as well as areas of strong performance. The evaluation also provides a systematic method of determining training needs for all staff members.

#### **4. Staff Development.**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

##### **A. System of staff development**

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

**Staff Development and Training Activities** The selection of DRS participants for training activities is based upon documented organizational, unit, or individual training needs. Training programs will be provided for all classes and types of staff members on an internally-assessed priority basis. Particular emphasis is placed on programs addressing assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, policy and procedure, ethics, and rehabilitation technology. DRS does not discriminate in the selection of trainees for these programs based on age, sex, religion, disability, and national or ethnic origin.

DRS is committed to utilizing only institutions or training facilities that are accessible programmatically and architecturally free of other barriers with respect to trainees with disabilities. In addition, DRS will ensure that program materials are accessible in the most appropriate format for all participants with disabilities (assistive communication devices, interpreters, large print, audio tapes, Braille material, etc.). The technology to ensure these accommodations is available through various support units within DRS. Moreover, to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities in facilities of higher education, DRS houses a rehabilitation counselor on campus at Marshall University.

The majority of the training needs are met through local training and the agency's annual State Training Conference. DRS also maintains strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with institutions of higher education, particularly those receiving funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to train rehabilitation professionals. This is to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared for employment.

Throughout FY 2017, DRS continued to utilize a group training approach for newly hired counselors and RSAs. The training is led by QA Unit staff members and consists of three two-day sessions, provided on a quarterly basis for new hires. The first session is titled "New Counselor/RSA Training" and provides introductory materials as well as training on case management and agency policies and procedures. The second and third sessions cover Decision Tree Training, detailing appropriate case work practices from referral to closure. In addition to the training, a CRP services overview is provided in a one-on-one format. While staff members

are on location in Nitro, WV, they receive a Rehabilitation Services Program overview and a tour of the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit.

This approach ensures that all rehabilitation counselors and paraprofessionals receive standardized and accurate training. QA Unit staff members conduct regular case record reviews to ensure compliance with federal, state, and agency casework standards. Any deficiencies identified from the reviews are addressed through appropriate training.

All Staff Development Unit—sponsored programs provide continuing education credits that assist DRS CRCs, Licensed Professional Counselors, and members of other certified groups to maintain or obtain their certification. DRS has received approval authority from the CRCC to provide CRC continuing education credits for training programs meeting CRCC criteria.

In FY 2017, 23 DRS managers and supervisors attended management training events to meet the requirements for the West Virginia Division of Personnel Policy 18, which mandates specialized training for all supervisors and managers. New managers and supervisors are required to take eight classes in the first two years. All appropriate DRS staff members attended these required courses.

In order to meet the ongoing leadership needs of the agency, selected DRS staff members will attend training series at the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute offered through San Diego State University. The training consists of four one—week sessions over the course of 14 to 16 months. The mission of the institute is, “To enrich the leadership, knowledge, skills, and perceptions of rehabilitation leaders through a powerful organizational learning experience that reinforces leaning, creativity, strategic thinking, and passion for the public program of vocational rehabilitation.” Further information can be found at the institute’s website, <http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/nrli/>.

In May 2017, 226 rehabilitation staff members participated in the agency’s State Training Conference. To address the specific needs of certain positions, concurrent pre—conference sessions were held for field managers, counselors for the blind, counselors for the deaf, and employment specialists. The full conference provided an overview of the latest Statewide Quality Assurance Review results, a review of services provided by the DRS Rehabilitation Programs Unit, and presentations on various VR—related topics. The topics covered included ethics, substance abuse treatment, career counseling, and behavioral health connections. This conference helps ensure that all staff members are connected to the overall mission and vision of the agency.

In 2017, 11 different training sessions were approved for CRC credits, totaling 58.75 clock hours.

DRS staff confront the challenge of refining and improving their skills and knowledge while dealing with the current explosion of knowledge, technology, and treatment modalities. The agency will continue to make intensive efforts to provide ongoing information that will ensure the skills of DRS employees are responsive to the needs of the people they serve.

With respect to training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS maintains a working relationship and a formal memorandum of understanding with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS). In West Virginia, the WVATS, under the Center for Excellence in

Disabilities at West Virginia University, is the administrator of the assistive technology grant. DRS is also represented on the West Virginia Assistive Technology Board and works with WVATS in a number of ways, including:

- Maintain an updated resource database for Assistive Technology services in West Virginia;
- Participate in special projects (i.e., finding and advocating for accessible recreational resources);
- Provide information resources, awareness and training for consumers and professionals in assistive technology services and devices;
- Provide information to WVATS partners regarding DRS and other disability related subjects; and
- Participate as a member on an interagency team, Partnerships in Assistive Technologies (PATHS), with a focus of interagency collaboration for the provision of Assistive Technology training and conferences.

## **B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge**

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

**Staff Development and Training Activities** The selection of DRS participants for training activities is based upon documented organizational, unit, or individual training needs. Training programs will be provided for all classes and types of staff members on an internally—assessed priority basis. Particular emphasis is placed on programs addressing assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, policy and procedure, ethics, and rehabilitation technology. DRS does not discriminate in the selection of trainees for these programs based on age, sex, religion, disability, and national or ethnic origin.

DRS is committed to utilizing only institutions or training facilities that are accessible programmatically and architecturally free of other barriers with respect to trainees with disabilities. In addition, DRS will ensure that program materials are accessible in the most appropriate format for all participants with disabilities (assistive communication devices, interpreters, large print, audio tapes, Braille material, etc.). The technology to ensure these accommodations is available through various support units within DRS. Moreover, to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities in facilities of higher education, DRS houses a rehabilitation counselor on campus at Marshall University.

The majority of the training needs are met through local training and the agency's State Training Conference. DRS also maintains strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with institutions of higher education, particularly those receiving funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to train rehabilitation professionals. This is to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared for employment.

Throughout FY 2017, DRS continued to utilize a group training approach for newly hired counselors and RSAs. The training is led by QA Unit staff members and consists of three two—day sessions, provided on a quarterly basis for new hires. The first session is titled “New Counselor/RSA Training” and provides introductory materials as well as training on case

management and agency policies and procedures. The second and third sessions cover Decision Tree Training, detailing appropriate case work practices from referral to closure. In addition to the training, a CRP services overview is provided in a one-on-one format. While staff members are on location in Nitro, WV, they receive a Rehabilitation Services Program overview and a tour of the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit.

This approach ensures that all rehabilitation counselors and paraprofessionals receive standardized and accurate training. QA Unit staff members conduct regular case record reviews to ensure compliance with federal, state, and agency casework standards. Any deficiencies identified from the reviews are addressed through appropriate training.

All Staff Development Unit—sponsored programs provide continuing education credits that assist DRS CRCs, Licensed Professional Counselors, and members of other certified groups to maintain or obtain their certification. DRS has received approval authority from the CRCC to provide CRC continuing education credits for training programs meeting CRCC criteria.

In FY 2017, 23 DRS managers and supervisors attended management training events to meet the requirements for the West Virginia Division of Personnel Policy 18, which mandates specialized training for all supervisors and managers. New managers and supervisors are required to take eight classes in the first two years. All appropriate DRS staff members attended these required courses.

In order to meet the ongoing leadership needs of the agency, selected DRS staff members will attend training series at the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute offered through San Diego State University. The training consists of four one—week sessions over the course of 14 to 16 months. The mission of the institute is, “To enrich the leadership, knowledge, skills, and perceptions of rehabilitation leaders through a powerful organizational learning experience that reinforces leaning, creativity, strategic thinking, and passion for the public program of vocational rehabilitation.” Further information can be found at the institute’s website, <http://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/nrli/>.

In May 2017, 226 rehabilitation staff members participated in the agency’s State Training Conference. To address the specific needs of certain positions, concurrent pre—conference sessions were held for field managers, counselors for the blind, counselors for the deaf, and employment specialists. The full conference provided an overview of the latest Statewide Quality Assurance Review results, a review of services provided by the DRS Rehabilitation Programs Unit, and presentations on various VR—related topics. The topics covered included ethics, substance abuse treatment, career counseling, and behavioral health connections. This conference helps ensure that all staff members are connected to the overall mission and vision of the agency.

In 2017, 11 different training sessions were approved for CRC credits, totaling 58.75 clock hours.

DRS staff confront the challenge of refining and improving their skills and knowledge while dealing with the current explosion of knowledge, technology, and treatment modalities. The agency will continue to make intensive efforts to provide ongoing information that will ensure the skills of DRS employees are responsive to the needs of the people they serve.

With respect to training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS maintains a working relationship and a formal memorandum of understanding with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS). In West Virginia, the WVATS, under the Center for Excellence in Disabilities at West Virginia University, is the administrator of the assistive technology grant. DRS is also represented on the West Virginia Assistive Technology Board and works with WVATS in a number of ways, including:

- Maintain an updated resource database for Assistive Technology services in West Virginia;
- Participate in special projects (i.e., finding and advocating for accessible recreational resources);
- Provide information resources, awareness and training for consumers and professionals in assistive technology services and devices;
- Provide information to WVATS partners regarding DRS and other disability related subjects; and
- Participate as a member on an interagency team, Partnerships in Assistive Technologies (PATHS), with a focus of interagency collaboration for the provision of Assistive Technology training and conferences.

## **5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

West Virginia does not have large populations of ethnic groups who speak a language other than English. Consequently, DRS has not experienced difficulties making its programs accessible and available statewide. The agency's main language accessibility needs concern people who are deaf, and each DRS district is staffed with a specialist counselor providing full access to programs and services for people who have deafness or hearing impairments.

DRS continues to work with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to train and certify interpreters in order to strengthen the network of providers for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf—blind. Numerous workshops and seminars are conducted to increase the number of interpreters, improve their communication skills, and provide better statewide coverage. These coordinated efforts will continue as needed.

DRS also ensures that its employees and consumers with blindness or visual impairments receive information and materials in their preferred mode of communication through various accommodations. Upon request, various DRS support units provide such services as assistive communication devices, large print and/or Braille materials, audiotapes, and electronic (computer) copies.

## **6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

DRS will continue to coordinate its system of personnel development with the West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDOE) personnel development under IDEA/No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This coordination will include collaborative efforts to share information, liaison activities, and cooperative training endeavors for DRS school counselors, teachers, and WVDOE employees, particularly those assigned to the Office of Special Education.

The DRS state level liaison attends WVDOE training functions related to special education and disseminates information about education policy or law changes to DRS school counselors as needed. DRS school counselors also receive information during their annual meeting. DRS school counselors also participate in cross—training efforts that occur on the local level through Regional Education Services Agencies. In some areas of the state, DRS school counselors and managers participate in local interagency planning groups where training issues are discussed and planned.

## **j. Statewide Assessment**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

### **1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:**

#### **A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;**

To comply with provisions of Title I, Section 101, State Plans, of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and Section 721, State Plans, of the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (WVSRC) conducted a three-year comprehensive statewide assessment of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) services needs of individuals with disabilities in West Virginia. The WVSRC-DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment was established in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 to oversee the needs assessment activity. Joint committee members including those selected by WVSRC and DRS personnel were fully committed to the needs assessment study and want to ensure successful completion of its objectives.

As part of the WVSRC-DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, the State Plan and Program Evaluation (SPPE) Unit conducted the needs assessment study for the agency in conjunction with WVSRC, which was fully involved from inception to the reporting of the results.

Four major objectives of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment study included examination of the rehabilitation needs of: (1) individuals with significant and most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services; (2) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program; (3) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and (4) youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre-employment transition services or other



transition services. The role of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) as service providers was reviewed to address the need to establish, develop, or improve CRPs in West Virginia.

To maintain effective and comprehensive service delivery programs for West Virginians with disabilities, the needs assessment identified various service needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. Some needed services such as transportation, housing, and personal assistance are beyond the scope of the state VR program and thus, require coordination and cooperation among a diverse range of public and private agencies and other organizations serving West Virginians with disabilities. The needs assessment recognized the service providers' perceptions of the needs of consumers with disabilities, including rehabilitation services associates, counselors, supervisors and managers of DRS, CRPs, Consumer Affairs Conference attendees, and Workforce Development Board members throughout West Virginia.

#### NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

One of the major objectives of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment included an examination of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services. In multiple instances, the assessment directed inquiry into the provision of services by CRPs, which are the primary service providers to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These inquiries included a survey to DRS field staff on the needs of persons with the most significant disabilities that included items regarding gaps in 1) employment services (including supported employment) and 2) CRP services, as well as a separate survey to DRS field staff specifically focused on the provision of CRP services.

Based on the results of the survey of DRS field staff members on the needs of persons with the most significant disabilities, some of the most commonly identified gaps in CRP services included direct placement (52.17% of respondents), Life Skills Training (40.37%), and Community Based Assessment (37.89%). Extended supported employment services (30.43% of respondents) and supported employment (29.81%) were two of the most commonly identified employment service gaps. This finding was reaffirmed by the separate survey of DRS field staff members which focused solely on the provision of CRP services, wherein supported employment was indicated as one of the most common CRP service gaps (21.6% of respondents). Because of these results, DRS continues to make the enhancement of relationships with CRPs a focus for the coming years to improve and increase services for persons with most significant disabilities [i.e., DRS Goal 5 - Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers].

CRPs are essential to the service provision of individuals with significant disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. DRS is committed to moving forward in support of CRPs as they continue to meet their commitment to providing the best possible services to individuals with the most significant disabilities statewide. DRS' commitment is demonstrated historically by large numbers of acknowledged CRP vendors and significant financial resources allocated for supported employment and other services. DRS anticipates this to continue in the coming years.

## THE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF CONSUMERS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

As part of the intake process for VR services, a question regarding service needs was posed to potential DRS consumers at the time of application. The reported service needs were then recorded in the DRS electronic case management system. In 2014, SPPE staff members conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 2,863 persons with disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. Included in these active cases with expressed VR service needs across the state were 235 persons with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds, 70 individuals aged 65 or older, and 1,551 transitioning youth. The findings of this analysis are presented below.

### Results of the Analysis of the Reported Service Needs of Persons with Significant Disabilities

In 2014, SPPE staff members, under guidance of the WVSRC—DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. These individuals represent a good sample of consumers with significant disabilities that will continue to seek assistance from agencies in coming years, *ceteris paribus*. All 55 counties in West Virginia were represented in the sample. The demographic profile of these individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 54.5% male, 45.5% female;

Race: 91.3% White, 8.2% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.5% Unknown;

Age: 45.0% under 20 years old, 21.9% 20—34 years, 10.5% 35—44 years, 20.2% 45—64 years, 2.4% 65 years or older;

Primary Impairment: 13.0% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 23.2% Physical Impairments, 63.7% Mental Impairments, 0.1% Unknown.

Comments from the 2,863 DRS case management records were analyzed and grouped into one or more of five general service themes: education, training, health, employment, and support. More specific service themes, within each general theme, were then determined for each comment.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 2,863 consumers with significant disabilities. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (21.7%): College (14.8%); Non—Specific Education (4.9%); Testing for Accommodations/LD (1.4%); GED (1.1%). TRAINING (30.1%): Vocational Training (26.0%); Driving (2.3%). HEALTH (17.1%): Hearing (9.8%); Treatments (3.8%); Vision (1.6%); Ailment (1.6%); Surgeries (1.3%). EMPLOYMENT (72.5%): Finding a Job (29.5%); Placement (19.8%); Career Counseling (8.7%); Career (7.5%); Job Retention (6.1%); Transition from High School (6.0%). SUPPORT (16.4%): Financial Aid for College (6.5%); General Financial (2.9%);

Accommodations (2.2%); Other (1.2%); Assistive Technology (1.1%); Miscellaneous Support (1.0%) Financial Aid for School (1.0%); Transportation (0.9%).

Of the statewide total of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 1,551 persons were determined to be of transition status (age 24 and under). The demographic profile of this subset of transition status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 56.1% male, 43.9% female;

Race: 92.3% White, 7.2% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.5% Unknown;

Age: 82.9% under 20 years old, 17.1% 20—34 years;

Primary Impairment: 5.2% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 16.0% Physical Impairments, 78.8% Mental Impairments, 0.1% Unknown.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,551 transitioning youth with significant disabilities. The approximate percentage of transitioning youth with significant disabilities reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (30.6%): College (22.8%); Non—Specific Education (5.5%); Testing for Accommodations/LD (1.6%). TRAINING (34.2%): Vocational Training (30.7%); Driving (3.0%); HEALTH (4.7%): Treatments (2.3%); Hearing (1.5%); Ailment (0.8%).

EMPLOYMENT (71.2%): Finding a Job (27.4%); Placement (19.3%); Career Counseling (13.9%); Transition from High School (11.1%); Career (10.8%). SUPPORT (20.0%): Financial Aid for College (10.3%); General Financial (3.6%); Accommodations (1.9%); Financial Aid for School (1.4%); Miscellaneous Support (1.1%).

Of the statewide total of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 235 persons were determined to be of minority status. The demographic profile of this subset of minority status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 53.85% male, 46.15% female;

Race: 5.5% American Indian, 3.8% Asian, 80.4% African American, 9.4% Hispanic, and 0.9% Native Hawaiian;

Age: 37.0% under 20 years old, 23.4% 20—34 years, 14.0% 35—44 years, 23.8% 45—64 years, 1.7% 65 years or older;

Primary Impairment: 11.9% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 22.6% Physical Impairments, 65.5% Mental Impairments, 0.0% Unknown.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 235 consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds. The approximate percentage

of consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (18.3%): College (11.9%); Non—Specific Education (6.4%). TRAINING (35.3%): Vocational Training (31.5%); Driving (3.8%). HEALTH (16.2%): Hearing (6.0%); Treatments (4.3%); Vision (3.8%); Ailment (3.0%). EMPLOYMENT (75.3%): Placement (32.3%); Finding a Job (28.5%); Career Counseling (7.7%); Career (7.2%); Transition from High School (3.8%). SUPPORT (14.9%): Financial Aid for College (4.3%); Accommodations (4.3%).

Of the statewide total of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 70 persons were determined to be aged 65 years or older. The demographic profile of this subset of individuals with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 60.0% male, 40.0% female;

Race: 94.3% White, 5.7% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.0% Unknown;

Age: 100% 65 years or older;

Primary Impairment: 82.9% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 14.6% Physical Impairments, 0.0% Mental Impairments, 2.4% Unknown.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 70 consumers with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (0.0%). TRAINING (8.6%): Other Training (4.3%). HEALTH (78.6%): Hearing (75.7%). EMPLOYMENT (54.3%): Job Retention (38.6%); Finding a Job (10.0%). SUPPORT (8.6%): Assistive Technology (4.3%).

## COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Results of the Survey of Consumer Affairs Conference (CAC) Attendees on the Needs of Persons with Significant Disabilities

In the fall of 2014, DRS solicited input on the service needs of persons with significant disabilities by requesting input from CAC attendees.

DRS issued surveys in the conference registration packets provided to all attendees as part of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment for individuals with significant disabilities. Based on analysis of the responses of 35 CAC attendees from across the state, the most frequently reported service needs for persons with significant disabilities included the following: transportation (27, 30.0% of the 90 total needs reported), employment needs (11, 12.2%), housing (9, 10.0%), health care needs (8, 8.9%), and accessibility (8, 8.9%).

The survey also asked respondents to indicate service gaps for individuals with disabilities. The most commonly reported statewide service gaps were transportation (13, 20.0% of the 65 total

gaps reported), housing (8, 12.3%), employment (6, 9.2%), emergency services (5, 7.7%), and health care (5, 7.7%).

#### Results of the Survey of DRS Field Staff on the Needs of Persons with Significant Disabilities

DRS is mandated under the federal Rehabilitation Act to periodically conduct a needs assessment of persons with significant disabilities. As part of this process and in conjunction with WVSRC, DRS issued a survey in May 2014 to its field staff, including rehabilitation services associates, counselors, supervisors, and managers. The comprehensive survey asked them to offer their perceptions of the service needs and service gaps of persons with significant disabilities being served, including students with disabilities' need for pre—employment transition services. The survey also obtained the specific areas where service needs and gaps were perceived to exist.

The survey instrument and methodology were based on previous needs assessment studies, as they generated valid and reliable information on the service needs of persons with significant disabilities in West Virginia. After pre—testing the questionnaire with the selected field counselors, supervisors, and managers along with discussions with the WVSRC Executive Director, the field staff survey was completed by 161 DRS rehabilitation services associates/counselors/supervisors/managers during the annual state conference.

#### Current Job Title

Of the 159 respondents, 103 were counselors — 64 (40.25%) Rehabilitation Counselors, 17 (10.69%) Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, and 22 (13.84%) Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. There were 34 (21.38%) Rehabilitation Services Associates (RSAs), 16 (10.06%) Field Office Managers/Supervisors, and 6 (3.77%) District Managers.

The survey asked respondents to rate the level of need for 69 VR—related services on a five—point Likert scale ranging from “1—least needed/used” to “5—most highly needed/used;” not applicable (N/A) was also an option for each service. Services that were rated by 50% or more respondents as having a high level of need (a rating of 4 or 5) are found below for each service category.

#### Educational Services

Vocational Education (124, 77.02%), 2—year or 4—year College (113, 70.18%), High School (107, 66.46%), and Special Education (103, 63.98%).

#### Training Services

Job Search Training/Assistance (136, 84.47%), Career Planning (106, 65.84%), Business Vocational (106, 65.84%), and On—the—job Training/Job Trial (90, 55.90%).

#### Health Services

Counseling and Guidance (139, 86.34%), Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment (124, 77.02%), Physician's Services (106, 65.83%), and Substance Abuse Treatment (92, 57.14%).

#### Employment Services

Job Placement (140, 86.95%), Availability of Psychological Evaluation (126, 78.26%), Vocational Evaluation (118, 73.30%), Job Development (109, 67.70%), and Community Based Assessment (101, 62.74%).

#### Support Services

Transportation (129, 80.13%) and Financial Assistance (106, 65.84).

#### CRP Services

Direct Placement (99, 61.49%), Work Adjustment Training (91, 56.52%), Community Based Assessment (88, 54.66%), and Job Coaching—Other than Supported Employment (SE; 81, 50.31%).

#### Service Gaps

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap in either the multiple-choice (Yes, No, or N/A) or open-ended response (“Which of the above services are most in need of an increase in availability?”) sections were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location.

#### Educational Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for educational services were:

Tutoring (97, 60.25%) — Beckley—6, Charleston—9, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—2, Huntington—7, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—4, Logan—7, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—2, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—3, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—5, Ripley—1, Romney—2, Sistersville—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—5, Weirton—4, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—5. (Unknown—2)

Vocational Education (86, 53.42%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—5, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Moorefield—4, Morgantown—6, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—5, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—3, Romney—1, Sistersville—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—5, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—5. (Unknown—4)

Adult Basic Education (65, 40.37%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—9, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—4, Lewisburg—2, Logan—7, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—3, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—1, Princeton—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—3)

Literacy Instruction (67, 41.61%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—6, Huntington—5, Lewisburg—3, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—2, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—6, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—2)

High School (31, 19.25%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—3, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—1, Keyser—4, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—3, Mullens—1, Point

Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—1)

### Training Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for training services were:

Job Search Training/Assistance (82, 50.93%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—10, Clarksburg—7, Elkins—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—3, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—2, Weston—5, and Wheeling—7. (Unknown—1)

On—the—job Training/Job Trial (80, 49.69%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—8, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—4, Huntington—3, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—3, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—5, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—3, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—6.

Career Planning Training (67, 41.61%) — Beckley—5, Charleston—7, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—2, Fairmont—2, Huntington—5, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—1, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—3, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—4, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—2)

Drive Training/Licensing (58, 36.02%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—4, Logan—4, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—3, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—4, Ripley—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—5, Weston—2, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—2)

Job Club Skills (55, 34.16%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—6, Elkins—3, Fairmont—2, Huntington—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—1, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—5, Point Pleasant—2, Sistersville—2, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—5, Weston—2, and Wheeling—4. (Unknown—3)

Life Skills (61, 37.89%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—4, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Morgantown—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, Ripley—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—2, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—2)

### Health Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for health services were:

Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment (101, 62.73%) — Beckley—6, Charleston—10, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—3, Fairmont—2, Huntington—4, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—5, Ripley—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2,

Summersville—3, Teays Valley—6, Weirton—5, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—7.  
(Unknown—3)

Dental Care (75, 46.58%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—9, Clarksburg—6, Elkins—4, Huntington—5, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—6, Morgantown—3, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—3)

Substance Abuse Treatment (77, 47.83%) — Beckley—5, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—4, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—3, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—5, Mullens—3, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—7, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—4. (Unknown—1)

Occupational Therapy (47, 29.19%) — Charleston—5, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—2, Huntington—3, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—4, Logan—3, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—3, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Princeton—3, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—1, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Hearing/Audiological Services (39, 24.22%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—1, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—3, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—3, Ripley—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—2.

#### Employment Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for employment services were:

Job Development (91, 56.52%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—10, Clarksburg—9, Elkins—4, Huntington—3, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—5, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—5, Weirton—5, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—4. (Unknown—3)

Job Placement (68, 42.24%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—4, Huntington—1, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—4, Logan—4, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—5, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—2)

Job Coaching— Other than SE (61, 37.89%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—4, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—5. (Unknown—3)

Extended Supported Employment Services (49, 30.43%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—2, Huntington—4, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Morgantown—3, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—5, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—



1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Weirton—3, Weston—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Supported Employment Services (48, 29.81%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—3, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—4, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—3.

Small Business Development (48, 29.81%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—3, Huntington—1, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—1, Logan—3, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—2, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—4, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—1)

Trial Work Experience (48, 29.81%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—4, Huntington—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—5, Oak Hill—2, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—3, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1.

#### Support Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for support services were:

Transportation (135, 83.85%) — Beckley—7, Charleston—11, Clarksburg—8, Elkins—4, Fairmont—3, Huntington—10, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—6, Logan—8, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—6, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—6, Mullens—3, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—6, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—7, Ripley—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—5, Weirton—7, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—8. (Unknown—3)

Financial Assistance (90, 55.90%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—9, Clarksburg—6, Elkins—4, Fairmont—1, Huntington—7, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—3, Logan—4, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—7. (Unknown—2)

Vehicle Maintenance/Repair (72, 44.72%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—8, Clarksburg—6, Elkins—3, Huntington—4, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—1, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Morgantown—3, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—5, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, Ripley—1, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—2, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—4. (Unknown—1)

Child Care (69, 42.86%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—9, Clarksburg—4, Elkins—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—4, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—4, Logan—4, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—5. (Unknown—4)

Housing Assistance (62, 38.51%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—4, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—5, Logan—4, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—2, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—5, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—

5, Romney—1, Spencer—1, Teays Valley—2, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—5.  
(Unknown—1)

CRP Services (primarily for individuals with the most significant disabilities)

The five most commonly reported gaps for CRP Services were:

Direct Placement (84, 52.17%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—8, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Fairmont—3, Huntington—1, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—5, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—4, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—6, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—2)

Life Skills Training (65, 40.37%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—3, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—6, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—3, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—1)

Community Based Assessment (61, 37.89%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—3, Martinsburg—1, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—6, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—4.

Job Coaching— Other than SE (59, 36.65%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—3, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—2.

Work Adjustment Training (52, 32.30%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—3.  
(Unknown—1)

Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location.

Note: New categories were created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre-existing service category from the survey. For example, the “Overall Training” category was created to include a number of open-ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, “Training options” and “Training services.” The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

## General Territories

The survey asked participants to “Please list the TOP FIVE services that our consumers with disabilities in DRS general territories need within your service area.” There were 131 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (94, 71.76%) — Beckley—6, Charleston—7, Clarksburg—6, Elkins—2, Fairmont—2, Huntington—9, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—6, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—5, Morgantown—6, Mullens—3, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—7, Ripley—2, Romney—1, Sistersville—1, Spencer—2, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—5, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—2)

Job Placement (41, 31.30%) — Charleston—5, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—3, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—2, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—3)

Psychological/Psychiatric Services (35, 26.72%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—6, Clarksburg—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—4, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—2, Logan—2, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—1, Oak Hill—1, Princeton—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—4. (Unknown—4)

Overall Training (29, 22.14%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—6, Fairmont—1, Huntington—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—1, Morgantown—2, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Ripley—1, Sistersville—1, Summersville—1, and Wheeling—1.

Substance Abuse Treatment (23, 17.56%) — Beckley—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—2, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—1, Mullens—2, Princeton—2, Summersville—1, and Weirton—1. (Unknown—2)

Life Skills Training (23, 17.56%) — Charleston—2, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—1, Logan—3, Martinsburg—1, Parkersburg—1, Princeton—2, Summersville—2, Weirton—1, and Weston—3. (Unknown—1)

## Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, “From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 110 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Job Placement (29, 26.36%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—2, Huntington—1, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—2, Welch—2, and Weston—1.

Transportation (26, 23.64%) — Beckley—1, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Parkersburg—2, Princeton—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—1)

Financial Assistance (22, 20.00%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—1, Logan—2, Martinsburg—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Weirton—2, and Wheeling—1.

Counseling and Guidance (16, 14.55%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Marshall—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Romney—1, Spencer—1, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—2.

Overall Training (17, 15.45%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—1, and Wheeling—1.

#### Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Respondents were asked, “From your experience with individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 49 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Hearing/Audiological Services (29, 59.18%) — Charleston—3, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—2, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—6, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Summersville—1, Weirton—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—2)

Interpreter Services (17, 34.69%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—2, Huntington—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Job Placement (9, 18.37%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—1, Lewisburg—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Teays Valley—1, and Weston—1.

Transportation (8, 16.33%) — Beckley—1, Elkins—1, Lewisburg—2, Logan—1, Morgantown—1, and Teays Valley—2.

Overall Training (8, 16.33%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Elkins—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, and Parkersburg—1.

#### Blind/Visually Impaired

Respondents were asked, “From your experience with individuals who are blind/visually impaired with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 33 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (18, 54.55%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—2, Morgantown—1, Parkersburg—1, Princeton—1, Romney—1, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Orientation/Mobility Services (10, 30.30%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—1, Martinsburg—1, Romney—1, and Wheeling—1.

Job Placement (7, 21.21%) — Charleston—2, Elkins—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, and Weston—1.

Assistive Technology (6, 18.18%) — Charleston—1, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—1, Logan—1, Marshall—1, and Martinsburg—1.

Overall Training (6, 18.18%) — Elkins—1, Lewisburg—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Parkersburg—1.

### Minority Individuals

The survey asked, “From your experience with minority individuals with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 92 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (73, 79.35%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—1, Fairmont—3, Huntington—7, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—5, Logan—2, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—4, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—3, Princeton—4, Ripley—1, Romney—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—7, Welch—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Job Placement (22, 23.91%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—1, Huntington—3, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Ripley—1, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Overall Training (21, 22.83%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Oak Hill—1, Ripley—2, Romney—1, and Teays Valley—1.

Counseling and Guidance (17, 18.48%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—2, Huntington—2, Keyser—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Parkersburg—3, and Teays Valley—1.

Housing Assistance (16, 17.39%) — Charleston—2, Martinsburg—4, Morgantown—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, and Wheeling—1.

Financial Assistance (16, 17.39%) — Charleston—1, Clarksburg—3, Martinsburg—2, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—1, Princeton—1, Summersville—1, and Weirton—5.

### Comments and Suggestions

There were 115 respondents that provided comments when asked for ways in which DRS could help them perform their job more effectively and efficiently. Suggestions with similar themes were grouped and some respondents provided comments that spanned several themes. The most common responses were Paperwork Reduction (13 respondents, 11.30%), Time with Clients (13, 11.30%), Policy Changes (12, 10.43%), Caseload Size (11, 9.57%), and Transportation (10, 8.70%).

### Additional Comments on the Unmet Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

There were 43 respondents that provided 58 additional comments which were grouped into major themes. Thirteen (30.23%) responses were related to Transportation. The next most common responses were for more CRPs/Vendors (5 respondents, 11.63%), DRS Employee Training (4, 9.30%), and Psychological/Psychiatric Services (4, 9.30%).

## **B. who are minorities;**

In 2014, SPPE staff members, under guidance of the WVSRC—DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide.

Of the statewide total of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 235 persons were determined to be of minority status. The demographic profile of this subset of minority status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 53.85% male, 46.15% female;

Race: 5.5% American Indian, 3.8% Asian, 80.4% African American, 9.4% Hispanic, and 0.9% Native Hawaiian;

Age: 37.0% under 20 years old, 23.4% 20—34 years, 14.0% 35—44 years, 23.8% 45—64 years, 1.7% 65 years or older;

Primary Impairment: 11.9% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 22.6% Physical Impairments, 65.5% Mental Impairments, 0.0% Unknown.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 235 consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (18.3%): College (11.9%); Non—Specific Education (6.4%). TRAINING (35.3%): Vocational Training (31.5%); Driving (3.8%). HEALTH (16.2%): Hearing (6.0%); Treatments (4.3%); Vision (3.8%); Ailment (3.0%). EMPLOYMENT (75.3%): Placement (32.3%); Finding a Job (28.5%); Career Counseling (7.7%); Career (7.2%); Transition from High School (3.8%). SUPPORT (14.9%): Financial Aid for College (4.3%); Accommodations (4.3%).

Respondents to the DRS field staff survey were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location.

Note: New categories were created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre—existing service category from the survey. For example, the “Overall Training” category was created to include a number of open—ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, “Training options” and “Training services.” The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

### Minority Individuals

The survey asked, “From your experience with minority individuals with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 92 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (73, 79.35%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—4, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—1, Fairmont—3, Huntington—7, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—5, Logan—2, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—4, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—3, Parkersburg—3, Princeton—4, Ripley—1, Romney—2, Spencer—2, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—7, Welch—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Job Placement (22, 23.91%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—1, Huntington—3, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—2, Ripley—1, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—2. (Unknown—1)

Overall Training (21, 22.83%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Oak Hill—1, Ripley—2, Romney—1, and Teays Valley—1.

Counseling and Guidance (17, 18.48%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—2, Huntington—2, Keyser—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Parkersburg—3, and Teays Valley—1.

Housing Assistance (16, 17.39%) — Charleston—2, Martinsburg—4, Morgantown—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—3, and Wheeling—1.

Financial Assistance (16, 17.39%) — Charleston—1, Clarksburg—3, Martinsburg—2, Mullens—2, Oak Hill—1, Princeton—1, Summersville—1, and Weirton—5.

### **C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

#### Identifying Individuals with Disabilities Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by DRS

According to the United States 2010 Census, there are 113,006 minorities in West Virginia, making up 6.1% of the state's total population. Since FY 2012, DRS has exceeded this percentage in terms of minority consumers served (6.8%, 6.5%, and 7.2% for FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014, respectively), indicating overall equal access to services.

United States 2010 Census data reveals that 11 counties in West Virginia have minority populations that exceed 3,000: Kanawha (21,027, 10.9% of total county population); Berkeley (12,669, 12.2 %); Raleigh (9,059, 11.5%); Monongalia (8,701, 9.1%); Cabell (8,125, 8.4%); Jefferson (6,622, 12.4%); Mercer (5,255, 8.4%); Marion (3,192, 5.7%); Wood (3,110, 3.6%); Ohio (3,027, 6.8%); and Fayette (3,013, 6.5%). In each year since FY 2012, the DRS minority service percentage has exceeded the county minority population percentage for seven of the eleven aforementioned counties: Kanawha, Berkeley, Raleigh, Cabell, Jefferson, Mercer, and Marion. The DRS minority service percentage was below the county minority population percentage in each year since FY 2012 for Monongalia and Ohio counties. In Wood and Fayette counties, the DRS minority service percentage matched or exceeded the county minority population percentage in FY 2012 and FY 2014, but was below the county minority population percentage in FY 2013. Below is a list of each of these eleven counties (with its respective minority population and percentage in parentheses), followed by the DRS minority service percentage for each county in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

Kanawha (21,027, 10.9%): FY 2012 — 14.0%; FY 2013 — 13.7%; FY 2014 — 14.6%

Berkeley (12,669, 12.2 %): FY 2012 — 16.3%; FY 2013 — 15.4%; FY 2014 — 19.0%

Raleigh (9,059, 11.5%): FY 2012 — 17.3%; FY 2013 — 14.9%; FY 2014 — 14.7%  
Monongalia (8,701, 9.1%): FY 2012 — 6.6%; FY 2013 — 7.6%; FY 2014 — 8.3%  
Cabell (8,125, 8.4%): FY 2012 — 12.0%; FY 2013 — 11.5%; FY 2014 — 11.3%  
Jefferson (6,622, 12.4%): FY 2012 — 14.2%; FY 2013 — 13.2%; FY 2014 — 14.1%  
Mercer (5,255, 8.4%): FY 2012 — 10.8%; FY 2013 — 10.8%; FY 2014 — 11.2%  
Marion (3,192, 5.7%): FY 2012 — 10.0%; FY 2013 — 10.6%; FY 2014 — 10.6%  
Wood (3,110, 3.6%): FY 2012 — 3.6%; FY 2013 — 3.3%; FY 2014 — 4.4%  
Ohio (3,027, 6.8%): FY 2012 — 5.3%; FY 2013 — 6.5%; FY 2014 — 6.1%  
Fayette (3,013, 6.5%): FY 2012 — 8.2%; FY 2013 — 5.5%; FY 2014 — 7.4%

In addition, the United States 2010 Census data indicated three additional counties in West Virginia with a minority population under 3,000 and a county minority population percentage greater than 6.5%: McDowell (2,403; 10.9%), Gilmer (1,520; 17.5%), and Summers (970; 7.0%). Of these three counties, only McDowell County had a DRS minority service percentage (15.3% in FY 2012, 15.6 in FY 2013, and 15.3% in FY 2014) higher than its county minority population percentage (10.9%). No minorities were served by DRS between FY 2012 to FY 2014 in either Gilmer or Summers counties. Below is a list of each of these three counties (with its respective minority population and percentage in parentheses), followed by the DRS minority service percentage for each county in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

McDowell (2,403, 10.9%): FY 2012 — 15.3%; FY 2013 — 15.6%; FY 2014 — 15.3%  
Gilmer (1,520, 17.5%): FY 2012 — 0.0%; FY 2013 — 0.0%; FY 2014 — 0.0%  
Summers (970, 7.0%): FY 2012 — 0.0%; FY 2013 — 0.0%; FY 2014 — 0.0%

To determine potentially underserved areas, the DRS minority service percentage for the three—year period (FY 2012 — FY 2014) for each county was compared to that county's minority population percentage. Counties with mean DRS minority service percentages that are lower than the minority population percentage are considered to be potentially underserved. Of the 14 aforementioned counties, only 4 counties met this criterion: Monongalia, Ohio, Gilmer, and Summers counties.

DRS utilized geographic information systems (GIS) to pinpoint potential underserved zip codes in Gilmer and Summers counties. Zip codes that meet two criteria are identified as potential underserved areas: (1) the zip code has a minority population greater than or equal to 50 and (2) there are 10 or fewer minority consumers (as of March, 2015) reported in the agency's database for the last four fiscal years. Applying these criteria reveals four potentially underserved zip codes, one in Gilmer County (Glenville) and three in Summers County (Alderson, Hinton, and Talcott). In Glenville (Gilmer County) and Alderson (Summers County) zip codes there exists Federal Corrections Institutions, thus eliminating them from the list of potential underserved zip codes. DRS will pursue outreach efforts in Summers County, targeting Hinton and Talcott zip codes to market and expand VR services to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.



## **D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**

### Fiscal Year 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of The West Virginia Workforce Development System

#### Introduction

One requirement of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) is an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. In West Virginia, this system is overseen at the state level by the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) and the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT); seven regional Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) that preside over localized workforce development system activities. The WIC and the regional WDBs are comprised of representatives from business, labor, and public agencies. The ICT is comprised of nine state partner agencies that encompass the WV workforce development system. The purpose of the ICT is to foster cooperation and coordination of services among partner agencies.

One—Stop Career Centers are physical locations where consumers, including those with disabilities, can utilize services provided by partner agencies operating under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WorkForce WV is the agency, within the WV Department of Commerce, that operates One—Stop Career Centers across the seven workforce development regions across the state. DRS' involvement in the WIC, ICT, and regional WDBs in addition to its presence at One—Stop Centers ensures that people with disabilities are considered as employment training needs and services are identified.

#### Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in West Virginia, DRS utilizes a multifaceted, broad approach. This report only covers a single activity and targeted population within the overall comprehensive statewide needs assessment— the rehabilitation needs of individuals served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. This report provides a brief overview of service availability via physical One—Stop locations followed by the results of a survey provided to all members of the ICT, including the directors of all regional WDBs.

#### One—Stop Career Center Types and Locations

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, there were 43 WorkForce WV One—Stop locations including 10 comprehensive, 10 satellite, and 23 affiliate centers. Based on the 2014 WV Annual Report on the WIA (please note that this was prior to the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act), the three types of One—Stop locations are defined based on the following criteria:

- 1) Comprehensive One—Stop Center — A physical location within each local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) area that must provide the core services specified in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) section 134(d)(2), and must provide access to other programs and activities carried out by the One—Stop partners, pursuant to WIA section 121. Public access to services offered must be at least 32 hours per week.

2) Satellite One—Stop Center — A physical location within each local WIB area that consists of at least three WIA mandated partners that are co—located; providing core services specified in WIA section 121(b)(1)(A)(i)(ii); providing a majority of the intensive services specified in WIA section 134(d)(3); may provide training services specified in WIA section 134(d)(4), but at a minimum must provide a documented means for referral to training services; and maintain hours for public access of at least 32 hours per week.

3) Affiliate One—Stop Site — A physical location where at least one WIA mandated partner provides core services specified in WIA section 121(b)(1)(A)(i)(ii); and must provide a documented means for referral to that WIA region’s comprehensive One—Stop Center’s partner services, including intensive and training services.

Please note that there are seven workforce development regions in West Virginia, whereas DRS has six regions. The following provides the breakdown of One—Stop centers by type and workforce development region:

—Region 1 has two comprehensive centers, three satellite centers, and four affiliate sites for a total of nine locations.

—Region 2 has one comprehensive center, one satellite center, and five affiliate sites for a total of seven locations.

—Region 3 has one comprehensive center, zero satellite centers, and three affiliate sites for a total of four locations.

—Region 4 has one comprehensive center, two satellite centers, and five affiliate sites for a total of eight locations.

—Region 5 has one comprehensive center, two satellite centers, and zero affiliate sites for a total of three locations.

—Region 6 has two comprehensive centers, two satellite centers, and six affiliate sites for a total of ten locations.

—Region 7 has two comprehensive centers, zero satellite centers, and zero affiliate sites for a total of two locations.

#### Survey of ICT Members

In February 2015, DRS emailed a survey to all members of the ICT. In addition to the seven regional WDB directors, ICT membership includes the following WV state agencies:

—WorkForce WV — WV Employment Service;

—Bureau of Senior Services — State Unit on Aging;

—Council for Community and Technical College;

—Department of Education — Adult Education and Literacy Activities, Postsecondary Vocational Education, and Office of Institutional Programs;

—Department of Education and the Arts — Division of Rehabilitation Services;

—Department of Health and Human Resources — Bureau of Children and Families, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Food Stamp Employment and Training;

—Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety — Division of Corrections; and

—Development Office — Community Development Division and Business Industry Development.

## Survey

The survey consisted of seven questions to collect information about the respondent, the agency they represent, and their perception of the rehabilitation service needs and gaps of the individuals with disabilities that they serve. The questions were as follows:

—Name

—Title

—Agency

—Approximately how many consumers with disabilities are served by your agency per year?

—Please identify the vocational rehabilitation services most often needed by consumers with disabilities served by your agency (up to five services).

—Please identify any vocational rehabilitation service gaps (i.e., services that are needed, but not available in sufficient quantities, if at all) for consumers with disabilities served by your agency (up to five services).

—How can WVDRS assist your agency to better serve your consumers with disabilities? Please add any additional comments you wish to provide.

## Results

Ten surveys were returned via email. Respondents represented the Development Office, Division of Corrections, Office of Adult Education, and six WDBs. One WDB provided separate responses for adult and youth programs.

### Number of Individuals with Disabilities Served

The approximate number of consumers with disabilities served by each agency varied greatly, from 15 to over 8,000. Five of the respondents were unsure due to limited or non-existent data on the disability status of individuals served by their agency.

### Services Most Often Needed

The most commonly reported service need (five respondents) was training. This included college, vocational, and on-the-job training. The second most commonly reported service needed (three respondents) was vocational counseling and guidance. Respondents indicated that the individuals with disabilities they serve often benefit from assistance in selecting an appropriate vocational goal that is consistent with the individual's strengths, weaknesses, interests, and disability-related functional limitations.

### Service Gaps

Six respondents reported no service gaps. Two respondents indicated the need for more collaboration and coordination of services with DRS. Dental services, public and employer awareness of DRS, and free tutoring were also reported.

#### DRS Assistance and Additional Comments

Eight respondents indicated they would like DRS to provide more outreach/awareness of available services. Recommendations for this included providing information brochures, educating partner agency staff, and educating individuals with disabilities served by partner agencies about the services that DRS can provide to eligible consumers.

#### **E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**

#### Results of the Analysis of the Reported Pre—Employment Transition Service Needs of Students with Disabilities

SPPE staff members in 2014, under guidance of the WVSRC—DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 2,863 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. These individuals represent a good sample of consumers with significant disabilities that will continue to seek assistance from agencies in coming years, ceteris paribus. All 55 counties in West Virginia were represented in the sample. SPPE staff members separately analyzed the needs comments of the 1,059 students with disabilities included in the sample. The needs comments were analyzed and grouped based on their indication or implication of need of one or more of five required pre—employment transition services (PETS services):

—Job exploration counseling;

—Work—based learning experiences, which may include in—school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

—Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

—Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

—Instruction in self—advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Of the 1,059 students with disabilities providing needs comments, 929 (87.7%) indicated or implied a need for one or more PETS services.

The demographic profile of these 929 students with disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 55.9% male, 44.1% female;

Race: 92.8% White, 6.7% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.5% Unknown;

Age: 100.0% under 20 years old;

Primary Impairment: 4.3% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 15.2% Physical Impairments, 80.5% Mental Impairments, 0.0% Unknown.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the following report presents the results of the qualitative analysis on the needs comments of these 929 students with disabilities who indicated or implied a need for one or more PETS services.

Job Exploration Counseling (676, 72.8%); Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Educational Programs (348, 37.5); Social Skills and Independent Living (70, 7.5%); Work—Based Learning Experiences (21, 2.3%); and Self—Advocacy (3, 0.3%).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment include an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation service needs of “youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre—employment transition services.” DRS field staff that serve transitioning youth are one key resource in identifying the service needs of youth with disabilities in West Virginia. Therefore, needs assessment surveys completed by field staff that serve transitioning youth were analyzed separately in order to identify students’ needs for pre—employment transition services (PETS). There were 18 services in the survey that are considered PETS and were used for the post—hoc PETS subset analysis of need and gap ratings by field counselors who are assigned to serve high school youth.

#### Selected PETS

The following services from the survey were considered PETS for this analysis:

- Special Education Services;
- Tutoring;
- Work Adjustment Training;
- Job Search Training;
- On—the—job Training;
- Career Planning Training;
- Training on Disability Rights;
- Independent Living Skills;
- Drive Training;
- Job Club Skills;
- Counseling and Guidance;
- Community Based Assessment;
- Trial Work Experience;
- Vocational Evaluation;
- Job Placement;

- Peer Support;
- Work Skills Assessment; and
- Life Skills Training.

#### Respondents

There were 74 respondents, 46% of the 161, that indicated having a partial or full school territory. The breakdown of the respondents by current position is as follows:

Rehabilitation Counselor, 33 respondents (44.59% of respondents)

Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, 13 respondents (17.57%)

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, 7 respondents (9.46%)

Field Office Manager/Supervisor, 3 respondents (4.05%)

Rehabilitation Services Associate, 18 respondents (24.32%)

#### Office Location

Respondents were from 27 branch office locations. The Ripley office was the only location not represented in the PETS subset. One respondent did not provide their office location. The total number of respondents by district and office location are as follows:

District 1 (13 Respondents) — Charleston—4, Point Pleasant—2, Ripley—0, Spencer—2, Teays Valley—5.

District 2 (10) — Clarksburg—2, Elkins—3, Morgantown—1, Fairmont—1, Weston—3.

District 3 (11) — Parkersburg—3, Sistersville—2, Weirton—3, Wheeling—3.

District 4 (12) — Beckley—2, Lewisburg—4, Oak Hill—2, Princeton—2, Summersville—2.

District 5 (14) — Huntington—1, Logan—2, Marshall University—6, Mullens—3, Welch—2.

District 6 (13) — Keyser—4, Martinsburg—6, Moorefield—2, Romney—1.

#### Top PETS Needs

Service need/use for each PET service was assessed to allow respondents to indicate which services their consumers need/use most often. This was done independently of the service gap assessment as some services may be highly needed/used, but are readily available and therefore do not require an increase in availability.

Services that were identified as either “4” or “5,” indicating frequent need by 50% or more of the total respondents are listed for each service category below with the total number and percentage of respondents in parentheses.

—Job Placement (67, 90.54%)

—Counseling and Guidance (64, 86.49%)

—Special Education Services (61, 82.43%)

- Job Search Training (61, 82.43%)
- Vocational Evaluation (55, 74.32%)
- Career Planning Training (51, 68.92%)
- Community Based Assessment (48, 64.86%)
- On—the—job Training (43, 58.11%)
- Work Skills Assessment (41, 55.41%)
- Work Adjustment Training (38, 51.35%)
- Driver Training (38, 51.35%)
- Tutoring (37, 50.00%)

#### Top Five Reported PETS Gaps

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap in either the multiple—choice (Yes, No, or N/A) or open—ended response (“Which of the above services are most in need of an increase in availability?”) sections were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses.

- Tutoring (44, 59.46%)
- On—the—job Training (38, 51.35%)
- Job Search Training (31, 41.89%)
- Life Skills Training (31, 41.89%)
- Job Placement (31, 41.89%)

#### Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents to the DRS field staff survey were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location.

Note: New categories were created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre—existing service category from the survey. For example, the “Overall Training” category was created to include a number of open—ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, “Training options” and “Training services.” The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

#### Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, “From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 110 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Job Placement (29, 26.36%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—2, Huntington—1, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—2, Welch—2, and Weston—1.

Transportation (26, 23.64%) — Beckley—1, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Parkersburg—2, Princeton—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—1)

Financial Assistance (22, 20.00%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—1, Logan—2, Martinsburg—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Weirton—2, and Wheeling—1.

Counseling and Guidance (16, 14.55%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Marshall—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Romney—1, Spencer—1, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—2.

Overall Training (17, 15.45%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—1, and Wheeling—1.

## **2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and**

### Results from the survey of DRS Field Staff on CRP Services

Information on the needs and gaps for CRP services was also collected from 119 DRS field staff as part of the FY 2015 comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Survey respondents rated nine different CRP service categories for their level of understanding of the service, need/use of the service, and their perception of any gap for each service. The nine CRP service categories were: Community Based Assessment; Supported Employment; Work Skills Assessment; Direct Placement; Work Adjustment Training; Life Skills Training; Extended Assessments; Extended Supported Employment; and Job Coaching—Other than Supported Employment.

All nine CRP service categories were reported as being understood by at least 87% of the field staff surveyed. The most commonly needed/used CRP service categories were: Community Based Assessment (105 of 115 responses, 91.3%); Direct Placement (104 of 116 responses, 89.7%); Job Coaching—Other than Supported Employment (99 of 114 responses, 86.8%); Work Adjustment Training (96 of 113 responses, 85.0%); and Life Skills Training (95 of 114 responses, 83.3%). The most commonly reported gaps for CRP Services were: Community Based Assessment (44 of 114 responses, 38.6%); Direct Placement (35 of 111 responses, 31.5%); Work Skills Assessment (27 of 106 responses, 25.5%); Work Adjustment Training (25 of 108 responses, 23.2%); and Supported Employment (24 of 111 responses, 21.6%).

DRS conducted a survey of CRPs/community service providers (CSPs) with acknowledged vendor status to provide services (including supported—employment services) to DRS consumers across the state. The survey was conducted as a part of the statewide comprehensive needs assessment study of persons with significant disabilities in West Virginia.



DRS distributed the survey via email to 58 DRS—acknowledged CRPs/CSPs to collect input on their provision of services to West Virginians with significant disabilities, their level of communication with DRS, ways in which DRS could improve services or service delivery, and what the CRPs/CSPs urgently needed to better serve West Virginians with significant disabilities. Forty—seven surveys were returned to DRS, for a response rate of 81.0 percent. Surveys were returned from CRPs/CSPs working with DRS offices across the state.

### Service Provision

In each of the six DRS districts, all nine categories of CRP services were reported as being provided. Services were also reported as being provided in 53 out of 55 counties in West Virginia (based on DRS records, CRP services are provided in the two remaining counties, although not by the respondents of the survey). All nine services were reported as being provided in 37 out of 55 counties (67.3%). Excluding the two aforementioned “unserved” counties, the remaining counties were provided between five and eight services. Additionally, in most counties, various services were provided by multiple CRPs/CSPs.

### Communication and Liaison Contact

All 47 CRPs/CSPs provided a rating of their communication with DRS. Rating options included Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor, and Very Poor. No CRPs/CSPs gave a rating of Very Poor and 43 of the 47 CRPs/CSPs (91.5%) gave a response of Good or better. Additionally, CRPs/CSPs were asked whether a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis. Thirty—two (32) CRPs/CSPs responded yes, while 15 CRPs/CSPs responded no (68.1% and 31.9%, respectively).

### DRS Improvement

Forty—four (44) of the 47 CRPs/CSPs gave comments regarding specific things that DRS could do to improve services or service delivery. One of the most common themes in the comments involved referrals. This included not only requests for greater numbers of referrals, but also an increase in referral quality.

Another major theme from these comments included improvements in information sharing and awareness. This theme was multi—faceted, weaving through multiple types of information to be shared with various stakeholders, including consumers. Several CRPs/CSPs indicated that DRS counselors lacked awareness about services, while some made a recommendation for information—sharing meetings to serve as a remedy for such a deficiency. Other CRPs/CSPs provided comments indicating a need for more consumer—related awareness including greater consideration of the consumers’ needs when selecting services, more information about the consumers at the time of referral, and educating consumers about the effects that employment can have on their other benefits.

Funding, aside from the funding generated from an increase in referrals, was an additional theme found in the comments of CRPs regarding DRS improvement. These comments regarding funding varied, from requests for grant monies to increases in service fees.

### CRP/CSP Needs

Forty—one (41) of the 47 CRPs/CSPs gave comments on what the CRP/CSP urgently needed to better serve West Virginians with disabilities. Funding and referrals were the most reported

needs. Several comments were also made that emphasized an enhancement of the relationship between DRS and CRPs on some level. In general, these comments referred to a greater sharing of information and responsibility between DRS and the CRPs. Other, less commonly addressed themes that could be found in the comments included needs for more transportation help and better relationships with employers to facilitate placement.

#### Conclusions Based on the Survey of CRPs/CSPs

No less than five CRP service categories were reported, by CRPs/CSPs, as being provided in each of West Virginia's counties, with the exception of two counties. All nine CRP services were reported as being provided in all six DRS districts and in two-thirds of all West Virginia counties.

Over 90% of CRPs/CSPs reported a Good or better rating of communication with DRS and no CRP/CSP rated communication with DRS as being Very Poor. This is somewhat contradictory with the fact that only 68.1% of the CRPs/CSPs claimed that a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis. This raises the slightly counter-intuitive idea that communication does not have to be frequent, or even regularly occurring, in order to be good. Comments regarding communication reflected this at times, suggesting that communication was good when it occurred. At other times, comments indicated that the lack of regular communication was indeed a problem.

Communication was also a factor in comments regarding DRS improvement and CRP/CSP needs. These comments demonstrated CRPs'/CSPs' beliefs that improvements in information acquisition and sharing between the parties would better enable the parties to make well-informed decisions regarding services and consumer needs. Comments on DRS improvement and CRP/CSP needs also emphasized funding and referrals, requesting that DRS continue to provide (or provide more of) each.

#### CRP Service Responses from DRS Field Staff Survey

The five most commonly reported gaps for CRP Services were:

Direct Placement (84, 52.17%) — Beckley—4, Charleston—8, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Fairmont—3, Huntington—1, Keyser—4, Lewisburg—5, Logan—5, Marshall—2, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—5, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Parkersburg—4, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—4, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—6, Welch—1, Weston—2, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—2)

Life Skills Training (65, 40.37%) — Beckley—3, Charleston—3, Clarksburg—5, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—6, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—4, Moorefield—1, Morgantown—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—3, Princeton—3, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—4, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—1)

Community Based Assessment (61, 37.89%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—3, Martinsburg—1, Moorefield—2, Morgantown—6, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—3, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Romney—1, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—5, Teays Valley—3, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—1, and Wheeling—4.

Job Coaching— Other than SE (59, 36.65%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Fairmont—1, Huntington—3, Keyser—3, Lewisburg—4, Logan—5, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—3, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—2, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—4, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—1, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—2.

Work Adjustment Training (52, 32.30%) — Beckley—2, Charleston—5, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Keyser—1, Lewisburg—3, Logan—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—4, Oak Hill—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—2, Princeton—2, Sistersville—2, Spencer—1, Summersville—3, Teays Valley—2, Weirton—3, Welch—1, Weston—3, and Wheeling—3. (Unknown—1)

### **3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment include an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation service needs of “youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre—employment transition services.” DRS field staff that serve transitioning youth are one key resource in identifying the service needs of youth with disabilities in West Virginia. Therefore, needs assessment surveys completed by field staff that serve transitioning youth were analyzed separately in order to identify students’ needs for pre—employment transition services (PETS). There were 18 services in the survey that are considered PETS and were used for the post—hoc PETS subset analysis of need and gap ratings by field counselors who are assigned to serve high school youth.

#### Selected PETS

The following services from the survey were considered PETS for this analysis:

- Special Education Services;
- Tutoring;
- Work Adjustment Training;
- Job Search Training;
- On—the—job Training;
- Career Planning Training;
- Training on Disability Rights;
- Independent Living Skills;
- Drive Training;
- Job Club Skills;
- Counseling and Guidance;

- Community Based Assessment;
- Trial Work Experience;
- Vocational Evaluation;
- Job Placement;
- Peer Support;
- Work Skills Assessment; and
- Life Skills Training.

### Respondents

There were 74 respondents, 46% of the 161, that indicated having a partial or full school territory. The breakdown of the respondents by current position is as follows:

- Rehabilitation Counselor, 33 respondents (44.59% of respondents)
- Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, 13 respondents (17.57%)
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, 7 respondents (9.46%)
- Field Office Manager/Supervisor, 3 respondents (4.05%)
- Rehabilitation Services Associate, 18 respondents (24.32%)

### Office Location

Respondents were from 27 branch office locations. The Ripley office was the only location not represented in the PETS subset. One respondent did not provide their office location. The total number of respondents by district and office location are as follows:

District 1 (13 Respondents) — Charleston—4, Point Pleasant—2, Ripley—0, Spencer—2, Teays Valley—5.

District 2 (10) — Clarksburg—2, Elkins—3, Morgantown—1, Fairmont—1, Weston—3.

District 3 (11) — Parkersburg—3, Sistersville—2, Weirton—3, Wheeling—3.

District 4 (12) — Beckley—2, Lewisburg—4, Oak Hill—2, Princeton—2, Summersville—2.

District 5 (14) — Huntington—1, Logan—2, Marshall University—6, Mullens—3, Welch—2.

District 6 (13) — Keyser—4, Martinsburg—6, Moorefield—2, Romney—1.

### Top PETS Needs

Service need/use for each PET service was assessed to allow respondents to indicate which services their consumers need/use most often. This was done independently of the service gap assessment as some services may be highly needed/used, but are readily available and therefore do not require an increase in availability.

Services that were identified as either “4” or “5,” indicating frequent need by 50% or more of the total respondents are listed for each service category below with the total number and percentage of respondents in parentheses.

- Job Placement (67, 90.54%)
- Counseling and Guidance (64, 86.49%)
- Special Education Services (61, 82.43%)
- Job Search Training (61, 82.43%)
- Vocational Evaluation (55, 74.32%)
- Career Planning Training (51, 68.92%)
- Community Based Assessment (48, 64.86%)
- On—the—job Training (43, 58.11%)
- Work Skills Assessment (41, 55.41%)
- Work Adjustment Training (38, 51.35%)
- Driver Training (38, 51.35%)
- Tutoring (37, 50.00%)

#### Top Five Reported PETS Gaps

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap in either the multiple—choice (Yes, No, or N/A) or open—ended response (“Which of the above services are most in need of an increase in availability?”) sections were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses.

- Tutoring (44, 59.46%)
- On—the—job Training (38, 51.35%)
- Job Search Training (31, 41.89%)
- Life Skills Training (31, 41.89%)
- Job Placement (31, 41.89%)

#### Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents to the DRS field staff survey were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location.

Note: New categories were created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre—existing service category from the survey. For example, the “Overall Training” category was created to include a number of open—ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, “Training options” and “Training services.” The

Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

### Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, “From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 110 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Job Placement (29, 26.36%) — Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—2, Huntington—1, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—3, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—4, Weirton—2, Welch—2, and Weston—1.

Transportation (26, 23.64%) — Beckley—1, Clarksburg—1, Elkins—1, Fairmont—1, Huntington—2, Keyser—2, Lewisburg—2, Logan—1, Marshall—1, Martinsburg—2, Morgantown—1, Parkersburg—2, Princeton—1, Spencer—1, Summersville—1, Teays Valley—1, Weirton—2, Weston—1, and Wheeling—1. (Unknown—1)

Financial Assistance (22, 20.00%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—3, Elkins—3, Huntington—1, Logan—2, Martinsburg—2, Mullens—1, Oak Hill—2, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Weirton—2, and Wheeling—1.

Counseling and Guidance (16, 14.55%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—1, Clarksburg—2, Elkins—1, Huntington—1, Keyser—1, Marshall—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Romney—1, Spencer—1, Weirton—1, and Wheeling—2.

Overall Training (17, 15.45%) — Beckley—1, Charleston—2, Clarksburg—2, Fairmont—1, Huntington—1, Morgantown—1, Mullens—1, Parkersburg—1, Point Pleasant—1, Princeton—1, Sistersville—1, Summersville—2, Teays Valley—1, and Wheeling—1.

## **k. Annual Estimates**

Describe:

### **1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) calculated its estimate of individuals with disabilities who are eligible for services under this State Plan by applying the state incidence of disability rate for individuals ages 18—64 (17.4%) to the state general population figure for individuals who are ages 18—64 (1,118,913). Both statistics are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012—2016 American Community Survey five—year estimates.

Based on an estimate from the American Community Survey (as of January 2018), there are 194,175 people with a disability in WV between ages 18—64. If DRS authorizes an Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 average of \$1,638 of services per consumer in a fiscal year, then over \$318 million would be needed to purchase vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for these potentially eligible individuals to move them toward competitive employment outcomes.

### **2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:**

#### **A. The VR Program;**

In FY 2019, the Division expects to serve 8,133 consumers with disabilities (i.e., eligible to receive services based on an Individualized Plan for Employment), obligating \$12.6 million of Title I funds. Additionally, the agency expects to serve 147 consumers with most significant disabilities [i.e., Order of Selection (OS) category 1] in supported employment, using Title I funds. These estimates are based on historical data and current trends in caseload levels, Order of Selection, and the availability of fiscal and personnel resources. Over the past few years, the agency has experienced a decrease in its number of consumers and a significant reduction in reallocated funds. As the agency continues to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, there will continue to be dynamic forces and multiple factors that contribute to the estimated number of consumers served by the agency. One factor is the agency continuing to experience a high level of turnover among its vocational rehabilitation counselors. This contributes to lower service levels due to the learning curve for new counselors. Another contributing factor to the estimates is the provision of pre-employment transition services. The agency has shifted fiscal and human resources to better serve students with disabilities. Finally, as eligible consumers with significant and non-significant disabilities continue to enlist in the VR program, they will continue to be placed on a waitlist to allow the agency to focus on individuals with the most significant disabilities.

#### **B. The Supported Employment Program; and**

In FY 2019, the Division expects to serve 8,133 consumers with disabilities (i.e., eligible to receive services based on an Individualized Plan for Employment), obligating \$12.6 million of Title I funds. The agency also expects to use Title I funds for supported employment services for 147 consumers with most significant disabilities [i.e., Order of Selection (OS) category 1] These estimates are based on historical data and current trends in caseload levels, Order of Selection, and the availability of fiscal and personnel resources. Over the past few years, the agency has experienced a decrease in its number of consumers and a significant reduction in reallocated funds. As the agency continues to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, there will continue to be dynamic forces and multiple factors that contribute to the estimated number of consumers served by the agency.

One factor is the agency continuing to experience a high level of turnover among its vocational rehabilitation counselors. This contributes to lower service levels due to the learning curve for new counselors. Another contributing factor to the estimates is the provision of pre-employment transition services. The agency has shifted fiscal and human resources to better serve students with disabilities. Finally, as eligible consumers with significant and non-significant disabilities continue to enlist in the VR program, they will continue to be placed on a waitlist to allow the agency to focus on individuals with the most significant disabilities.

#### **C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;**

In Fiscal Year 2019, it is estimated that:

—5,551 individuals will be served in OS Category 1, using an estimated \$8,693,198 of Title I funds (average of \$1,566).

—2,579 individuals will be served in OS Category 2, using an estimated \$3,864,635 of Title I funds (average of \$1,499).

—3 individuals will be served in OS Category 3, using an estimated \$3,262 of Title I funds (average of \$1,087).

—0 individuals will be served in OS Category 4, using an estimated \$0 of Title I funds (average of \$0).

### **3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and**

DRS estimates that during FY 2019, 3,483 individuals who are eligible for VR services, will not be receiving services due to an order of selection. Specifically, DRS estimates that 2,622 individuals in OS Category 2 will not be served, 843 individuals in OS Category 3 will not be served, and 18 individuals in OS Category 4 will not be served. However, these individuals may be served if resources become available. Of the 3,483 individuals who are eligible for VR services but will not receive services due to an order of selection, 1,651 individuals are expected to be new applicants in FY 2019. Specifically, 1,468 new applicants in OS Category 2, 176 new applicants in OS Category 3, and 7 new applicants in OS Category 4

### **4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.**

In Fiscal Year 2019, it is estimated that:

—5,551 individuals will be served in OS Category 1, using an estimated \$8,693,198 of Title I funds (average of \$1,566).

—2,579 individuals will be served in OS Category 2, using an estimated \$3,864,635 of Title I funds (average of \$1,499).

—3 individuals will be served in OS Category 3, using an estimated \$3,262 of Title I funds (average of \$1,087).

—0 individuals will be served in OS Category 4, using an estimated \$0 of Title I funds (average of \$0).

## **I. State Goals and Priorities**

The designated State unit must:

### **1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed**

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) employs many goals to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly those individuals with the most significant disabilities. Furthermore, DRS recognizes those services essential to needs identified in the comprehensive assessment, evaluation of the Designated State Unit's performance on pre—WIOA Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) standards and indicators to ensure quality



services for individuals with significant disabilities, and services vital to the operation and effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in West Virginia.

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and the WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well—integrated workforce development system that provided customer—focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS Executive Management Group (EMG) meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. All SRC members were provided draft copies of the PY 2016/FY 2017 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

## **2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.**

The workforce development system (WDS) of West Virginia has identified the following goals for Program Years 2016—2019:

### **Goal 1: Workforce Development System Integration**

In order for WIOA to be successful, a seamless one—stop delivery system must be created. As resources become more and more limited, partners in the workforce development system must work together in order to provide maximum benefit to our customers.

### **Goal 2: Customer—Driven Approach (Individual & Employer)**

We will create an approach based on the needs of the job seekers as well as the needs of the employer. Our workforce development system must examine the needs of the employer, assess the skills and skills gaps of the workforce, and then create solutions to ensure maximum benefit to both customer groups.

### **Goal 3: Career Pathways Development**

It is imperative that the workforce development system provide education and/or training for skills that lead to quality employment in high—demand jobs or entry—level occupations that lead to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low—skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways.

The State will support career pathways that help adults and youth enter the labor force and/or advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation, or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation.

#### Goal 4: Increase Opportunities for Youth

Unemployment rates for older youth and young adults remain substantially higher than those for the population as a whole. The likelihood of employment is highly correlated with educational levels; rates of employment and labor market participation for individuals with secondary credentials or less are substantially lower than for those with postsecondary credentials. For these reasons, the workforce development system must recognize the employment challenges faced by youth, particularly those without postsecondary credentials. Partners must work together to alleviate barriers and create opportunities for our youth.

DRS is fully committed to coordinate its activity and services with core and community partners to ensure successful completion of the aforementioned goals. The following goals highlight specific focus areas for DRS that will also contribute to the overall goals of the West Virginia WDS:

DRS Goal 1 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater. Compared to the national average of 28.8%, West Virginia has a much lower percentage of individuals 25 years and older having attained a bachelor's degree (18.8%; from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/54000.html>). For individuals with disabilities, the percentage is much lower, at 8.10%. While a majority (69.4%) of West Virginians with disabilities age 25 or over have a high school education or higher, nearly a third (30.6%) of this population does not, compared to only 10.9% of the State's population of 25 or older without a disability. Close relationships with the WV Adult Education Program (Adult Ed) and the WV Higher Education Policy Commission, as well as State and Local Education Agencies, will help to close this education gap.

DRS Goal 2 — Provide Pre—Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities. Pursuant to requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and findings from the 2015 CSNA, DRS will, in cooperation with State and Local Education Agencies, provide Pre—Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities, focusing on students 21 years or younger while still in high school. The provision of PETS offers students with disabilities information about careers, career opportunities, education and training programs, and self—advocacy. This information and work—based experiences can lead to more well—inform career decision making and can empower students with disabilities to become more educated and skilled, moving toward a career that meets their needs. Activities under this DRS goal are provided in conjunction with those of the West Virginia Department of Education's Graduation 20/20 project. This initiative focuses on improving the graduation rate for West Virginia high school students with disabilities. In 2014, only 70.27% of students with a disability in West Virginia graduated from high school with a regular diploma. By 2018, Graduation 20/20 has a target increased graduation rate (with a regular diploma) of 81.44% for students with disabilities.

DRS Goal 3 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide. From a Bureau of Labor Statistics' December 2014

report, West Virginia had the lowest workforce participation rate (all individuals, with and without disabilities) among all the states and the District of Columbia, with 52.8% compared to the national average of 62.7%. Individuals with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, have lower employment/workforce participation rates. Labor force participation among persons with disabilities in West Virginia has been steadily declining in recent years. Since 2010, labor force participation among these individuals is estimated to have fallen from 31.7% (63,609) to 29.1% (57,785) in 2013. As of 2013, labor force participation for persons with disabilities in West Virginia was almost 12 percentage points below the national rate of 41.0%. West Virginia has a high poverty rate, with 17.9% of residents below the poverty level compared to 15.4% nationally (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/54000.html>). The poverty rate is especially high for individuals with disabilities, with estimates that 24.9 % of persons with disabilities above the age of 18 (86,250 of 346,903) were living in poverty in 2013. Even among those employed, there are still significant numbers of West Virginians who earn below the poverty line.

Workforce WV expects the largest numeric change in employment growth (from 2012 to 2022) to occur in the industries of Health Care and Social Assistance (+23,142; 33.50%), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation (+5,594; 35.39%), Government (+5,322; 14.22%), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+3,951; 34.18%), and Retail Trade (+3,561; 8.92%).

Findings from the 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicated the need to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in specific ways to warrant the creation of two additional DRS goals.

DRS Goal 4 — Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. FY 2015 CSNA findings from field staff surveys and Consumer Affairs Conference (CAC) attendee surveys indicate a need for continued efforts to increase the availability of transportation throughout the state. Based on responses by stakeholders across the state, transportation continues to be an issue and a perceived barrier to employment/training. DRS continues to implement several initiatives to help alleviate the need for transportation while taking into account the wide array of circumstances that West Virginians with disabilities experience. DRS has authorized the direct purchasing of cars for qualified consumers as well as the creation of the Vendor Travel Reimbursement for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) who provide transportation for consumers; counselors also encourage consumers' family members to assist with reimbursable transportation. DRS will continue to make sure that consumers are aware of these options and continue to identify targeted solutions to the varied transportation issues for West Virginians with disabilities, focusing specifically on individualized transportation solutions.

DRS Goal 5 — Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. VR consumers require specialized services provided by CRPs statewide to achieve an integrated, competitive employment outcome. Responses from the CSNA indicate there still is a need for DRS to continue to improve collaborative relationships with all community providers. Findings from the CSNA point to a need to focus

efforts on specific geographic areas within the state where miscommunication between community providers and DRS counselors continues.

### **3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:**

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well—integrated workforce development system that provided customer—focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS Executive Management Group (EMG) meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. All SRC members were provided draft copies of the PY 2016/FY 2017 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

#### **A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;**

Findings from the 2015 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicated the need to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in specific ways to warrant the creation of two additional DRS goals.

DRS Goal 4 — Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. FY 2015 CSNA findings from field staff surveys and Consumer Affairs Conference (CAC) attendee surveys indicate a need for continued efforts to increase the availability of transportation throughout the state. Based on responses by stakeholders across the state, transportation continues to be an issue and a perceived barrier to employment/training. DRS continues to implement several initiatives to help alleviate the need for transportation while taking into account the wide array of circumstances that West Virginians with disabilities experience. DRS has authorized the direct purchasing of cars for qualified consumers as well as the creation of the Vendor Travel Reimbursement for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) who provide transportation for consumers; counselors also encourage consumers' family members to assist with reimbursable transportation. DRS will continue to make sure that consumers are aware of these options and continue to identify targeted solutions to the varied transportation issues for West Virginians with disabilities, focusing specifically on individualized transportation solutions.

DRS Goal 5 — Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. VR consumers require specialized services provided by CRPs statewide to achieve an integrated, competitive employment outcome. Responses from the CSNA indicate there still is a need for DRS to continue to improve collaborative relationships with all community providers. Findings from the CSNA point to a need to focus efforts on specific geographic areas within the state where miscommunication between community providers and DRS counselors continues.

**B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and**

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in program year (PY) 2016, it will collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

**C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.**

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and the WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well—integrated workforce development system that provided customer—focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided

DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS Executive Management Group (EMG) meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. All SRC members were provided draft copies of the PY 2016/FY 2017 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

## **m. Order of Selection**

Describe:

### **1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:**

#### **A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**

The Division's Director will determine whether resources will be available to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals throughout the program year. If not, consistent with state and federal laws and regulations, the Director will establish restrictions regarding priority categories for selecting the order in which otherwise eligible individuals may be served. Only the Director may establish an order of selection.

In Program Year (PY) 2018, the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will be operating under an order of selection (OS), as there will not be adequate resources to provide services to all eligible consumers. DRS will continue to place eligible applicants with non—significant disabilities (OS priority categories 3 and 4) and eligible applicants with significant disabilities (OS priority category 2) on the waiting list in PY 2018. DRS has not elected to serve eligible individuals regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

Description of Priority categories

Priority Categories

Following are the order of selection categories currently applicable to the Division's vocational rehabilitation program:

Category 1: Eligible applicants with the most significant disabilities.

Category 2: Eligible applicants with significant disabilities.

Category 3: Eligible applicants with non—significant disabilities comprised of individuals with a permanent disability and whose service provision will be completed in less than nine months.

Category 4: Eligible applicants with non—significant disabilities comprised of individuals with a non—permanent disability.

The Counselor will determine the significance of an individual's disability after conducting a diagnostic study that allows for assessing the permanency of the disability, the number of functional capacities limited by the disability, the number of vocational rehabilitation services needed, and the time in service required to complete those services. These criteria are used when determining whether the individual's disability is non—significant, significant, or most significant.

#### Definitions

Individual with a Most Significant Disability (MSD).

An individual who:

- a. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self—care, self—direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerances, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- b. Will require two or more vocational rehabilitation services in addition to counseling and assessment; and
- c. Those services will require more than twelve months.

Alternatively, any individual who will be receiving services under an individualized supported employment plan for employment will be determined to be MSD.

Individual with Significant Disability (SD).

An individual who:

- a. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self—care, self—direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerances, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
- b. Will require one or more vocational rehabilitation services in addition to counseling and assessment; and
- c. Those services will require nine months or more.

Individual with Non—Significant Disability.

An individual who:

- a. Has a non—permanent disability, or
- b. Has a permanent disability whose service provision will be completed in less than nine months.

#### Time in Service

For the purpose of determining significance of disability, “time in service” is considered to begin upon implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment and end upon entering Status 22 (in employment).

Automatic Classification as an Individual with Significant Disability

An individual who is a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiary or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient will be coded automatically as SD. However, if the individual meets MSD criteria, that designation will apply.

#### Recertification

An individual may be recertified from SD to MSD if all MSD criteria are met. In such instances, the Counselor will note appropriate circumstances in the Action Statement/Details section of the consumer's case record.

#### DRS Responsibilities when Implementing an Order of Selection

An OS has no impact on the DRS obligation for case finding and referrals. DRS has a continuing responsibility to make the public and referral sources aware of the services it has to offer individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. Furthermore, DRS shall ensure its funding arrangements for providing services, including third party arrangements and establishment grants, are consistent with the OS. Any funding arrangements that are inconsistent with the OS will be renegotiated.

#### Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

##### OS Administration Process

DRS will continue to place eligible applicants with non—significant disabilities (OS priority categories 3 and 4) and eligible applicants with significant disabilities (OS priority category 2) on the waiting list in PY 2018.

Services necessary for determination of eligibility and assessment of rehabilitation needs are exempted from the Division's order of selection. Any individual notified by the Counselor of classification as a member of an open priority category shall be exempted should that category later be closed.

#### Plan for Implementing the Order of Selection

DRS will strictly adhere to federal regulations in administering its OS. DRS will continue to: (1) implement the order on a statewide basis; (2) notify all eligible persons of their assignment to a particular priority category and their right to appeal this assignment; (3) assure continuity of services to all persons who were receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to the effective date of the closure order; and (4) assure that funding arrangements are consistent with the OS [34 CFR 361.36(e)].

When the order of selection is implemented, DRS will continue to ensure that an eligible individual who is not assigned to an open OS category has access to services provided under the information and referral system [Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Act]. Information and referral services include: (1) providing VR information and guidance to assist the individual to achieve employment and (2) appropriately referring the individual to other federal and state programs, including other statewide workforce development programs, that are best suited to meet the individual's specific employment needs [Section 101(a)(20)(A) of the Act].

When making a referral, DRS will provide the individual with:

—a notice of the referral;



—information about a specific point of contact within the program to which the individual is being referred; and

—information and advice about the most suitable service for assisting the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment [Section 101(a)(20)(B)(ii) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.37(b)(2)].

DRS will continue to maintain the individual's service record to include documentation on the nature and scope of the information and referral services it provides to the individual and documentation on the referral itself [34 CFR 361.47(a)(13)].

DRS will open and close priority categories as needed in PY 2018, so long as the order of the categories is maintained and continuity of services to all individuals selected for services is assured.

DRS will use the individual's date of application to rank individuals within a priority category. This equitable and reasonable factor provides a method of selecting individuals from a waiting list when DRS has enough resources to serve some, but not all, individuals in that OS priority category.

#### **B. The justification for the order.**

In PY 2018, DRS will be operating under an order of selection (OS), as there will not be adequate resources to provide services to all eligible consumers.

#### **C. The service and outcome goals.**

In PY 2018, the agency plans to serve 8,133 individuals with an expected outcome goal of 1,229 rehabilitants within a service time frame of 6 and 28 months and at a cost of \$12,561,095 for all priority categories.

#### **D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**

In PY 2018, it is projected that:

—5,551 individuals in OS Category 1 will be served. Approximately 566 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 513 individuals in this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 28 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be \$8,693,198.

—2,579 individuals in OS Category 2 will be served. Approximately 660 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 526 individuals in this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 22 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be \$3,864,635.

—3 individuals in OS Category 3 will be served. Approximately 3 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 0 individuals in this

OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 6 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be \$3,262.

—0 individuals in OS Category 4 will be served. Approximately 0 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 0 individuals in this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 0 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be \$0.

**E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

DRS' Client Services Manual clearly outlines OS Categories to ensure priority services for persons with MSD throughout the state. Furthermore, DRS has budgeted sufficient resources to serve all consumers with disabilities in all open OS Categories with priority given to persons with MSD. DRS utilizes data and caseload management reports to monitor and ensure services to OS Category 1, persons with MSD, are maintained through the PY.

DRS will reopen OS Categories as resources become available. DRS will assess the agency's resources and ability to maintain continuous VR services prior to opening up each OS Category. DRS will ensure that individuals with MSD are being served, with no individuals with MSD on the waitlist prior to opening the next OS Category.

When a closed category is reopened for services, individuals in that category will be notified in writing by DRS that they can now receive services. DRS will ensure all individuals selected for services will continue to receive those services without interruption.

**2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.**

DRS has not elected to serve eligible individuals regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

**n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.**

**1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.**

The methodology of the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) for distribution of Title VI—B funds is based exclusively on a fee—for—service authorization process with approved vendors of supported employment (SE) services. DRS uses no Title VI—B funds for administrative costs. Utilizing the DRS fee schedule for SE services, rehabilitation counselors utilize Title VI—B and Title I funds to provide needed SE services for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.

DRS established a statewide fee—for—service funding approach for job development services for SE—eligible individuals. This structure provides vendors an effective and efficient way of meeting the costs of this critical element of the job placement process. The process provides

reimbursement for employment outcomes and brings increased energy and vendor resources to support job development activities.

In FY 2015, DRS exhausted the \$300,000.00 of the Title VI—B funds to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities in its SE program through community rehabilitation program (CRP) services. When Title VI—B funds (\$300,000 total per year with \$150,000 set aside for youth with disabilities) are exhausted, DRS defrays supported employment program service costs with Title I funds for individuals who require the services or who qualify and have not yet been served under the supported employment program. In FY 2015, DRS authorized \$474,215.67 SE services for 151 youth with disabilities and \$254,054.95 in SE services for 109 adults with disabilities.

DRS plans to continue using three prevalent models of supported employment services: individual placement, mobile work crews, and enclaves. Additionally, DRS will encourage and support development of affirmative industries that integrate workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities throughout the CRP network.

DRS policies defining competitive employment settings promote linking CRPs with federal and state work contracts that may exist within the community. Such links expand job opportunities for individuals receiving SE, particularly those who reside in rural locations. This approach also directs Title VI—B and Title I funds into placement—related services and activities.

## **2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:**

### **A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) continues to strongly promote and support training and support services for youth with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. DRS uses its fiscal and case management systems to continuously monitor resources (especially reserved funds to be used with youth with the most significant disabilities) being used for Extended Supported Employment Services (e.g., job coaching for supported employment).

DRS does not use Title VI—b funds for administrative costs in the provision of SE services. When Title VI—B funds (\$300,000 total, with a minimum of \$150,000 set aside for youth with disabilities under the age of 24) are exhausted, DRS defrays supported employment program service costs with Title I funds for individuals who require the services or who qualify and have not yet been served under the supported employment program. If Title VI-B funds set aside for youth are not exhausted, they may be used for the provision of extended services for youth under the age of 24. Please see the next section for additional information regarding extended services for youth.

### **B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

Through a combined effort with other disability organizations, \$100,000 was appropriated by the West Virginia Legislature for supported employment follow—along services (extended supported employment services). DRS serves as the fiscal agent for these funds. DRS has created

program guidelines governing the use of state—appropriated funds for extended services under the supported employment program created by state statute in 1993. The sole use of the state funds attached to this program is to provide extended services for individuals not eligible from any other funding source. All providers of supported employment services may access these funds for individuals who are eligible under the guidelines. At the end of FY 2015, DRS had sponsored 67 individuals in the extended supported employment program so they could maintain and retain their jobs within the community. This figure represents the cooperative efforts of 13 CRPs.

As appropriate, the DRS will use the State funds allocated (\$100,000) for Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES) to expand employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities (MSD). DRS will continue to educate legislature regarding ESES for youth with MSD to ensure continued funding for ESES.

## **o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

### **1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**

DRS Goal 1 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater.

DRS will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre-employment transition services for high school students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 - Provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities.

The 2015 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre-employment transition service need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(WIOA), DRS has recently restructured its field services unit, creating a subdivision of counselors that focus solely on providing services, including Pre-employment Transition Services (PETS), to students with disabilities. DRS counselors in high schools will provide PETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will host a one week summer workshop for transition students who are juniors entering into their senior year of high school. The workshop will be held in seven areas across the state. DRS staff participating include the PETS Counselor, Employment Specialist, and RSA assigned to the PETS territory. Class will start at 9:00am and end at 4:00pm. Class size for each of the seven workshops will be approximately 30 students. Students will earn minimum wage for the time that they attend. DRS is also requesting WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the workshops to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

- Career planning
- Career preparation
- SSI/SSDI Information
- Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs.
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Employer Expectations
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Timeliness of task completion
- Be able to work without supervision
- Positive work ethic
- Manage multiple tasks
- High-growth Jobs
- Personal Brand
- Job Hunting Tools- resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

In 2016, DRS will partner with Community Access, Incorporated to implement a program to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program will address the five mandated PETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP). The program will assist school districts by offering training and

technical assistance in setting up community-based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project will help level the playing field between resource-rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders will be a component of the project. A concerted effort will be made to include historically under-served groups including students in the foster care system, those returning from out-of-state placements, and those students on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) track. The project has the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community-based Work Exploration programs.
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WV Department of Education (WVDOE) staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross-sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

DRS Goal 3 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

#### Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS.

#### Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS will continue to use its employment specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in-house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 12 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability-related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers, including

students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

- Staffing services
- Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities
- Financial incentives
- Accessibility assessments
- Accommodating employees with disabilities
- Basic disability etiquette
- Attitudinal barriers
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Locating a DRS office
- Where to find additional resources

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS-employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job-ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 19 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

### Assistive Technology

DRS will continue to provide rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals can become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities.

WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit, with two locations (in Nitro, covering the southern half of the state and in Morgantown, covering the North), which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 — Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continues its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focuses on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors will encourage planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors will identify transportation issues and focus on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This will ensure that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal is not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues also will be addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS will continue to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and will continue to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources.

DRS Goal 5 — Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers [including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), Independent Living, and other community providers] to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

- Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web-based, user-friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

- Continue to maintain regular communications between DRS and community providers in each district and at the state level. Each DRS district will continue to host joint meetings with DRS district and branch office staff and CRPs in those districts to provide opportunities for CRP representatives and DRS personnel to discuss local service needs of DRS consumers. Subsequent to each meeting, the local DRS office will be required to send a brief report to the CRP Program Manager. This process will allow all parties involved in the expansion of community-based



services to be kept informed of progress and issues. The Division will continue to examine the information and recommendations collected from various meetings between CRP and DRS staff members.

Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

- a. An e-mail list-serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.
  - b. DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service-related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.
  - c. Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings. - Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.
- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.
  - Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies. - Continue to conduct cross training and face-to-face meetings with community partners at the local level.
  - Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.
  - Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.
  - Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

## **2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.**

DRS will continue to provide rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals can become employed or maintain employment. DRS has

developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit, with two locations (in Nitro, covering the southern half of the state and in Morgantown, covering the North), which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

### **3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has made improvements in minority access to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, as indicated by successfully exceeding the RSA requirement for Indicator 2.1 (equal access). In FY 2015, the ratio of minority service rate over non—minority service rate was 0.883. The 88.3% service rate ratio is above the RSA benchmark of 80%.

The agency's branch office locations represent statewide coverage. These offices are able to serve individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, in all areas of the state. Many cities within WV which have a relatively high proportion of minorities in the population (e.g., Charleston, Huntington, and Beckley) have a DRS branch office located within.

Additionally, DRS will continue to utilize tools and techniques which have allowed the agency to have success in its outreach to minority populations, such as:

—DRS will continue to use geographic information systems (GIS), as appropriate, to pinpoint geographic locations with potentially underserved minority populations in the State. This will allow for more effective and efficient outreach to those populations.

—DRS will continue to depend on local outreach efforts by branch office field staff to bring individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, into the VR system.

### **4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

DRS Goal 1 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre—employment transition services for high school students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 — Provide Pre—Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities. The 2015 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre—employment transition service need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), DRS has recently restructured its field services unit, creating a subdivision of counselors that focus solely on providing services, including Pre—employment Transition Services (PETS), to students with disabilities. DRS counselors in high schools will provide PETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will host a one week summer workshop for transition students who are juniors entering into their senior year of high school. The workshop will be held in seven areas across the state. DRS staff participating include the PETS Counselor, Employment Specialist, and RSA assigned to the PETS territory. Class will start at 9:00am and end at 4:00pm. Class size for each of the seven workshops will be approximately 30 students. Students will earn minimum wage for the time that they attend. DRS is also requesting WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the workshops to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

—Career planning

—Career preparation

—SSI/SSDI Information

—Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs.

—Communication

- Conflict Management
- Employer Expectations
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Timeliness of task completion
- Be able to work without supervision
- Positive work ethic
- Manage multiple tasks
- High—growth Jobs
- Personal Brand
- Job Hunting Tools— resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

In 2016, DRS will partner with Community Access, Incorporated to implement a program to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program will address the five mandated PETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP). The program will assist school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community—based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project will help level the playing field between resource—rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders will be a component of the project. A concerted effort will be made to include historically under—served groups including students in the foster care system, those returning from out—of—state placements, and those students on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) track. The project has the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community—based Work Exploration programs.
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WV Department of Education (WVDOE) staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross—sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

**5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

— Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new ‘CRP Locator’ tool (a web—based, user—friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

— Continue to maintain regular communications between DRS and community providers in each district and at the state level. Each DRS district will continue to host joint meetings with DRS district and branch office staff and CRPs in those districts to provide opportunities for CRP representatives and DRS personnel to discuss local service needs of DRS consumers. Subsequent to each meeting, the local DRS office will be required to send a brief report to the CRP Program Manager. This process will allow all parties involved in the expansion of community—based services to be kept informed of progress and issues. The Division will continue to examine the information and recommendations collected from various meetings between CRP and DRS staff members.

Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

a. An e—mail list—serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.

b. DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service—related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.

c. Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

— Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.

— Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.

— Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies.

— Continue to conduct cross training and face—to—face meetings with community partners at the local level.

- Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.
- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.
- Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

## **6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in program year (PY) 2016, it will collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

## **7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**

Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS.

## Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS will continue to use its employment specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in—house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability—related information, services, and pre—screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 12 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS’ team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability—related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

- Staffing services
- Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities
- Financial incentives
- Accessibility assessments
- Accommodating employees with disabilities
- Basic disability etiquette
- Attitudinal barriers
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Locating a DRS office
- Where to find additional resources

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS—employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job—ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 19 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS’ Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with

disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

## **8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:**

### **A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**

DRS Goal 1 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre—employment transition services for high school students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 — Provide Pre—Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities.

The 2015 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre—employment transition service need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), DRS has recently restructured its field services unit, creating a subdivision of counselors that focus solely on providing services, including Pre—employment Transition Services (PETS), to students with disabilities. DRS counselors in high schools will provide PETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will host a one week summer workshop for transition students who are juniors entering into their senior year of high school. The workshop



will be held in seven areas across the state. DRS staff participating include the PETS Counselor, Employment Specialist, and RSA assigned to the PETS territory. Class will start at 9:00am and end at 4:00pm. Class size for each of the seven workshops will be approximately 30 students. Students will earn minimum wage for the time that they attend. DRS is also requesting WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the workshops to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

- Career planning
- Career preparation
- SSI/SSDI Information
- Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs.
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Employer Expectations
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Timeliness of task completion
- Be able to work without supervision
- Positive work ethic
- Manage multiple tasks
- High—growth Jobs
- Personal Brand
- Job Hunting Tools— resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

In 2016, DRS will partner with Community Access, Incorporated to implement a program to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program will address the five mandated PETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP). The program will assist school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community—based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project will help level the playing field between resource—rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders will be a component of the project. A concerted effort will be made to include historically under—served groups including students in the foster care system, those returning from out—of—state placements, and those students on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) track. The project has the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community—based Work Exploration programs.

2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WV Department of Education (WVDOE) staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross—sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

DRS Goal 3 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

#### Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS.

#### Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS will continue to use its employment specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in—house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability—related information, services, and pre—screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 12 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability—related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

- Staffing services
- Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities
- Financial incentives

- Accessibility assessments
- Accommodating employees with disabilities
- Basic disability etiquette
- Attitudinal barriers
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Locating a DRS office
- Where to find additional resources

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS—employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job—ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 19 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS’ Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students’ vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

#### Assistive Technology

DRS will continue to provide rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals can become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS’ role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit, with two locations (in Nitro, covering the southern half of the state and in Morgantown, covering the North), which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 — Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continues its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focuses on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors will encourage planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors will identify transportation issues and focus on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This will ensure that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal is not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues also will be addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS will continue to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and will continue to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources.

DRS Goal 5 — Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers [including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), Independent Living, and other community providers] to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

— Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web—based, user—friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

— Continue to maintain regular communications between DRS and community providers in each district and at the state level. Each DRS district will continue to host joint meetings with DRS district and branch office staff and CRPs in those districts to provide opportunities for CRP representatives and DRS personnel to discuss local service needs of DRS consumers. Subsequent to each meeting, the local DRS office will be required to send a brief report to the CRP Program Manager. This process will allow all parties involved in the expansion of community—based services to be kept informed of progress and issues. The Division will continue to examine the information and recommendations collected from various meetings between CRP and DRS staff members.

Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

a. An e—mail list—serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.

b. DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service—related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.

c. Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

— Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.

— Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.

— Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies.

— Continue to conduct cross training and face—to—face meetings with community partners at the local level.

— Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.

— Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.

— Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

## **B. support innovation and expansion activities; and**

To foster a customer—focused approach to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) works with the WV State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council and uses innovation and expansion (I&E) resources to support the activities of these groups. As appropriate, DRS will continue to use I&E funds to discover, generate, and improve upon service delivery processes to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, with the emphasis on pre—employment transition services to students with disabilities now in place by WIOA, there are significant opportunities for discoveries that can be made using I&E resources.

## **C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has made improvements in minority access to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, as indicated by successfully exceeding the RSA requirement for Indicator 2.1 (equal access). In FY 2015, the ratio of minority service rate over non—minority service rate was 0.883. The 88.3% service rate ratio is above the RSA benchmark of 80%.

The agency's branch office locations represent statewide coverage. These offices are able to serve individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, in all areas of the state. Many cities within WV which have a relatively high proportion of minorities in the population (e.g., Charleston, Huntington, and Beckley) have a DRS branch office located within.

DRS also has a significant presence in state colleges and high schools with significant minority populations in all 55 counties of WV.

Due to the rural nature of the state, support for transportation is very important for access to VR services by individuals with disabilities. DRS continues to recognize this barrier as a challenge to VR service delivery statewide. DRS is committed to continuing its pursuit of individualized transportation solutions for its consumers, including those from minority backgrounds.

Additionally, DRS will continue to utilize tools and techniques which have allowed the agency to have success in its outreach to minority populations, such as:

—DRS will continue to use geographic information systems (GIS), as appropriate, to pinpoint geographic locations with potentially underserved minority populations in the State. This will allow for more effective and efficient outreach to those populations.

—DRS will continue to depend on local outreach efforts by branch office field staff to bring individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, into the VR system.

## **p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

Describe:

**1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

The following description includes progress in the achievement of the goals for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

DRS Goal 1 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater.

Since the implementation of the Unified State Plan, DRS has witnessed an increasing shift, among rehabilitated consumers, from a pre-high school diploma education at application to a post-high school diploma education at closure. In federal fiscal year (FY) 2015, the percentage of rehabilitated consumers with less than a high school diploma dropped 24.7 percentage points

(from 31.3% at application to 6.6% at closure) over the course of their program participation. Likewise, the percentage of rehabilitated consumers with a high school diploma or more education increased 25.9 percentage points (from 63.8% at application to 89.7% at closure). This shift increased in FY 2017, with the percentage of rehabilitated consumers with less than a high school diploma dropping 25.5 percentage points (from 30.4% at application to 4.9% at closure) over the course of their program participation. Meanwhile, the percentage of rehabilitated consumers with a high school diploma or further education increased 28.2 percentage points (from 63.9% at application to 92.1% at closure).

DRS monitored the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. DRS worked closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre-employment transition services for high school students with disabilities. DRS assigned a counselor to each high school in WV to enhance the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors took part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when invited to do so. Counselors stayed in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as needed. DRS also worked closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education. DRS will continue to conduct these activities as part of its progress toward achievement of this goal.

DRS Goal 2 — Provide Pre—Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities.

The 2015 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre-employment transition service need. DRS counselors provided Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. In program year (PY) 2016, DRS provided Pre-ETS to 2,185 students with disabilities in WV.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS hosted summer workshops [Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits] for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. In 2016, the CEO Summits were held in 7 areas across the state; in 2017, the Summits were held in 11 areas. DRS staff participating included the Pre-ETS Counselor, Employment Specialist, and Rehabilitation Service Associates (RSAs) assigned to the Pre-ETS territory. Class size for each of the workshops was approximately 30 students. Students earned minimum wage for the time that they attend. DRS also included representatives from WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the workshops to provide additional information to the students. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits.

Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, SSI/SSDI Information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict

management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles.

Throughout the academic year, DRS Employment Specialists also provided Pre-ETS at the local high schools. The Employment Specialists conducted mock interviewing, career exploration, and other employment related topics. The Providing Opportunities Within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program provides students that ability to job shadow careers that they are interested in. The Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 81 employers involved in the POWER Program.

In 2016 and 2017, DRS partnered with Community Access, Incorporated (CAI) to implement a program, entitled “Pathways to the Future,” to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program addressed the five required Pre-ETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP). The program assisted school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community-based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project helped level the playing field between resource-rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders was a component of the project. The project had the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community-based Work Exploration programs.
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WV Department of Education (WVDOE) staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross-sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

In conjunction with CAI, DRS enlisted the services of Terzetto Creative to create a “Pathways to the Future” website ([www.pathwayswv.org](http://www.pathwayswv.org)), which serves as a self-service resource for students with disabilities statewide to receive Pre-ETS. The website provides valuable information and tools regarding career planning, education planning, independent living, self-determination, and work-based learning. The website was bolstered by banners that were placed in high schools in all 55 counties of the state. Additionally, several pages of the College Foundation of West Virginia’s website ([www.cfwv.com](http://www.cfwv.com)) have links to the Pathways website. These banners and links directed students with disabilities to the website and its resources.

DRS Goal 3 — Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

Collaboration with WorkForce WV



DRS has maintained regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This has been accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media. DRS, particularly through its Employment Specialists, stayed informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS Employment Specialists have also continuously collected employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS. DRS registers its job-ready consumers with WorkForce WV in order to better serve employers by providing them with a base of potential employees.

#### Collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards

DRS maintained and continues to maintain a presence with each of West Virginia's seven Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs): Region 1 WDB; Region 2 — South Western WV WDB, Inc.; Region 3 — WDB of Kanawha County, Inc.; Region 4 Mid-Ohio Valley WDB; Region 5 — Northern Panhandle WDB; Region 6 WDB, and Region 7 WDB. DRS has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) with each board. Each Local WDB has a DRS representative who is active in the Board's activities and decision-making process.

#### Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS used its Employment Specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in-house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 11 Employment Specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. Each Employment Specialist has a unique understanding of local labor market information (LMI) including what jobs are available, what jobs are in demand or decline, and employer networks.

DRS' team of Employment Specialists provided business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability-related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment Specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, Employment Specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides information regarding staffing services, training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities, financial incentives, accessibility assessments, accommodating employees with disabilities, basic disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, locating a DRS office, and where to find additional resources.

DRS Employment Specialists conducted over 1,000 employer visits with more than 800 employers in both FYs 2016 and 2017.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS-employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to Counselors to potentially match a job-ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 19 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also worked with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities through the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice. Currently, there are 81 employers statewide that participate in the POWER program.

#### Assistive Technology

DRS provided rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals could become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit, with two locations (in Nitro, covering the southern half of the state and in Morgantown, covering the North), which provided AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 — Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continued its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focused on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors encouraged planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors identified transportation issues and focused on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This ensured

that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal was not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues were also addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS continued to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and continued to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources. These activities will be ongoing as DRS strives to accomplish transportation access for all of its consumers in need.

DRS Goal 5 — Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

From FY 2016 to FY 2017, DRS witnessed an increase in consumers served by CRPs (from 1,264 to 1,584), as well as authorized dollars spent on CRP services (from \$3,023,989 to \$3,680,197).

DRS continued to educate field staff, especially new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web-based, user-friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits increased awareness of available service options, which helped to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. DRS continued to maintain regular communications with community providers in each district and at the state level. Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV.

Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also includes:

- a. An e-mail list-serve with all current vendors that is updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.
- b. DRS counselors in each district continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service-related issues specific to the local service area(s) aids in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.
- c. Two Rehabilitation Specialists covering all districts in the state provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements. During these visits, they provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

Additionally, the agency works to:

- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas;
- Conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings are held to promote interagency collaboration

by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies;

- Conduct cross training and face-to-face meetings with community partners at the local level;
- Assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events;
- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument; and - Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

### **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

DRS continued to be successful in achieving the agency's goals and priorities. However, a high turnover rate of DRS staff, including VR counselors, presents a barrier to the full achievement of all goals and priorities. Because of this barrier, DRS will continue to maintain its goals and priorities relating to CRPs, transportation, and serving youth with disabilities until the desired outcomes are achieved.

The main impact of high turnover is the need to continually train and educate new staff members. Newly hired staff do not have a full understanding of available resources in their local area, including transportation and CRP services. This knowledge gap effects many areas of DRS activities and may unfortunately lead to lower levels of CRP utilization, local transportation options, and consumer satisfaction, especially among youth. However, DRS has worked and will continue working to mitigate these impediments to achieving its goals and priorities.

The high turnover rate, not just among DRS staff, but CRP staff as well, can negatively impact CRP service delivery and capacity across the state. For these reasons, DRS has maintained goals and priorities associated with improving the working relationships between DRS and CRP staff in addition to increasing the availability of CRP services within the community.

To combat transportation issues, DRS has continued its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and its focus on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. DRS also encouraged planning for transportation needs early in the development of the consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, DRS counselors identified transportation issues and focused on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This ensured that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal was not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues were also addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews.

DRS is successfully moving forward, despite the barriers faced by the agency, and will continue to work toward successfully achieving all goals and priorities.

## **2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

### **A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

## PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SE) GOALS

The total authorized dollars for CRP supported employment services in FY 2017 was \$703,389.53 for 184 consumers with most significant disabilities. This is an increase from FY 2016, when 216 consumers were served and \$686,015.47 were authorized for CRP SE services.

As previously addressed in the discussion of DRS Goal 5, DRS continued to promote the expansion community rehabilitation programs to expand their services into potentially unserved or underserved areas. DRS identified new community rehabilitation programs to increase the availability of supported employment services (i.e., job coaching) for West Virginians with significant disabilities. In FY 2015, DRS identified 91 CRPs to serve West Virginians with disabilities. As of the beginning of 2018, the agency has identified 101 CRPs. The agency also emphasized job coaching for DRS consumers who are not in the supported employment program.

### **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

## PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SE) GOALS

The total authorized dollars for CRP supported employment services in FY 2017 was \$703,389.53 for 184 consumers with most significant disabilities. This is an increase from FY 2016, when 216 consumers were served and \$686,015.47 were authorized for CRP SE services.

As previously addressed in the discussion of DRS Goal 5, DRS continued to promote the expansion community rehabilitation programs to expand their services into potentially unserved or underserved areas. DRS identified new community rehabilitation programs to increase the availability of supported employment services (i.e., job coaching) for West Virginians with significant disabilities. In FY 2015, DRS identified 91 CRPs to serve West Virginians with disabilities. As of the beginning of 2018, the agency has identified 101 CRPs. The agency also emphasized job coaching for DRS consumers who are not in the supported employment program.

### **3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in program year (PY) 2018, it will collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

—The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;

—The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

—The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

#### **4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

##### UTILIZATION OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

##### I&E FUNDS FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND WEST VIRGINIA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

DRS fully embraces the Congressional intent that individuals with disabilities and their advocates are full partners in the state rehabilitation program. Therefore, DRS has established a goal to improve its service delivery system through involvement of consumers and their advocates to increase the ease of access to, timeliness of, and quality of rehabilitation services and ultimately to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The Division's concentration of I&E efforts on consumer partnerships demonstrates its commitment to enhanced consumer involvement.

Success in working with consumers and their advocates is fundamentally important in developing and using innovative approaches to achieve long-term success in expanding and improving rehabilitation services, including supported employment. DRS pursues that work primarily through partnership initiatives with the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council and the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council.

DRS believes that the activities of these councils provide a promising foundation for the kind of partnership envisioned by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. If that partnership is to achieve its full potential, however, it must receive the necessary support.

Therefore, DRS annually allocates I&E funds to support general operations of the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council and the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council.

FY 2017 highlights for each appear below.

##### WEST VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

I&E funds support operations and activities undertaken by members of the WVSRC. DRS allocated \$103,500 for WVSRC in FY 2017.

As required by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, WVSRC assists DRS by conducting a survey of consumer satisfaction for DRS consumers whose VR cases have been closed. Surveys were mailed to over 5,000 individuals in FY 2017. WVSRC uses I&E funds to share costs of contracting an independent consultant to compile a report of survey results.

I&E funding assists WVSRC to prepare, publish, and distribute its annual report.

WVSRC also participates in development and establishment of DRS goals and priorities outlined in this state plan. I&E funds are used for travel costs as necessary.

#### WEST VIRGINIA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

In combination with Title VII money, I&E funds help support operations and activities undertaken by the WVSILC. DRS allocated \$256,665 for WVSILC in FY 2017.

WVSILC, in partnership with DRS, is responsible jointly developed and submitted the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) for FY 2017-2019. WVSILC continues to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the SPIL. In conjunction with DRS, WVSILC prepares and submits the 704 Report for West Virginia.

WVSILC members and/or employees collaborate with and/or participate in activities of the WV Centers for Independent Living (WVCIL), WV Developmental Disabilities Council, WVSRC, WV Olmstead Council, WV Mental Health Consumers Association, WV American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Medley Hartley Advocacy Project Advisory Council, WV Transportation Alliance, and the Fair Shake Network. WVSILC also coordinates activities with the WVSRC including joint meetings and training sessions with these other organizations. Training for service providers on sexual victimization of individuals with disabilities has been scheduled.

WVSILC conducts a survey of consumer satisfaction for consumers who received independent living services. WVSILC uses I&E funds to share costs with DRS and WVCIL for distribution of the survey and contracting an independent consultant to compile survey results and prepare an annual report of findings.

WVSILC ensures that all meetings are open to the public and provides notice through the WV Secretary of State's Office as well as through statewide media at least two weeks prior to the meetings.

#### **q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.**

Include the following:

##### **1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) vendor acknowledgment process includes an in—service training session for prospective new vendors and training updates as requested. During the training session, participants receive a Service Provider Guide and an introduction to the DRS process for providing supported employment (SE) services. DRS also loans SE training books and materials at no cost.

The quality of SE services is directly tied to the competency of the personnel performing job development and community based training services. DRS encourages and supports the provision of a broad range of in—service training programs for personnel directly involved in SE service delivery.

DRS is committed to ensuring the availability of SE services throughout West Virginia as reflected in progress toward DRS Goal 5 {Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers [including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), Independent Living, and other community providers] to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers}. There are currently 63 DRS—acknowledged SE vendors from all districts across the state. These vendors make SE services available to an increasing number of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

In accordance with federal regulations, the SE services that may be provided to individuals and youth with disabilities placed in SE include:

1. Evaluation of rehabilitation potential for SE to supplement the comprehensive assessment conducted under the Title I program;
2. Job development;
3. Job placement;
4. Intensive on—the—job training provided by skilled job coaches/employment specialists;
5. Case management services;
6. Job monitoring, whether performed on—site or off—site, that includes regular contact with employees, employers, parents, guardians, and other professionals to reinforce and maintain the job placement;
7. Rehabilitation technology assessment and services as appropriate; and
8. Post—employment services (following transition to extended SE services) that are available from the extended service provider and that are needed to maintain the SE job placement.

As appropriate, youth with disabilities placed in SE may also receive transition services and pre—employment transition services (PETS) that include:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work—based learning experiences, which may include in—school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
5. Instruction in self—advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The demand and need for SE services continues to be significant, particularly in rural areas, as well as for those individuals who are transitioning from school to the workforce. DRS continues its commitment to expanding the statewide capacity for SE services.

DRS will continue to provide SE services to its consumers and will acknowledge additional SE service providers where needed. The Division will continue to consider non—traditional approaches to SE service delivery and will increasingly emphasize the development of natural



supports wherever possible. DRS anticipates that more individuals will receive services with the increased number of approved SE providers.

DRS authorized SE services to 259 individuals in FY 2015.

While SE services may be expected to vary in scope and duration from individual to individual, core services that may be provided to individuals and youth with disabilities placed in SE can include:

1. Assessment of the individual's environmental circumstances;
2. Job analysis and job development;
3. Rehabilitation technology assessment;
4. Job placement following appropriate match of job/consumer characteristics identified in during assessment, job analysis, and job development (services 1 and 2 above);
5. Intensive, one—on—one, on—the—job training;
6. Job stabilization, job coach fading as much as possible; and
7. Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES), optimally including natural supports.

In order to ensure that priority of resources is given to those individuals with the most significant disabilities, DRS will continue to implement an order of selection (OS) in FY 2017, where applicants meeting the criteria for OS priority categories 3 and 4 will be placed on a waiting list.

## **2. The timing of transition to extended services.**

DRS receives state funds earmarked to provide Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES) for SE clients closed as successfully rehabilitated who, after an assessment of their progress and continuing needs for services, are found to require ongoing job coaching to maintain employment and are not eligible for services through other funding sources. The consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment includes an estimate of the time needed for transition to extended services. Provision of ESES (job coaching) to all eligible SE clients, including youth with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with an approved IPE will not exceed 4 years, as required by federal regulations. Consumers in SE placement are eligible to receive any services traditionally available through the DRS Title I program.

## **Certifications**

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate    **West Virginia  
Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Name of designated State agency    **West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts  
(The West Virginia Department of Commerce will be the DSA effective July 1, 2018)**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Marijane K. Waldron**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Director, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation  
Services**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.\*\* Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; No
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

**Footnotes**

---

**Certification 1 Footnotes**

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

### **Certification 2 Footnotes**

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

### **Certification 3 Footnotes**

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

### **Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State**

#### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:  
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization     **West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:     **Marijane K. Waldron**

Title of Authorized Representative:     **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to [MAT\\_OCTAE@ed.gov](mailto:MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov)

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the

undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:  
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization    **West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Marijane K. Waldron**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

### **Assurances**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

#### **1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:**

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:**

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

## **3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

**a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

**c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).**

**e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

**f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

**g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

**h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .**
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.**
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

#### **4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:**

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

- a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .**
- c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?**

Agency will provide the full range of services described above      Yes
- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs**

**j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,**

- i. has developed and will implement,**
  - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and**
  - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and**
- ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).**

#### **5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

**a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.**

#### **6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

**a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.**



## **7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:**

**a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that:**

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act**
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State**