

**(1) *Methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities***

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, working with the SRC, is involved in ongoing data analysis, soliciting input from the public, to include VR consumers and partner stakeholders, in determining the strategic direction of the agency that are inclusive of the FFY 2014 goals and priorities in Attachment 4.11 (C)(1) . The data sources used in identification and evaluation of the agency strategies include the Triennial Needs Assessment and information extracted that reports on the progress toward attaining the standards and indicators. The annual case review process is used to further evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation counseling and guidance services provided across the agency. The Designated State Agency conducts biannual stakeholder surveys that provide important information to the agency with regard to emerging needs.

ND DVR has become involved with Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE). PROMISE is a federal initiative through the Departments of Education, in collaboration with the Social Security Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Department of Labor.

PROMISE is targeted for transition youth, who are ages 14 – 16 at the time of enrollment and are beneficiaries of SSI. Due to the number of youth required to receive the grant, ND has joined a multi-state consortium including: South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The ND agency partners include: the Governor's Office, Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Developmental Disabilities Division, Medicaid, Parent Training Programs, DPI, Job Service, the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, Benefits Planners and DVR.

PROMISE is intended to improve the education and employment outcomes of child SSI recipients and their families, and eventually lead to increased economic self-sufficiency and a reduction in their dependence on SSI payments. For the program participants who are assigned to the Model Demonstration Project (MDP), or treatment group, an array of services and supports would be available to the students and their families. This would include case management, benefits counseling, career and work-based learning experiences, and parent training and information, as well as other services which may help the student's education and employment outcomes.

Goal 2 in Section (7) of this attachment identifies additional activities related to services to youth.

**(2) *Plans for how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis***

DVR continues to support assistive technology as an integral part of each stage of the VR process. An assistive technology screening tool is used during the intake process with all applicants. When assistive technology needs are identified, further assessment and/or referrals are provided as necessary to include referrals to IPAT, the State Tech Act Program. DVR is a member of the IPAT Advisory Council and the AT Re-use Work Group. This is the fourth year of IPAT's successful Peddling for Possibilities fundraiser. Approximately \$24,000 was raised from the annual fundraiser with the funds being used to purchase assistive technology for those without financial resources. Staff at IPAT meet the highest standard of their profession, providing assistive technology assessment and training, and are certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America. IPAT maintains a blog with updates posted three times a week on their website. The topics of the blog posts rotate between the categories of AT equipment, AT funding, AT anecdotes, and staying at home through the use of AT. IPAT maintains an active presence through social media to include Facebook. In addition to the two demonstration labs, IPAT has expanded their Fargo presence to include a Home First Show Room that is a complete home environment that provides a homelike atmosphere for demonstration of AT. IPAT, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, and VR have developed a joint strategic plan to increase the availability and use of AT by those with blindness/low vision.

**(3) *To Carry Out Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities***

In North Dakota, 9.4% of the population is comprised of minorities. Native Americans are the largest of these minority groups at 5.5%. During FFY 2013 of all the individuals who became employed through VR services, 12.8% were minorities.

The breakdown of minorities employed during FFY 2013 is as follows: 7.7% Native Americans, 1.6% Hispanic, 1.9% Black and 0.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. These figures are about the same as last year and are expected to be similar during this next year.

VR administrative staff, to include the agency Director, meet with the 121 Program Directors on an annual basis to provide a forum for discussion and support the collaborative efforts of counseling staff from both agencies to promote an increase in shared consumers.

DVR has placed a veteran counselor to work on the Three Affiliated Tribes Reservation. This counselor is a resource for training and consulting on cultural sensitivity and minority issues with DVR staff across the state. Both the state and

regional Vocational Rehabilitation offices provide technical assistance to the remaining 121 projects, as requested. These four programs are also served by the Client Assistance Program. In addition to providing technical assistance, DVR has itinerant counselors who visit the reservations to work together with the projects to provide services otherwise not available or to meet with those individuals who prefer to work with vocational rehabilitation. DVR also coordinates off reservation services for individuals and invites 121 Project staff to any training activities coordinated through our office.

*Goal 4, Strategy 4.1* in Section (7) of this attachment is specific to supported employment services.

**(4) *Plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state***

The results of the Provider Survey conducted with the 2013-2015 Triennial Needs Assessment is discussed in Attachment 4.11(a).

DVR continues to schedule statewide provider meetings and has one staff assigned part-time to support the collaborative effort of VR and providers to assist VR consumers to gain competitive employment. VR worked with providers over the past year to establish policy and practice in the establishment of an outcome/results based payment approach to the provision of service related to Job Development and successful Job Placement. Within the contracts with providers are milestones for the completion of assessment service, development of a job placement plan that includes strategies to include AT, Job Coaching, and other methods to achieve successful case closures by Vocational Rehabilitation.

In addition, DVR developed and implemented a Provider Service Agreement. The purpose of the certification is to enhance provider training in order for them to better meet individual needs. Implementation of the agreements was finalized on 10/1/2011.

DVR is working with the TACE and is participating in the Employment Specialist training that is available to new CRP staff. DVR's role is to provide a general overview of VR services.

DVR continues to work with the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Public Instruction, and providers in the development of an advanced job coaching module for providers to access additional training for their staff.

**(5) *Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators***

Historically, DVR does well with achieving the standards and indicators. There are only two areas where we have had difficulty maintaining consistency. To improve

1.1, DVR will utilize cognitive motivational tools and techniques to move motivated individuals towards work. To maintain the success that we have experienced with Standard 2, we will continue to work with tribal relationships and cultural awareness and sensitivity as outlined above.

*Goal 1* in Section (7) of this attachment, identifies additional activities related to improving our standards and indicators.

**(6) *Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities***

Over the past two years, the North Dakota Workforce Leadership team has been engaged in developing, evaluating the success of strategic workforce planning. The Workforce Strategic Plan is developed by the members of the Leadership Team which includes Job Service North Dakota, Department of Career and Technical Education, Adult Learning programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Workforce Division within the Department of Commerce. The strategic initiatives are presented to the larger Workforce Development Council. The Council recognizes the alignment of the activities listed below and North Dakota's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development. Subsequently, the Council supports the following strategies which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment based strategies:

- Promotional activities and programs geared to incoming families regarding community and regional employment, housing, daycare, schools and recreation which support the Economic Development Foundation's *Find the Good Life ND* campaign (website);
- Continue expansion of internships and externships;
- Utilize short-term training to serve Veterans and persons with multiple employment barriers to include disability;
- Support the expansion of K-12 and post-secondary programs, employer partnerships that support demand for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) related employment;
- Support the existing adult learning centers to continue to provide entry level skill sets for college and careers to meet statewide economic needs.

**(7) *To Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities***

The goals and strategies below are based on the results of the 2013-2015 Triennial Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs conducted in 2012, public input, federal standards and indicators, recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council

and DVR's Managing for Results Strategic Planning. They are designed to support achievement of DVR's goals and priorities identified in *Attachment 4.11 (c)(1)*.

Notations are made by the goals and/or strategies that include innovation, expansion and improvement of services and/or outreach activities.

Some strategies support achievement of more than one of DVR's goals.

**Goal 1** Target to Meet Federal Standard 1 – Increase Employment Outcomes from 2013. DVR will meet or exceed, at a minimum, four of the six indicators, and at least two of the three primary indicators by 09/30/2014.

**Strategy 1.1** *Provide real-time performance information through reports available to all staff using the AWARE case management system.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 1.2** *Develop strategies to identify clients who are not moving forward in a timely manner to IPE development.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 1.3** *Evaluate the implementation of the Talent Acquisition Portal as an additional resource available to clients to match their skills and interests to the available career opportunities.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 1.4** *Continue participation as a member of the State's Workforce Leadership Team in developing and managing the State's Strategic Workforce plan to connect employers with job seekers.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Goal 2** DVR will enhance service delivery to youth by 9/30/2014.

**Strategy 2.1** *Partner with the North Dakota Developmental Disability Planning Council to implement one Project Search site in North Dakota.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 2.2** *Partner with employers, providers and community resources to provide youth with summer work experience.*

**Strategy 2.3** *Educate special education professionals regarding the VR service delivery system and community resources to be of assistance to youth during their transition years by offering teacher internships in the VR agency.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 2.4** *Partner with the State Special Education Agency, Protection and Advocacy, the Developmental Disability Council and the*

*Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University to develop a statewide transition portal as a resource to youth as they plan their transition from secondary education to seeking employment and living independently.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Goal 3** Ensure VR services are available to meet the job readiness needs for individuals who are blind or experience significant visual loss by 9/30/2014.

**Strategy 3.1** *Partner with the North Dakota School for the Blind to develop a center-based curriculum that is intended to enhance the employment success of individuals who are blind.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 3.2** *Establish internal protocols within VR to clarify the role of the VR Counselor and the VR Vision Rehabilitation Specialist to enhance a team approach in meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 3.3** *Use results from the Statewide VR Counselor survey to develop a curriculum which will provide education for VR Counselors regarding medical aspects of vision loss and assistive technology devices specific to individuals who are blind or have a significant visual impairment.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 3.4** *Continue annual joint training between Vision Rehabilitation Specialists from VR and ND Vision Services/School for the Blind.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Goal 4** Provide leadership that promotes competitive integrated employment as the first choice for individuals who are of working age by 9/30/2013.

**Strategy 4.1** *Facilitate the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities in managing the State's Employment First Initiative.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**

**Strategy 4.2** *Participate as a member of the Employment Learning Community to network with private providers of disability services and advocates to develop strategies and policies that support integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.*

**Innovation/enhancement/improvement**