

2012 FEDERAL STATE PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2012
October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012**

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
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Attachment 4.2 (c): Summary Input Provided by the State Rehabilitation Council

FLORIDA REHABILITATION COUNCIL (FRC) COMMENTS

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) participated in strategic partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in the design and facilitation of eight public meetings in four locations around the state. These public meetings were held in the following VR areas, two forums in each city: Area 1 (Pensacola), Area 2 (Daytona Beach), Area 5 (Ft. Myers), and Area 6 (Miami). At each meeting, attendees were provided with contact information for submitting comments directly to the FRC, along with various options for submitting comments to VR.

FRC members representing all standing committees formed a State Plan Task Force to study the draft of the 2012 State Plan. Comments from public meetings were included so FRC members would know how vendors, customers, and staff view VR.

The Executive Committee received the State Plan Task Force recommendations resulting from the May 18, 2011, FRC meeting. Observations and FRC suggestions were discussed with the VR Director, who accepted FRC recommendations to the State Plan draft. The result was unanimous approval to accept the Florida 2012 State Plan.

FRC observations and recommendations are presented below:

RE: Supported Employment

- In attachment 4.8 (b) (4), the FRC recommends that VR and service providers collaborate to do a more thorough assessment to see if customers' needs are best served by waiting for available supported employment services.
- In attachment 6.3, FRC would like to have VR and service providers collaborate to do a more thorough assessment to see if customers belong in Supported Employment.
- The FRC will work with VR to encourage consideration of other Supported Employment options.

Other topics include:

- The FRC will work with VR staff to determine potential ways to further engage unlisted school districts referenced in attachment 4.7 (b) (3).
- In attachment 4.10, the FRC would like an analysis conducted to determine if passing the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam impacts VR counselor turnover. This analysis will help inform VR and FRC of future recommendations and actions.

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- FRC members are very concerned about the process and impact of Order of Selection (OOS) on VR customers. In attachment 4.11 (b) and attachment 4.11 (c) (3) FRC wants VR to seek all opportunities to reduce and eliminate OOS. We applaud VR's efforts to reduce the impact on the customer, as evidenced by the elimination of Category 1 and Category 2 wait lists. However, the FRC will continue to monitor OOS and encourage the elimination of the Order as soon as possible.

FRC will continue to work with VR as a strategic partner to support the efforts to improve and expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter into and maintain gainful employment.

Agency Response:

VR accepts the Florida Rehabilitation Council's comments and recommendations. The recommendations are incorporated into the 2012 State Plan, where appropriate. We look forward to continuing our strategic partnership with FRC to improve and expand employment opportunities and self-sufficiency for eligible Floridians with disabilities.

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Attachment 4.7 (b) (3): Request for Waivers of Statewideness

Overview

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides services throughout the state, including School to Work Transition services that expand and improve vocational rehabilitation options for eligible customers. VR has entered into Third Party Cooperative Arrangements in some political subdivisions, but services are not currently available in all areas of the state. The State Plan cannot assure that the expanded services provided through the Third Party Cooperative Arrangements will be available in all political subdivisions of the State as required in 34 CFR 361.25. A Waiver of Statewideness is requested in this State Plan in accordance with 34 CFR 361.26 and 34 CFR 361.28 (b).

Types of Services Provided

School and Community-Based Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

VR offered the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement in October 2006 to Florida's 67 school districts. The three-year (state fiscal years) arrangement provides community-based work experiences to eligible students who have VR transition service needs identified in their Individual Educational Plan and Individualized Plan for Employment. VR gave interested school districts another opportunity from January 2007 until June 2008 to enter into an arrangement that would end on June 30, 2010. Due to Order of Selection, new arrangements for providing services during school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 were not available. VR will give all 67 school districts the opportunity to enter into new arrangements to provide services from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014. A generic copy of the template for the Third Party Cooperative Arrangement is available on the VR website at RehabWorks.org.

Written Assurances

VR assures the Rehabilitation Services Administration that the Division has Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with some school districts and will provide written assurances as required. Specifically, each arrangement is formalized through the VR procurement contracting process and contains the following:

1. The local school district will certify to the VR that money used for match funds are non-federal and are not used for match in any other federally or state assisted project or program.
2. VR approval will be obtained for all Third Party Cooperative Arrangement services.
3. VR will assure that all local school districts with Third Party Cooperative Arrangements will abide by the state's Order of Selection policy;
4. All other state plan requirements will apply to all services provided under the scope of the arrangement.

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Third Party Cooperative Arrangement

During state fiscal year 2010-11, VR had arrangements with the school districts in the following counties:

1. Baker
2. Bay
3. Bradford
4. Calhoun
5. Columbia
6. Flagler
7. Gadsden
8. Gulf
9. Hendry
10. Holmes
11. Jackson
12. Leon
13. Manatee
14. Martin
15. Monroe
16. Nassau
17. Pasco
18. Taylor
19. Volusia
20. Wakulla
21. Walton

Prior to state fiscal year 2011-12, VR will offer arrangements to all 67 Florida School Districts.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (1): Cooperation with Agencies Not Under the Workforce Investment System

Cooperation with agencies and other entities not carrying out activities under the Workforce Investment System include agreements with The Able Trust, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Division of Blind Services, Mental Health Program Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and others. As of FFY 2006, the State Rural Development Council no longer operates in Florida (National Rural Development Partnership, 2006).

The Able Trust

The mission of The Able Trust is to assist citizens with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process. This includes administering grants, as well as educational and public awareness programs. The recipients of vocational rehabilitation program services and other Floridians with disabilities, receive direct support through funded community rehabilitation program employment projects and individual client grants from The Able Trust. The Able Trust is a non-profit corporation that relies upon contributions and gifts. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) does not provide any Title I funds to The Able Trust. The agreement promotes cooperation between The Able Trust and the designated state unit. This includes, as provided for in Florida Statutes, the submission of The Able Trust's annual budget, annual report, annual audit, and any changes to the Articles of Incorporation or by-laws to the division's director. The VR director is to be informed of all board meetings, as required by Florida statute. VR reviews the above documents and makes the necessary certification based on statute. This agreement is currently in effect through June 30, 2011.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

This cooperative agreement contains a detailed and specific focus on collaborative planning and funding of Supported Employment services. Specifically, the agreement addresses the transition of secondary students to the community, to provide a seamless transition of services. The cooperative agreement includes local strategies and joint obligations for implementation.

Both agencies have a common goal of enabling eligible persons to achieve greater independence through employment. The goal of this agreement is to provide coordination of support and services throughout the state to ensure that maximum client satisfaction and informed choice is maintained.

Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, Florida Department of Health

VR and the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program have agreed to expand referrals between the two agencies in order to improve employment outcomes for persons with a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. The effort will include joint statewide training for those involved in the project and identification of local referral liaisons.

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Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.

VR and the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. agree to share specific information about their customers to optimize service delivery. Both agree to specific procedures that facilitate the delivery of services to their respective and mutual consumers. Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology offers an Alternative Financing Program for the purchase of assistive technology to all residents of Florida who have disabilities. Some of VR's customers can benefit from this program.

Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.

VR coordinates with Florida Independent Living Council, Inc., and the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state. Through Memoranda of Agreement, VR provides funding, outlines roles and responsibilities, and ensures cooperative planning.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and VR agree to cooperate in serving students and customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, and in establishing transition meetings. Activities have been implemented to increase public awareness of programs serving these customers and to improve transition between the school and local counselors.

Florida Small Business Development Center Network

Coordination with this network is carried out at the local level on a case-by-case basis. VR customers who are seeking self-employment can use a Business Planning Team. A representative from the Small Business Development Center Network can serve on such teams to help VR's customers assess their potential for self-employment and analyze the various issues that need to be taken into account.

Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

The main purpose of the Commission is to advance and support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in national and volunteer service opportunities throughout Florida. This includes increasing participation by persons with disabilities in AmeriCorps, a program administered by the Commission. VR is a party to the multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding to promote the Commission's efforts for persons with disabilities.

Institutions of Higher Education

VR has Memoranda of Understanding with the Presidents of Florida's public universities and the Florida College System. Both Memoranda outline the purposes, roles and responsibilities of VR and the educational institutions, as well as, financial and programmatic responsibilities. The Memoranda of Understanding provides information regarding financial assistance, sharing of assessment findings, accommodations, rehabilitation technology services, academic advisement, counseling, confidentiality, and other topics.

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The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe

The Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe is the recipient of the Federal Section 121 Grant under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. VR and the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe have a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate services for eligible Native Americans with disabilities residing on or near the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe Tama Reservation within a 150 mile radius. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of both groups, including services for joint consumers and technical assistance.

Mental Health Program, Florida Department of Children and Families

VR has extensive coordination efforts to assist customers who have mental illnesses. One of these is participation on the Florida Assertive Community Treatment Team, a community-based, outreach-oriented method of delivering services to individuals with mental illnesses coordinated by the Mental Health Program. VR provides staff liaisons with many of these teams to help serve this group of customers in a comprehensive manner. In addition, VR is an active member of the State Mental Health Planning Council of Florida. The cooperative agreement promotes coordination so that appropriate services can be delivered to maximize customer choice and satisfaction.

Division of Blind Services, Florida Department of Education

Both VR and Blind Services serve individuals with visual impairments. This agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of each division, including those for individuals with one-eye pathology, bilateral visual impairment, multiple disabilities, and for individuals who are deaf-blind.

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education; Division of Blind Services; Florida Department of Health; Agency for Workforce Innovation

The Florida Interagency Agreement for the Transfer of Assistive Technology, signed in 2006, establishes a framework for a more efficient transition of technology as individuals with disabilities move through the continuum from educational services to employment. Specifically, the agreement ensures children and youth with disabilities and their families, educators, and employers are informed about the continued use and transfer of assistive technology devices. These devices may remain with the person as he or she moves from home to school and to post-school activities in order to assist in meeting transition needs. The agreement outlines the conditions for coordination, the authority for transfer of property by local education agencies, financial responsibilities, and other topics.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Employment Standards Administration

Both agencies agree to further the common goal of providing (VR) equal employment opportunities and protecting against discrimination. VR will provide expertise on matters relating to disability issues and employment, cross-referral of individuals with

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disabilities, and will participate in interagency training programs, staff meetings, and conferences. Both agencies agree to a coordinated public outreach effort.

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE)

VR utilizes the services and manufactured items produced in correctional work programs through PRIDE. PRIDE is a Florida corporation that provides these goods and services as a state-use contracting program. A similar product or service of comparable price and quality, found necessary for use by a state agency, may not be purchased from a source other than PRIDE. Also, contracts between VR and any private vendor require all items be purchased through PRIDE. This is consistent with Section 946.515, Florida Statutes.

Rehabilitation Foundation of Northwest Florida

The purpose of this agreement is to maximize funding of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with physical disabilities residing in northwest Florida. The Foundation contributes \$25,000 to VR toward meeting its non-federal share requirements in 34 CFR 361.60. In turn, VR will allocate an additional \$92,250 in federal funds to match the Foundation's contribution for vocational rehabilitation services in the following northwest Florida counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton.

The intent of these cooperative efforts is to increase the services leading to quality competitive employment outcomes that are responsive to the strengths, resources, interests, and capabilities of individuals with disabilities residing in northwest Florida. VR agrees to provide quarterly reports of expenditures to the Foundation's Trustees. Each report will include the number of individuals served and a description of services provided under the terms of the agreement.

Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Act

One of VR's ongoing objectives for the Ticket to Work Program is to increase the number of partnerships with Employment Networks (Employment and Rehabilitation Service Providers). VR hopes to expand the resources available to customers to meet the current and future levels of demand. It is also the goal of VR to ensure that customers have a choice in service providers available within their communities. Also, VR has implemented a new Employment Network Referral and Partnership Agreement that creates more opportunity to develop partnerships with Employment Networks. The agreement features a transitional approach by assisting Social Security Administration customers in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency through core VR services followed by ongoing support services from employment networks. During the 2011-2012 year, VR will monitor the Agreements effectiveness in meeting the previously stated goal.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

The need to serve Florida veterans who have disabilities led to this agreement, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of VR and the Department of Veterans Affairs. It clarifies which agency can provide specific services. It also includes information regarding shared planning, joint activities, and coordination.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (2): Coordination with Education Officials

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) updated the cooperative agreement coordinating transition services with state educational officials in July 2006. It is a state-level interagency agreement, including agencies charged with providing transition services to students leaving high school and going to postsecondary education/training, support services, and/or employment. The agencies listed below agree to meet regularly to share information, ideas and current initiatives, collaborate on training and special projects, cooperate in planning and budgeting, and generally support any areas of work which are mutually beneficial. Agencies which support this “way of work” are:

Florida Department of Education:
 Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
 Division of Blind Services
Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Florida Department of Health, Children’s Medical Services
Florida Department of Children and Families, Mental Health Services

This formal interagency agreement is designed to serve as a transition services model for improved collaboration, communication, coordination, and cooperation among local education agencies and local offices of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children’s Medical Services, and Mental Health Services.

VR continues to dedicate a VR program administrator who is the central point of contact for the VR School to Work Transition Program. The administrator serves as the liaison for the 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. This position coordinates and plans for effective transition services delivery with VR’s staff and external stakeholders statewide. The administrator is responsible for training internal staff and making presentations about VR transition services at conferences statewide in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of the agency’s role in assisting eligible students with disabilities.

Additionally, the VR administrator provides transition related technical assistance to the Florida Rehabilitation Council. The administrator serves as a representative on the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee and works closely with the regional representatives of Project 10: the Transition Education Network. Project 10 is funded by the University of South Florida through a grant from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services under the Florida Department of Education. Project 10 assists Florida school districts and stakeholders with increasing their ability to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes. Project 10 assists educators, parents,

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students, agency representatives, and others interested in Florida's transition efforts by providing capacity building to implement secondary transition services, interagency collaboration, transition legislation and policy, and student development and outcomes.

The VR administrator also serves on the Intra-Agency Committee whose membership is comprised from various Department of Education agencies. The agencies provide services to youth or young adults with disabilities. The committee works to assure that state and community programs are accessible and resources are inclusive for individuals with disabilities transitioning from school to meaningful careers. VR counselors serving transition students participate in each area's local interagency councils. The interagency councils are a collaborative effort between VR and Department of Education partners, public high schools, adult service agencies, workforce programs, parents, students, advocates, and employers, working together to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

VR adopted an early referral/application process for transition students during SFY 2008-2009 to better coordinate with the State Education Agency and the Local Education Agency. Brochures for the VR School to Work Transition Program are made available to students and families so that individuals can begin gathering information at age 14. Referrals for VR services are made at age 16 for those students with disabilities that are engaged in community-based work experiences in the last two years of secondary school. Students with disabilities that are at high risk for dropping out of school may be referred at any age. This additional time allows the counselor to develop rapport with the transition student and family, explore vocational options and comparable benefits, and begin necessary guidance and counseling.

Provisions for Development and Approval of Individualized Plans for Employment for Students with Disabilities

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Individual Support Plan, and/or Care Coordination Plans are completed or updated as early as possible prior to graduation or leaving school to allow a seamless transition to a student's desired post-school outcomes.

VR counselors, with assistance from VR technicians, are assigned as representatives to work with public high schools statewide. They provide outreach and vocational rehabilitation services orientation to students, school officials, parents, and others involved in transition services. Only the VR counselor may determine a student's eligibility for VR services, develop an approved IPE, and sponsor the delivery of necessary transition services to assist the student with planning, preparing for, and attaining successful post-school employment.

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Information on Formal Interagency Agreement with Respect to:

Technical Assistance and Consultation

Local educational agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services staff. The agreement addresses consultation, coordination, and the provision of technical assistance to each other, students, and their families/guardians/surrogates in planning for the transition from secondary school to post-school activities and inclusion in the adult community.

Transition Planning by Personnel of the Designated State Agency and Educational Agency for Development and Completion of the Individual Educational Plan

Local educational agencies work collaboratively with VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services in the Transition Individual Educational Plan process. Local educational agencies that are considering transition services during the Individual Educational Plan meeting will invite representatives from any other agency who may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the school district shall take other steps (e.g., correspondence or phone calls) to obtain the participation of the agency in the planning of any transition services. The local educational agency must reconvene the Transition Individual Educational Plan team to identify alternative strategies for providing a student's transition needs if an agency fails to do so.

In order to plan effective transition services for students with disabilities, it is essential that all invited partner agencies encourage and support participation in the Transition Individual Educational Plan process.

VR invests 20 to 25 percent of its statewide staffing resources to transition services to serve students with disabilities in Florida's 67 school districts and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Additional improvements to the Rehabilitation Information Management System for transition students' data collection have been requested. When this enhancement is completed, VR will be able to analyze differences between the transition student with an IEP, 504 Education Plan and all other students with disabilities. In SFY 2009-2010, when updates were made to the Ombudsman's tracking system, revisions were also made to the transition coding to assist with continuous improvement of the VR School to Work Transition Program.

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Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for each partner agency as required by federal and state regulations are as follows:

1. Local educational agencies provide free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities, including preparation for transition from school to work or other post-school activities.
2. VR and Division of Blind Services assist with student transition from secondary school to work through postsecondary training, education, or direct placement into employment necessary to attain a successful employment outcome.
3. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities endeavors to "reduce the use of sheltered workshops and other noncompetitive employment day activities and promote opportunities for gainful employment for persons with developmental disabilities who choose to seek such employment," (Chapter 393, Florida Statutes). Additionally, Chapter 393, Florida Statutes states that "to promote independence and productivity, the agency shall provide support and services, within available resources, to assist clients enrolled in Medicaid waivers who choose to pursue gainful employment." If an individual is eligible for Agency for Persons with Disabilities' waiver services and employment is a needed service, then this service must be provided to meet standards as outlined in Florida rule.
4. Children's Medical Services ensures a smooth and successful transition process to adult healthcare services and providers for youth and young adults with special healthcare needs that it serves.
5. Mental Health Services provides a system of care, in partnership with families and the community that enables children and adults with mental health or emotional disabilities to successfully live in the community, become self-sufficient or to attain self-sufficiency at adulthood, and realize their full potential. Mental health support and services enable adults and transitioning students to participate in community activities such as employment and other valued community roles.

Specific Purpose

Specifically, it is intended that the interagency agreement:

1. Provide guidance to the local educational agencies, VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services' front-line staff, when serving students transitioning from school to work or other post-school activities.

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2. Provide information to parents/students so they know what they can and should expect from the local educational agencies, VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services during the transition process.
3. Provide parameters to the local educational agencies, VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services' administrators/managers/nursing supervisors when developing, negotiating, and implementing local cooperative agreements.
4. Encourage and support the participation of all agency personnel in the IEP process at the local level through the development of guidelines, policies, and/or procedures.

Financial Responsibilities

The Department of Education, VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services are committed to meeting financial responsibilities as required by law. Agency/Division heads for the organizations will periodically identify areas for improved programmatic and financial efficiencies and develop strategies to meet financial responsibilities, including joint appropriations requests from the state legislature and negotiations with federal agencies. Each party is financially responsible for the services it provides under its own laws and rules.

Conditions and Terms of Reimbursement

If a non-educational agency fails to provide or pay for services for which they are responsible, and which are also considered special education and related services, the local educational agency (or state agency responsible for developing the child's IEP) shall provide or pay for these services to the child in a timely manner. The local educational agency or state agency may then claim reimbursement for the services from the non-educational agency that was responsible for the provision of the services and failed to provide or pay for these services, and that agency shall reimburse the local educational agency or state agency in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

Procedures for Outreach to and Identification of Students with Disabilities who need Transition Services

Outreach and Identification of Students

Local educational agencies are strongly encouraged to enter into written agreements with the VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with

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Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services staff, on the outreach methods used to inform to students with disabilities who may need, and could benefit from these agencies.

Brochures, flyers, website resources, presentations, transition fairs, or informational letters will be made available to the local educational agency, students, and their parents or guardians, to explain the role that VR, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, and Mental Health Services programs play in the transition process, and the agencies' referral/application policies and procedures.

VR has executed a total of 21 third party cooperative arrangements for State Fiscal Year 2010-2011. The goal of these arrangements is to create new or expand existing transition services with a vocational rehabilitation focus. The costs are shared between the agencies. In order for the cooperating agency to receive matching vocational rehabilitation dollars, they must provide a cash match of non-federal funds. Recipients of the Third Party Cooperative Arrangements began providing job coaching to eligible students with a Supported Employment IPE in State Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (3): Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has a variety of agreements with private non-profit organizations. These include contracts, rate agreements, and other cooperative, non-financial agreements.

Specifically, VR provides contracts for three core components: employment services, supported employment, and On-the-Job Training (OJT). Additionally, some VR services are purchased through certified vendors. All new vendors/providers, whether through a contractual or vendor relationship, must go through a certification and approval process. VR reviews and certifies the qualifications of vendors providing services to our clients in order to ensure the quality of these services, as well as the safety of the public. In addition to certifying and approving vendor/provider services, VR conducts employment verifications on all client placements facilitated by vendors/contract providers.

VR's policy ensures that applicants and eligible individuals exercise choice of qualified service providers. Customers are also informed if the provider has staff experienced in working with special disability populations, foreign languages, and other communication skills. Eligible individuals have the choice of necessary services, service providers, the setting in which to receive services in the written Individualized Plan for Employment.

Currently, VR combined rate contracts that include employment, supported employment, and OJT in one contract, or individually as requested by the contractor. VR has executed approximately 197 contracts for the three services. In addition to the rate contracts, there are 16 agreements with the Centers for Independent Living located throughout the state to provide independent living services, 21 third party cooperative arrangements with local school boards are maintained, as well as additional contracts with agencies for providing services such as delegable VR services, outreach for migrant and seasonal farm workers, interpreting services, and rehabilitation engineering. In addition, a rate study for interpreting services was recently completed in order to standardize the rates for these services throughout the state.

Additionally, VR has collaborative, non-contractual arrangements and agreements with non-profit organizations that provide referrals, other vocational rehabilitation services, and comparable benefits. For example, through coordinating with Centers for Independent Living, individuals with disabilities receive life skills training, employability skills training, and support such as transportation, clothing, and emergency funds. Relationships with organizations that serve clients with hearing impairments provide opportunities for support groups, sign language classes, and placement assistance.

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Throughout the state, many counselors are designated to serve as liaisons with specific groups and organizations. Individuals are referred to those groups if it is determined that they can benefit from their services. Services are coordinated with numerous non-profit hospitals and clinics for referrals and medical assistance. Numerous foundations and associations such as the Easter Seals Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, National Kidney Foundation, Brain Injury Association of Florida, Epilepsy Foundation, Family Network on Disability of Florida, and others provide individual and family support groups and disability education to our mutual clients.

It is the intent of VR continues with the above referenced contractual agreements, cooperative arrangements, and liaison relationships through the 2012 Federal Fiscal Year. In addition, VR will be executing contracts with seven vendors for Innovation and Expansion projects.

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Attachment 4.8 (b) (4): Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has entered into cooperative agreements with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities; Department of Children and Families, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program; and other stakeholders to identify and make arrangements to provide supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. If individuals with significant disabilities want to work, the agencies pursue a cooperative process that will help them to get jobs. Six broad-based objectives govern Florida's interagency supported employment programs. They are:

1. Continue to develop and enhance supported employment for persons with the most significant disabilities. The state system for the provision of supported employment reflects: (a) mutually agreeable definitions of the services to be provided; (b) administrative responsibility of the intensive component of supported employment services to eligible individuals as the primary responsibility of VR for individuals with most significant disabilities; (c) administrative responsibility of the extended services component as the primary responsibility of other stakeholders including the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Children and Families, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program.
2. Continue to improve the statewide management of supported employment programs by avoiding duplication of effort and funding, while ensuring accountability. This process will provide a coordinated system of program development for supported employment services. The process includes the coordination of statewide planning and request for proposal process, coordination of programmatic and fiscal responsibilities prior to beginning any new program, and promotion of consistency in funding, reporting, and monitoring.
3. Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring a comprehensive, continuous, efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services, information collection and dissemination, confidentiality, and technical assistance.
4. Identify issues, policies, and practices that present systemic barriers to effective participation of individuals with most significant disabilities and develop appropriate resolutions to remove such barriers.
5. Continue to implement an interagency planning process for budget coordination, which defines and projects the number of people in need of

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intensive and extended services for each fiscal year and facilitates program and fiscal planning.

6. Support the belief that all individuals with disabilities can work if provided appropriate and timely assistance.

Supported Employment Services

VR is responsible for Phase One of Supported Employment Services. The objective of the intensive vocational service segment is to obtain and stabilize the supported employment placement to the individual's and employer's satisfaction and to transition the individual to a comprehensive plan of extended services. Supported employment services consist of intensive time-limited vocational rehabilitation services (the responsibility of VR) and extended services, also known as Phase Two. This includes vocational supports, for the duration of the supported employment placement, the role of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Children and Families Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program or other identified funding sources.

Extended Services

The purpose of the extended services is to maintain the individual in supported employment and enhance the individual's involvement in the workplace culture and career advancement. The nature of services provided during the intensive and extended services of supported employment may be similar to the initial services but may differ in intensity.

Allowances would be made for persons who, while receiving extended services, require re-intervention of intensive services through VR because they have destabilized on the job. When appropriate, VR shall again assume the responsibility and cost of providing intensive vocational services, including necessary job related support services.

VR will endeavor to secure funding for extended services for all individuals with most significant disabilities receiving supported employment services. VR will not deny eligible individuals supported employment services on the basis of disability alone.

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Attachment 4.10: Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is continuing its Comprehensive System of Personnel Development plan to meet the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18.

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

As of May 31, 2011, VR has 1,007 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Of this number, there are 434 counseling positions providing vocational rehabilitation services. Seventy-eight (78) supervisory and/or area level managerial positions support the counseling positions. Eighty-two (82) additional positions are located in the Bureau of Rehabilitation and Reemployment Services. The remaining 413 positions are managerial/administrative, paraprofessional, technical, and administrative support. In addition to the 1,007 FTEs, there are 23 contracted positions providing VR services under state supervision. VR's turnover rate has decreased from last year's average of 20 percent to approximately 18.2 percent for counseling positions. The turnover rate for field supervisors is 16.7 percent and 10 percent for program administration. VR continues to employ all available strategies to address turnover.

Assurance of an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessional personnel is the major driver for VR's Human Resource Development Section. Data from numerous sources are used to assess current and projected needs, as well as VR's progress toward meeting them.

The state's automated People First personnel system maintains employment histories to assist in projecting human resource needs. The state continues to make available a deferred retirement option program (DROP) that allows individuals to continue working for the state for five years beyond their original retirement date. Because it is impossible to anticipate how many individuals will accept the deferral option, projecting future employment needs is difficult. However, we know that there are currently 70 individuals in DROP, 80 individuals with 30 or more years of service, and 140 individuals over the age of 62.

VR obtains data from the Rehabilitation Information Management System (RIMS) related to counselor-client ratio, another tool for assessing current and projected staffing needs. The average counselor-client caseload is 125, in relation to assisting customers from application to closure.

People First and RIMS data, as well as information from other internal reports are used to obtain:

- The number and classification of authorized positions for each local unit and state headquarters in relation to the number of individuals served.

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- The number and classification of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- The projected number and classification of personnel who will be needed in five years to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- The state institutions of higher education that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by program type.
- The number of students in each of these institutions, by program type.
- The number of students graduating from each program and the credentials they have received.

The average annual projected staffing requirements for the VR counselor and field supervisor positions are listed below. The projections for the VR counselor, field supervisor, and program administration positions are based on the average turnover rates of 18.2, 16.7, and 10 percent listed in paragraph one on the previous page.

<u>Job Group</u>	<u>Projected Annual Vacancies</u>
VR Counselor	79*
Field Supervisors	13*
Program Administration	41*

*This number is an annual average derived by multiplying the number of positions for the job group times the respective turnover rate.

Approximately 22 percent – 25 percent of the estimates above represent Transition Counselor needs. When population growth is factored in, the projected five-year staffing need is slightly higher than that noted above, but would require that VR be provided with additional FTEs, which is unlikely in the current economic climate.

In order to ensure the continuity of quality rehabilitation services and to address staff vacancies and turnover in particularly difficult to fill geographic areas, VR has contracted for staff. The contracts ensure that qualified personnel are hired to provide necessary rehabilitation services. These employees are supervised by a state VR supervisor or counselor/analyst who performs the activities that the federal regulations (34 CFR 361.13) specify are the responsibility of the designated state unit and cannot be delegated to private providers. These activities include:

- All decisions affecting eligibility for VR, the nature and scope of available services and the provision of these services, and the suspension, reduction and termination of these services.
- The determination to close the records of services of an individual who has achieved an employment outcome.
- Policy formulation and implementation.

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- Allocation and expenditure of VR funds.
- Participation as a partner in the one-stop service delivery system.

Described below is information from institutions of higher education in Florida that prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals, categorized by institution and type of program.

Program Data for Institutions of Higher Education

Institution: Florida Atlantic University

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Training – Graduate Only

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 29 Masters Graduate Students, 2 Ph.D. Students

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure or Eligibility: 8 Graduate level
All passed CRC examination

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2011- 8 MS
- 2012-12 MS, 1 Ph.D.
- 2013-10 MS, 1 Ph.D.

Institution: Florida State University

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling & Services (BS, MS, Ph.D.*)

*The BS & Ph.D. programs are being closed; no new students are being accepted.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 17 total; 5 BS, 3 MS, 2 Ph.D.

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 7

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2011 – 5 BS, 3 MS, 2 Ph.D.
- 2012 – 0 BS, 5 MS, 2 Ph.D.
- 2013 – 0 BS, 15 MS, 0 Ph.D.

Institution: University of Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling (BHS, MHS, RSD)

The MHS and RSD programs at the University of Florida have been phased out and are not accepting new admissions. Numbers in the categories below reflect students who are enrolled and completing their degrees.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 50 total; 46 BHS, 2 MHS, 2 Ph.D.

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: All MHS graduates are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) or CRC-eligible

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2010 – 45 BHS, 12 MHS, 2 Ph.D.
- 2011 – 45 BHS, 12 MHS, 1 Ph.D.
- 2012 – 45 BHS, 0 MHS, 1 Ph.D.
- 2013 – Program phased out. No graduates anticipated.

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Institution: University of North Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation Counseling (MS)

The MS program at UNF has been phased out and is not accepting new admissions. All remaining rehabilitation counseling students have either graduated or transferred into other programs.

Institution: University of South Florida

Type of Program: Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (MA)

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 185 Graduate Students

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 70; all are eligible to become Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and Registered Mental Health Interns.

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2011 – 70 MA
- 2012 – 60 MA
- 2013 – 50 MA

Institution: Florida International University

Type of Program: Master of Science in Counselor Education – Rehabilitation Counseling Track (MS)

The FIU program is not Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE)-accredited, but is a source of Masters level rehabilitation counseling graduates.

Number & Type of Students Enrolled: 11 MS

Number of Graduates with Certification, Licensure, or Eligibility: 2

Number of Graduates Anticipated:

- 2011 – 3 MS
- 2012 – 4 MS
- 2013 – 3 MS

Rehabilitation Services Administration did not sponsor any of the graduates in the programs referenced above.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Qualified Personnel

VR's full-time recruiter identifies opportunities to acquaint job seekers with the advantages of working for the Division. VR maintains close relationships with universities within and outside of the state. For example, the recruiter works with universities, including minority institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and disability specific organizations. Additionally, the recruiter attends job fairs and makes contact with qualified counselors throughout Florida and in other states. VR staff serve on the Rehabilitation Advisory Committees of some of the university programs, collaborates with universities in securing grant funding, and utilizes university staff to assist in training and education activities.

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VR acknowledges that it will not be able to recruit an adequate number of qualified CRC rehabilitation counselors to replace those retiring and departing for other reasons. As a strategy to meet this need, VR has developed a plan addressing recruitment, preparation, and retention. The goals, objectives, strategies, and measurement for this plan are located in Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 2.

Personnel Standards

There is not a state-approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. VR in conjunction with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) established the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) educational eligibility requirement as its standard.

Efforts are made to recruit and hire counselors who meet the CRC educational eligibility status. If VR is unsuccessful in finding enough qualified applicants, it will accept those who meet the minimal initial standard for individuals providing counseling and guidance services. This standard shall be no less than the following:

The individual(s) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university and one year of experience counseling individuals with disabilities. Alternative majors other than social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science may be considered along with the minimum qualification requirements for the position. When evaluating the suitability of alternative majors, the hiring authority should consider the major area of study's applicability to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. A master's degree from an accredited university in a social, behavioral, or rehabilitative science can substitute for the year of required experience.

Though VR hires counselors without the CRC, it prefers that counselors actually acquire the credential. As an incentive to do so, VR adds \$3,000.00 to the base pay of staff who obtain their certification. Approximately 48 percent of current personnel meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard. Those hired in 2007 or before who do not meet the standard have until 2012 to meet it. Individuals hired in subsequent years who do not meet the standard have five years to do so. Thus, individuals hired in 2011 will have until 2016 to meet the standard; those hired in 2012 will have until 2017, etc.

State of Florida employees are permitted to utilize a tuition waiver to take up to six hours per semester on a space-available basis at public universities. This is how many counselors worked to reach the CSPD standard until fall 2006.

In recent years, VR has implemented a more aggressive approach to meeting the CSPD standard. A significant portion of the in-service training grant has been allocated solely to VR's CSPD activities. The tuition waiver program will continue to be utilized to the extent possible, as it represents a significant

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savings to VR. In-service training grant funds will be used to pay tuition for individuals who cannot get the coursework they need through the waiver program, such as those who are not near a public university or who otherwise cannot use the waiver program. Also, in-service training grant funds are allocated for textbook reimbursement.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Section has implemented an internal tracking data system to track academic classes taken and progress toward certification eligibility.

In addition to the Florida public universities referenced above, VR also accesses the resources of Auburn University, Southern University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Arkansas – Little Rock, and the University of Wisconsin-Stout, all of whom provide online Masters level rehabilitation programs. VR also accesses the resources of the University of North Texas and San Diego State through the Consortium on Distance Education in Rehabilitation (CDER) program. VR will continue to access additional programs as appropriate.

Staff Development

HRD efforts will continue to be oriented toward appropriate and adequate training for all personnel with substantial in-service grant resources allocated to the CSPD effort. Although the in-service training grant is the main funding source for funding these activities, it is not sufficient to fund all staff development and training activities. Supplemental funds are provided from other budget resources.

One of the initiatives supported by the supplemental funds is the Supervisor's Apprenticeship training program. The program consists of six, half-day modules on topics including managing expectations, time management, prioritizing and delegating, communication skills, providing feedback, conflict resolution, and legal issues. The training is highly interactive and includes out of class assignments that allow trainees to practice and implement the skills they are learning. VR supervisors, at all levels, completed the program in 2007. It was provided again in 2008 and 2009 and is offered periodically so that all new supervisors will have developed the skill set afforded through the program.

Although there has been an emphasis on assisting counselors in meeting the CSPD standard and on developing the technical, managerial, and leadership skills of the supervisors and managers, staff development opportunities are provided to employees at every level.

VR continues to offer individual training allocations for each staff member. This allocation can be used for job-related professional development activities such as attending conferences, purchasing books, tapes, CDs, or other materials; taking

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online short courses; or any other approved professional development activity. Supervisory approval is required for these professional development activities to ensure that staff are participating in activities consistent with their individual needs and job responsibilities and requirements. It is anticipated that the resources of the regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center will be accessed as available and appropriate.

HRD Section coordinates at least once a year in each of the Areas so staff at all levels will have the training and education they need to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively. In addition, local Area managers coordinate training within their areas to address local needs.

VR anticipates implementing a Learning Management System in SFY 2011-2012, which will not only track learning participation, but will also serve as a host for online training activities for staff at all levels. VR has also purchased licenses for WebEx and has the capability of using WebEx for training purposes. Every effort is made to ensure that the correct medium is utilized to address the particular issue at hand.

VR produces a monthly newsletter for all staff, as well as a quarterly newsletter for supervisory staff to ensure that they are kept up to date on methods, techniques, and research for performing their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Whether offered directly or contracted by the HRD Section, VR's staff development and training programs are designed with the goal of maintaining a well-prepared, competent workforce equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully facilitate the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. VR is responsible for ensuring that staff, including contracted staff, receive necessary staff development and training. Accordingly, HRD includes contracted staff at all training programs.

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

A bi-annual needs assessment is conducted using information from a number of sources. These include a formal needs assessment instrument, performance evaluation data, training evaluation sheets obtained from every sponsored program, exit interviews, and supervisory input. VR has implemented Individual Development Plans for Field Service employees. HRD will use this information in assessing employee needs. The bi-annual needs assessment data determines program development and modification.

Annual performance evaluations are conducted on each staff member with intermittent evaluation, if indicated. Performance is evaluated according to standards and goals established at the beginning of the evaluation period. Employees are evaluated in the context of their knowledge, skills, and abilities

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within the field of rehabilitation, and on policy about priority of service to individuals with the most significant disabilities. If circumstances change, training and professional development activities are provided to assist the individual in meeting their goals in support of the designated state unit's mission.

In-Service Training Grant

The in-service training grant application is developed based on documented and anticipated needs with commensurate funding requested. VR continues to provide a variety of in-house training programs including new counselor training, new counselor follow-up training, supervisory training, policy training, new legislation, casework review training, etc. VR anticipates offering eight new VR Counselor Training programs and seven new VR Counselor Follow-Up programs each year, as well as numerous other programs as needed.

In carrying out its staff development and training program, VR addresses several topics in its training curricula. The training curricula include modules on the following: preliminary assessment, eligibility determination, vocational evaluation, vocational counseling (within the modules on eligibility determination and individualized plan for employment development), job placement, rehabilitation technology, cultural competence, ethics, supported employment, transition from school-to-work, medical and psychological issues, caseload management, and special programs, to name a few.

VR places emphasis on the professional development of unit supervisors, area directors, and supervisors. Statewide supervisor training meetings are used to achieve this goal. Topics are selected based on policy or procedure changes, new initiatives, audit and review findings, and general professional development. Budgetary considerations have reduced the meetings to two per year.

Counseling and non-counseling staff, including administrative staff, will continue to be provided training in core subjects through distance and on-site learning. As caseloads grow, the role of the paraprofessional technician becomes more and more critical to effective management of caseloads. All counseling staff will continue to work toward certified rehabilitation counselor eligibility and/or degrees in rehabilitation or counseling through tuition waivers and other mechanisms and the in-service training grant. VR will continue to look for additional programs.

Engineers from the Rehabilitation Technology Engineering Program, contracted through the University of South Florida, provide training on rehabilitation technology and engineering, and participate in centralized counselor training, as well as in-service training at the local level. The contract terms ensure that the provider makes rehabilitation technology engineers available statewide.

State labor market information, as well as national data, provides information on the employment and advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities. Job

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announcements are published online through the People First website providing access to all state jobs through one portal.

Manuals related to policy and rehabilitation information management are available online. Staff have Internet access for obtaining information related to medical and psychological conditions, rehabilitation technology, Federal/State Plan, legislation and regulations, and employment related information.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Florida's diverse population suggests a variety of different languages, dialects, and cultural traditions are needed to address the needs of individuals who participate in different programs and organizations. One strategy that VR uses in this regard is to actively recruit counselors and support staff who are representative of Florida's diverse population. VR places advertisements in ethnic newspapers and collaborates with local civic and social service groups. Bilingual individuals are on staff, but interpreters or translators will continue to be used when a counselor is unable to communicate directly with a customer in his/her preferred language. Vendor relationships with local partners will continue to be used to assure availability of this service.

American Sign Language interpretation needs are met using a combination of staff positions and contracts with local providers. In some areas, difficulty in hiring qualified individuals has led to positions being vacant for prolonged periods. In those situations, and to supplement needs beyond those that can be served by qualified VR staff, contracts are in place with local providers for interpreter services.

VR meets the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance by providing materials in Braille and large print, through having sign language interpreters and foreign language translators, and offering real-time captioning, as needed.

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

Presenters provide orientation and training for employees serving students with disabilities in transition from VR, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES), and transition partners. Cross-training between the BEES and VR staff is emphasized through multi-agency cooperative agreements as presented in Attachment 4.8 (b) (2). Department of Education State Education Agency and Local Educational Agency profiles are utilized to obtain important statistical information on graduation rates, dropout rates, Individual Educational Plan compliance and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in transition. Additionally, BEES and VR continue to share and analyze student data to identify those students with Individual Educational Plans that can benefit from VR's services, and to identify potential gaps in services.

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VR strives to assist the local education agencies to meet the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Examples include an early VR referral and application process, education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers, access to the original curricula, VR Transition Staff Contact List, quality education, provision of VR transition brochures, and Individual Educational Plan/Individualized Plan for Employment coordination through the efforts of its 94 designated school to work counselors. VR counselors will continue to attend regular in-service training oriented specifically towards school to work transition issues as they endeavor to meet the requirements of the CSPD.

Also, VR and transition partners continue to present and participate in annual transition conferences. Transition staff participated with education staff and community partners at the Project 10 Institutes held across the state. The VR Administrator and BEESS Administrator provided training/presentations at the institutes. Agencies provided updates and shared promising initiatives and practices.

At these meetings, VR counselors and local educators meet to discuss and learn from one another about transition practices and issues. A training module and video entitled "Vocational Rehabilitation School to Work Transition" is provided prior to new counselor training. Information and resources from the VR School to Work Transition Program is also provided during new counselor follow-up training. VR developed the VR School to Work Transition Guidelines and Best Practices Guide as a resource for VR counselors to assure statewide consistency in coordinating transition services to students with disabilities. At the local level, VR staff participate in Project Connect sites or other interagency groups throughout the state to improve local coordination and services with students, families, schools, employers, and agency partners.

Finally, it is VR's policy that all programs, projects, and activities under its charge are to be carried out in compliance with the accessibility and accommodation principles of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Staff are provided pertinent information on the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. All staff have been trained on the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and receive ongoing training in related policy implementation.

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Attachment 4.11 (a): Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in cooperation with the Florida Rehabilitation Council are required to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with residing in the state. The assessment is conducted every three years consistent with the intent of the Rehabilitation Act. VR and FRC are currently conducting an assessment to identify the vocational rehabilitation needs of customers, as well as their satisfaction with the VR services they receive. A cross-functional team comprised of VR and FRC staff and the chairman of the FRC planning committee was established to guide the implementation of the project. This procedure helps to ensure the FRC is actively involved at all levels of the needs assessment process.

The purpose of the assessment is to identify the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities classified as most significantly disabled. The objectives for this research include the following:

- a. To identify VR services considered as important for individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services to get or keep a job.
- b. To identify barriers to VR services for individuals with most significant disabilities.
- c. To identify customers' opinion about service quality and capacity. Service quality refers to how well services are provided. The term service capacity refers to the availability of services identified as necessary and valuable in assisting customers in achieving an employment outcome.
- d. To analyze information for individuals on the waiting list to determine the characteristics of those individuals who are currently unserved by VR.

It is anticipated that the full assessment will be completed by September 2011. VR and the FRC will continue to incorporate the results from the assessment into the state plan. During April 2011, preliminary results from the needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey, as well as information from other performance and management reports were used in a strategic planning process to better align the goals, objectives, and strategies for the program. VR's priorities and the changes to the goals, objectives, and strategies are reflected in Attachment 4.11 (c) (1) in the next section.

Background

According to estimates in the 2008 American Community Survey, 10 percent of working age people (ages 21 to 64) in Florida report having a disability.

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Specifically, 1,021,700 of the 10,239,900 individuals, ages 21 to 64 in Florida, reported one or more disabilities. These 1,021,700 working age adults with an employment disability may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services. However, as expected, this number far exceeds the VR's service capacity. According to the American Community Survey, the percentage of working age people with disabilities that were working full-time/full-year was 23.5 percent while 9.9 percent were not working but were actively looking for work. Income levels for working age people with disabilities vary. For example, the median annual earnings of non-institutionalized persons aged 21-64 years with a disability in Florida, who were working full-time/full-year in 2008 was \$32,600. Conversely, 16 percent of the working-age people with disabilities were receiving Social Security Income payments. All of the estimates described above are based on information reported in the 2008 American Community Survey.

Florida's unemployment rate has declined slightly from the 12.2 percent reported this time last year. However, the rate still remains in the double digits, 11.5 percent (February 28, 2011). The state is still challenged with a high unemployment rate. According to a report by the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research, the current unemployment rate of 11.5 percents equates to approximately 1.1 million individuals not working. Information from this report also shows that Florida's unemployment rate continues to run higher than the national average of 8.9 percent. Furthermore, The Florida Legislature's, Office of Economic and Demographic Research reported that 43 of the state's 67 counties have unemployment rates in the double digits. The unemployment rates in these counties ranged from 10.2 to 14.9 percent.

Despite these challenges, the VR continues to educate businesses and the larger community about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers throughout Florida are recognizing the value of including individuals with disabilities in meeting the demand for a well-trained and skilled workforce.

Preliminary Results

This section presents the results from focus group research, stakeholder interviews, and customer satisfaction survey research. VR is completing surveys of customers and counseling staff. The results from these two surveys will be included in the final report.

Focus Groups

As a part of the needs assessment design, there were a minimum of six focus groups, one in each local VR area. However, one local area conducted two focus groups for a total of seven statewide. Focus groups provide a depth and richness of information, including insights about attitudes, opinions, and behaviors.

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In total, 44 individuals categorized as most significantly disabled participated in the seven focus groups. Participants were not randomly selected; therefore, the sample sizes were small. The results are not statistically generalizable to the entire population of Floridians with disabilities. However, the results do provide insight and suggestions about the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The focus group participants offered a range of needs and supports that would assist them in getting and keeping a job. Two themes that arose were schooling and job skills/knowledge as the most important services needed.

Schooling includes:

1. Tuition and assistance with supplies such as books for college;
2. Continued education and advanced degree assistance;
3. Education or special training targeted towards goal; and
4. Assistance from counselor to help customer make the best school placement.

Job skills/knowledge includes:

1. Computer and typing skills;
2. Interview skills;
 - a. what to say to get job interviews;
 - b. learning how to ensure that personal stressors or barriers are addressed prior to getting interview or job;
3. Strategies to learn how to survive in a job environment; and
4. How to address obstacles in job placement.

Participants were asked about barriers to successful employment. VR marketing and client traits were identified as barriers that keep individuals from getting or using VR services or from getting or keeping a job.

VR marketing includes:

1. Lack of awareness of services or resources available; and
2. Need for better public relations strategies, such as using advertising and spreading the word about VR.

Client (Customer) traits include:

1. Attributes that include lack of self confidence, fear, patience, and skills;
2. Mental attributes such as medical, alcohol, or drug use side effects; and
3. Physical attributes includes flare-up with disability and worsening of vision.

Near the end of the sessions, participants were asked for suggestions that might make it easier to get VR services or a job. Again, VR marketing was the top suggestion followed by suggestions that include client services and training.

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VR marketing includes:

1. Advertisements through TV and radio, schools, medical offices, agencies;
2. Market VR through unemployment services;
3. Use a more user-friendly name than vocational rehabilitation; and
4. Let church groups, ministries, doctors know about VR.

Client Services include:

1. Hire customers for overload, customers want to give back;
2. Help with basic needs such as supplies, childcare, and computers for college;
3. Better client choice: have more choice to agencies and better matches to agencies;
4. Offer customer incentives: provide unique services that others don't have; and
5. Network and partner with other agencies such as unemployment offices.

Training includes:

1. Computer training;
2. More help with job training and placement; and
3. Sensitivity training for VR representatives.

Stakeholder Interviews

During early 2011, VR conducted a series of structured interviews with key VR staff, FRC members, and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) Director. The focus of the interviews was to obtain their opinions about the needs of individuals with disabilities, what potential barriers may exist for customers, and what suggestions they had to improve service delivery. The following summarizes the key findings from those interviews.

Factors Critical to Obtaining and Keeping a Job

Participants were asked what were the goods and services needed by VR customers to get and keep a job. Responses covered a very wide variety of needs. Only the responses emphasized the most are provided here. They include better information on the part of customers, counselors, and employers. According to the participants, both customers and counselors needed to know what opportunities were available in local markets, what capacities customers already had, and what they still needed to learn. Examples of this included not only what was necessary to do the job, but how to search for jobs (e.g., how to create resumes).

Participants also indicated that customers needed to learn the culture of the organization once hired. In addition, customers needed to understand the VR process, which was commonly described by respondents as overly complex and bureaucratic. On the other hand, results suggest that VR counselors need to be

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aware of the totality of available resources including that of partners outside the agency (for example, vendors and other federal agencies). Finally, employers needed to have a better understanding of the capabilities of an individual with disabilities to complete a job – to counter unfortunate stereotypes. Training and education was stressed to address these issue as well as better outreach on the part of VR. Additionally, participants mentioned the need to address transportation and equipment problems, medical services, and continued support once a customer was hired.

Unserved and Underserved Populations

The underserved groups most mentioned were those with mental health or cognitive impairment (particularly the former). Seven of the 17 respondents mentioned those with mental health problems, two others noted individuals with cognitive impairment. In terms of unserved populations, those on the waiting list due to order of selection were stressed the most. Six respondents brought them up.

Perceived Barriers To Employment

Responses varied with regards to potential barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities. The most noted problems (both mentioned by 11 of the 17 respondents) were problems in the VR processes and bias against individuals with disabilities. Problems in the VR process were stated as the difficulty in doing anything quickly and the lack of easily available information on the process. Respondents felt that this was due to excessive regulations and/or external constraints. Results suggest that the lack of timeliness in process and the lack of available information created a variety of secondary problems – for example, not being able to obtain adequate vendors. A closely related issue (mentioned 11 times) was problems with counseling. Communication between counselors and customers was often inadequate, while certain groups (e.g., those who had mental health problems and had failed to get or keep jobs in the past) were not served as well.

A lack of understanding about the skills or abilities of individuals with disabilities to engage in meaningful employment often created bias on the part of employers against hiring customers was also commonly mentioned (ten times). However, respondents also suggested that there was similar bias on the part of the public and some counselors. Most commonly, this took the form of doubts about the customer's ability (or interest) in doing tasks. Respondents also indicated that this was made much worse by a difficult economy (mentioned seven times). They indicated that not only was hiring generally down significantly, but that jobs were changing (becoming more complex) in ways that made it more difficult for individuals with disabilities to be hired. Aside from these broad issues, transportation (noted nine times), order of selection (mentioned four times directly but associated with a range of other issues indirectly) and difficulties with

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customers themselves (e.g., criminal records or lack of confidence) were all mentioned.

Suggestions for Improvement

While there were a wide range of suggestions on how to improve VR, three broad themes were particularly important. These included: 1) improvements in VR processes, 2) reaching out to customers and other external parties more, 3) openly combating the lack of understanding or biasness about individuals with disabilities by providing more or better information, and 4) eliminating order of selection. The VR process was commonly seen as cumbersome, intimidating for some customers, and overly bureaucratic. The results were that service delivery took too long to reach customers. Solutions offered included streamlined processes, more consistency across units, and better information to customers and employers. More counselor training, particularly for difficult problems such as mental health or transition populations was also stressed. Finally, more thorough analysis to better determine the characteristics of individuals with disabilities in Florida was a suggested solution brought up by a number of respondents

Customer Satisfaction

There are two separate surveys used to evaluate satisfaction levels of customers; those rehabilitated and those not rehabilitated after obtaining vocational rehabilitation services. Also, active customers are measured to see how well their services are being provided as the individual progresses through their Individualized Plan for Employment. In 2010, the overall satisfaction rate of customers in active case status was 77 percent. The overall satisfaction rate for customers in closed case status was 74 percent.

State Plan Public Meeting Comments

VR and the FRC conducted eight state plan review sessions in four locations: Miami, Ft. Myers, Daytona Beach and Pensacola. The meetings were held to collect public comments about the policies and procedures described in the State Plan. One hundred and five people attended. Attendees included customers, other interested individuals, VR staff, and FRC representatives. The majority of the attendees were not customers but other interested individuals, i.e., parents, current vendors, potential vendors, and representatives from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Centers for Independent Living, Client Assistance Program, and Department of Children and Families. They provided comments about:

- Accessibility Issues (4)
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding (2)

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- Centers for Independent Living (4)
- Collaboration/Partnerships (3)
- Communications (6)
- Compliments (5)
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (6)
- Customer/Counselor Concerns (7)
- Employment Issues (8)
- Innovation and Expansion Projects (4)
- Order of Selection (4)
- On-the-Job Training (4)
- Other (19)
- Rehabilitation Performance Measurement (5)
- Supported Employment (6)
- Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (4)
- Ticket to Work (3)
- Transition School to Work (6)

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Attachment 4.11 (b): Annual Estimates

According to the 2008 American Community Survey for Florida, a total of 1,021,700 working age adults with an employment disability may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services.

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served with Funds Provided Under Part B of Title I and Part B of Title VI of the Act

During the period of October 1, 2011, through September 30, 2012, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) anticipates a workload of 45,537 individuals. Due to limited resources, VR has determined that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all individuals with disabilities in the state that apply for services. The following are projections for Federal Fiscal Year 2012 (October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012). The estimated numbers of eligible individuals to receive vocational rehabilitation services by priority category are:

Priority Category 1	33,000
Priority Category 2	12,475
Priority Category 3	62
Total by Priority Category	45,537

The estimated number to be served in Supported Employment (Part B of Title VI of the Act) is 6,000.

Cost of the Services for the Number of Individuals Estimated to be Eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation

The estimated costs for services for each priority category are:

Priority Category 1	\$ 100,353,000
Priority Category 2	\$ 33,532,800
Priority Category 3	\$ 120,218
Total Estimate Costs by Category	\$ 134,006,018

Additionally, the cost for assessment services for FY 2012 is projected as \$10,500,000. Total revenue needed for FY 2012 is \$144,506,018.

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The projected budget authority for FY 2012 for Individualized Plan for Employment and assessment services is estimated to be \$104,303,089. Additional carry forward will also be available for services.

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (1): State Goals and Priorities

VISION

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides the services that are required for eligible customers to achieve an employment goal, with priority placed on serving the customers with the most significant disabilities. Employers throughout Florida recognize the value of including individuals with disabilities in the workforce and provide equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in meeting the demand for a well trained and skilled workforce.

MISSION

To provide services to eligible individuals with physical and/or mental impairments that will enable the individual to achieve an employment goal and/or enhance their independence.

THREE YEAR GOALS AND PRIORITIES (FFY 2012-2014)

VR held strategic planning meetings to review its priorities and to update the goals, objectives, and strategies described in the 2009-2011 plan. The federal and state performance reports, personnel reports, budgetary information, performance improvement results, legislative reports, etc. were used in the planning process. The following goals and priorities are established, in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council for FY 2012-2014.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Leadership and Collaboration

Objective 1.1: Collaborate effectively with partners at the federal, state, and local level to maximize employment services for people with disabilities.

Strategy:

1. VR will assume a leadership role to foster cooperation and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels for partners involved in the employment of people with disabilities.
2. Provide statewide training and dialog on hard-to-place customer groups (e.g., prisoner re-entry, cognitive and supportive employment Phase 2).
3. Promote local level meetings between qualified rehabilitation providers and employer groups to foster return to work of customers of the injured worker rehabilitation program.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.1):

1. Percentage of partners satisfied with Memorandum of Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding results.
Target: To Be Determined

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2. Percent of Memoranda of Agreements and Memoranda of Understandings in compliance. Target: To Be Determined.
3. Number of local level provider and employer group meetings.

Objective 1.2: Educate individual employers and the business community about the benefits of employing qualified individuals with disabilities and the services available to support successful employment.

Strategies:

1. Standardize and systematically market to employers and existing employer networks (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Center, Business Leadership Networks, etc.), both statewide and on a local basis.
2. Provide technical assistance to employers on including the use of natural and community supports.
3. Evaluate, redesign, and market Florida Job Connections.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.2):

1. Number of employers who hire VR customers for minimum of 90 days. Target: 7,000
2. Number of employers who provide On-the-Job Training training to VR customers. Target: 90

Objective 1.3: Increase compliance with requirements and promote best practices by the Centers for Independent Living.

Strategy:

1. Develop annual training for Centers for Independent Living.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Cumulative percent of Centers for Independent Living in full compliance with evaluation standards met.

Objective 1.4: Maintain full partnerships with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and the Florida Independent Living Council (FILC).

Strategies:

1. Support FRC in carrying out responsibilities as mandated in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
2. Partner with FRC in developing its goals and objectives, conducting statewide need assessments and evaluating client satisfaction with service delivery and employment outcomes.
3. Support the FILC in carrying out responsibilities as mandated in Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.4):

1. Percentage of partnership requirements completed. Target: 100 percent.
2. Satisfaction Rating for Strategic Partners. Target: 80 percent.

GOAL 2: Improve Service Delivery through Strengthened Workplace Environment and Improved Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Objective 2.1: Overall employee satisfaction.

Strategies:

1. Develop pulse satisfaction surveys for targeted projects.
2. Redesign Employee Suggestion Program.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Overall Employee Satisfaction.

Objective 2.2: Improve advancement opportunities for VR employees.

Strategies:

1. Review hiring practices across all areas of the state and implement activities to improve hiring practices.
2. Design and implement career path and succession planning.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Percent of employees that have requested non-standard schedule and have been approved.

Objective 2.3: Improve service delivery by enhancing employee skills.

Strategies:

1. Standardize VR field services support staff duties across the state.
2. Develop a systematic process for on-boarding, mentoring, and training all VR employees, including the utilization of a learning management system.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 2.3):

1. Percentage of all VR employees successfully completing identified training (defined as demonstration of knowledge and demonstration of behavior). Target: Baseline data to be collected 2010-11.

Objective 2.4: Provide professional comfortable office environments that are accessible, safe, and secure.

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Strategies:

1. Conduct assessment of VR offices to ensure they are professional in appearance, in structure, mechanical features are in good condition and employees have the tools to do their job.
2. Revise and update the emergency management plan, VR facilities manual, and emergency preparedness safety manual.
3. Provide safety and facilities management training statewide.
4. Develop a process to report defective equipment/furnishings or unsafe working conditions.
5. Conduct a comprehensive, consumer-driven ADA transition plan evaluation and update that includes a review of the accessibility of the Division's programs, communications, personnel practices, facilities and technology, and a plan for making necessary improvements.

Indicator and Target (Objective 2.4):

1. Employee satisfaction with office environment (accessible, comfortable, safe). Target: 90 percent.

GOAL 3: Improve Customer Success and Satisfaction

Objective 3.1: Increase the customer satisfaction rate.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement an approach for analyzing factors contributing to customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and program effectiveness.

Indicators and Target (Objective 3.1):

1. Percentage of customers indicating overall Satisfaction. Target: 80 percent.

Objective 3.2: Increase the rehabilitation rate.

Strategies:

1. Implement innovation and expansion approaches to: a) improve the effectiveness of VR services that result in employment outcomes, and b) train individuals with disabilities to promote self-sufficiency and overcome barriers to employment.
2. Analyze reasons for unsuccessful closures across the life of the case across multiple factors.
3. Design and standardize customer contact approaches.
4. Conduct analysis of purchased client services expenditures to enhance delivery of service to customers.

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Indicator and Target (Objective 3.2):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2).
Target: 55.8 percent.

Psychosocial/Mental Health

Objective 3.3: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with Psychosocial/Mental Health disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders who are receiving services under an IPE.

Strategies:

1. Improve collaboration between VR and Department of Children and Families, psychosocial/mental health systems and others serving persons with mental health and substance abuse disabilities.
2. Design and implement psychosocial/mental health training for VR staff to effectively deliver services for persons with psychosocial/mental health and substance abuse disabilities.
3. Identify concerns inherent with individuals with psychosocial/mental health and substance abuse disabilities re-entering the community from the justice system, including mental health courts, drug courts, and juvenile justice, to develop a system of care and transition to employment.
4. Implement Recovery and Trauma Informed Care models and provide training to VR staff.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.3):

1. Percentage of individuals with psychosocial/mental health disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders who are receiving services under an IPE. Target: 37 percent.
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with psychosocial/mental health disabilities and/or substance use disorders who have received services under an IPE. Target: 43 Percent.

Cognitive Disabilities

Objective 3.4: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities who are receiving services under an IPE.

Strategies:

1. Conduct analysis of factors related to improving the rehabilitation rate for individuals with cognitive disabilities.

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2. Utilize help from the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center to improve the delivery of Supported Employment Phase 2 services.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Percentage of individuals with cognitive disabilities who are receiving services under an IPE.
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities who have received services under an IPE.

Self-Employment

Objective 3.5: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal.

Strategies:

1. Conduct on-site networking meetings between VR field staff and self-employment providers to discuss issues and concerns, provide technical assistance and training, and to ensure quality of services.
2. Revise Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultant training on Vocational Rehabilitation intranet system.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 3.3):

1. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal. Target: 1 percent.
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal. Target: 1 percent.

Self-Supporting at Closure

Objective 3.6: Increase the percentage of individuals served who are self-supporting at closure compared to at application.

Strategies:

1. Design and implement comprehensive directory of community resources.
2. Increase the numbers of appropriate referrals to One-Stop Centers and Employment Networks by offering training on appropriate referrals and available services.

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Indicator and Target (Objective 3.6):

1. Percent of individuals served that are self-supporting at closure compared to at application (RSA Indicator 1.6). Target: 53 percent.

Transition

Objective 3.7: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for transition-age individuals who receive VR services under an IPE.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement an early referral/application process.
2. Conduct targeted outreach to school staff, mental health centers, foster care, juvenile justice, and others serving youth with disabilities.
3. Establish a statewide transition training team to address transition staff training needs identified through survey results, monitoring activities, and technical assistance requests, with input from VR staff and community partners.
4. Increase use of volunteerism and community service in addition to work and social skills development at the high school level.
5. Expand funding opportunities in order to engage transition-age students with disabilities in Community-Based Work Experience programs.
6. Design pilot and implement Discovery and Customized Employment approaches for transition-age students.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.7):

1. Number of referred transition-age individuals. Target: 17,300.
2. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age. Target: 33 percent.
3. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age. Target: 28 percent.

Policy and Practice

Objective 3.8: Modify VR policy and practices to more effectively address changing requirements of customers and the workplace.

Strategies:

1. Increase the exchange of information among VR and injured worker rehabilitation programs and their partners.
2. Increase use of on-the-job training for job placement assistance.
3. Expand the use of Social Security Administration benefits planners in the beginning of the rehabilitation process.

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4. Complete implementation of recommendations from the Rehabilitation Engineering Team.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.8):

1. Number of customers who participate in on-the-job training. Target: 350. Actual 2010 performance is 324.

Service Delivery

Objective 3.9: Promote a consistent service delivery process throughout the state.

Strategies:

1. Review workload associated with the case process and the distribution of resources including technology.
2. Design a process for transfer of caseloads and continuity of service.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.9):

1. Percent of findings identified in the quarterly quality assurance reviews that are resolved. Target: Baseline data is being collected during FFY 2010-11.

GOAL 4: Improve Infrastructure for Business Processes / Organizational Capacity

Objective 4.1: Improve vendor and contract processes.

Strategies:

1. Conduct needs assessment and conduct vendor outreach based on results.
2. Design and implement monitoring and fraud detection processes.
3. Implement electronic billing and payment processes for vendors and contract vendors
4. Review and revise vendor qualification standards.
5. Create detailed online handbook for service providers to ensure expectations and processes are effectively communicated.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.1):

1. Percent of vendors completing the certification process within ten days. Target: 100 percent.
2. Average time for vendor certification. Target: 48 Hours
3. Percent of contracts meeting all contract process timeframe requirements. Target: 100 percent.

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Objective 4.2: Update data systems and technology to better support customers and staff.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a gap analysis and develop user requirements for a case management system that meets VR's business needs.
2. Investigate feasibility of data sharing with partners in order to expedite eligibility determination.
3. Investigate and modify inefficiencies within the Rehabilitation Information Management System (RIMS) to minimize duplication of data entry.
4. Include Vendor Certification user needs in RIMS redesign.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.2):

1. Percent of VR offices meeting employee and customer technology requirements.

GOAL 5: Improve the System for Ensuring Quality

Objective 5.1: Design an integrated system for managing business processes, reporting performance, and improving performance.

Strategies:

1. Document all key VR processes.
2. Document all key outcome measures and business process measures.
3. Integrate management reports for utilization by all management teams and communicate to all employees.
4. Identify, prioritize, and conduct performance improvement projects based on organizational performance.
5. Design a program evaluation strategy for Centers for Independent Living and Innovation and Expansion Grant Programs.

Indicator and Target (Objective 5.1):

1. Percent of indicators trending in the right direction. Target: 90 percent by December 31, 2013.
2. Percent of strategies completed on time.

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (3): Order of Selection

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Justification for the Order of Selection

The Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) determined that sufficient resources were not available to provide rehabilitation services to all individuals with disabilities that apply. Consequently, VR established an order of selection within the state to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services, those with significant disabilities second, and then to all other eligible individuals. The determination to invoke an order of selection was based on use of funds in the preceding years, projected funding, projected number and types of referrals, number of eligible individuals, and counselor case loads.

On August 4, 2008, the order of selection was implemented closing all categories. On February 15, 2010, VR determined that sufficient fiscal and human resources were available to serve all Category 1 individuals and opened Category 1. Category 2 was opened on August 2, 2010. Category 3 remains closed at this time. The order of selection remains in effect statewide and does not select one disabling condition over another. The order is not established based on age, sex, marital status, religion, race, color, national origin, or political affiliation, and is not based on the vocational goal of the individual with a disability. Elements that relate to the significance of disability are the only factors used in the order of selection.

As of April 15, 2011, 2,443 individuals with disabilities in Category 3 remained on the waiting list. It is anticipated that persons with most significant disabilities (Category 1), and persons with significant disabilities (Category 2), will not move to the waiting list in FFY 2012 and these categories will remain open. It is not projected that any Category 3 individuals will be moved from the waiting list. The wait period for "other eligible persons with disabilities" is indeterminate.

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Outcome and Service Goals, Time Frames, and Service Costs for FFY 2012

CATEGORIES	EXISTING AND NEW IPE TO BE SERVED	AVERAGE CASE COST FOR 12 MONTHS	YEAR	PROJECTED 26s	PROJECTED 28s	TIME/MONTHS
Priority 1	33,000	\$3,041	\$100,353,000	3,600	6,600	19.3
Priority 2	12,475	\$2,688	\$33,532,800	1,250	2,400	30.2
Priority 3	62	\$1,939	\$120,218	30	15	34.4

Cost for assessment services for FY 2012 is projected as \$10,500,000.

Projected revenue needed for FY 2012 for IPE and assessment services is estimated to be \$144,506,518. The projected budget authority available for FY 2012 is \$104,303,089. Additional carry forward funds will also be available.

Order of Selection Policies

Individuals seeking Supported Employment services are assessed as having a most significant disability. Additionally, individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits as a result of being determined to be disabled or blind are assessed as having at least a significant disability and are evaluated to determine whether they meet the criteria for individuals with most significant disabilities.

After an individual is found eligible for VR services, an order of selection determination is completed. Additional evaluations or assessments to make this determination may be needed. The VR counselor and individual jointly determine the individual's order of selection priority category by evaluating his or her functional limitations, anticipated services needed, and the duration of the services.

This policy does not affect an individual who began to receive services under an approved individualized plan for employment prior to the implementation date of the order of selection, or those individuals who are in need of post-employment services.

VR officially notifies all individuals of their individual order of selection determination. Individuals not immediately activated for development of an employment plan are offered referral services and the option to be placed on a waiting list until employment plan development services can be initiated. Individuals on the waiting list are contacted annually to determine if additional

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information is available. If resources become available, those in Category 3 (other eligible individuals) will be activated.

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Order of Selection Priority Description

MOST SIGNIFICANTLY DISABLED (Priority 1)

Eligible individual with a disability which...

1. Seriously limits three or more functional capacities in terms of work.
2. Requires three or more primary services.
3. Services must be provided over an extended period of time (at least 12 months).
4. Is not likely to be corrected through surgical intervention and/or other treatment modes.

SIGNIFICANTLY DISABLED (Priority 2)

Eligible individual with a disability which...

1. Seriously limits one or two functional capacities in terms of work.
2. Requires two or more primary services.
3. Services must be provided over an extended period of time (at least six months).

OR

4. The individual is a recipient of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as a result of disability or blindness.

OTHER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS (Priority 3)

Eligible individual with a disability which...

1. Does not seriously limit functional capacity in terms of work:
2. Services are expected to last less than six months.

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Attachment 4.11 (c) (4): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Goal 1

Increase service capacity for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Plans

Allocate Title VI-B funds to assure individuals with most significant disabilities have statewide equal access to vocational rehabilitation services.

Fully expend Title VI-B funds for purchase of Supported Employment services, after reserving no more than five percent for program administration.

Goal 2

Utilize Title VI-B funds to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

Plans

Use Title I funds, supplemented with Title VI-B funds, in providing Supported Employment services as specified in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

Purchase supported employment services based upon the established performance benchmarks.

Goal 3

Utilize the five percent permitted for administration to fund development and delivery of training and technical assistance.

Plans

Enhance direct service staff professional competencies in service delivery to individuals with most significant disabilities through training.

Provide funding to support collaboration between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other community resources through networking and leadership activities.

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Goal 4

Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services.

Plans

Collaborate with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to assure referrals receive full benefits from Medicaid waiver funding for extended services.

Coordinate interagency training on social security benefits planning to support extended services.

Enter into cooperative agreements with parent and family organizations to collaborate in the development of natural supports.

Communicate with businesses and employers to educate them about on-the-job supports for individuals in supported employment.

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Attachment 4.11 (d): State Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Council Support

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to provide support for the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and Florida Independent Living Council (FILC). Funds are allocated for the operations of FRC to achieve the goals and objectives in their strategic plan. FRC participates as an active strategic partner with VR in carrying out the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. VR and FILC operate under a three-year Memorandum of Agreement. The agreement aligns with the three-year state plan for Independent Living (See Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 1, Objective 1.3, Strategies 1-3).

Use of Innovation and Expansion Funds

VR solicited innovative approaches to improve the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services through an Invitation to Negotiate process. The purpose of the innovation and expansion projects is to: 1) increase employment opportunities for individuals with most significant disabilities; 2) improve the effectiveness of VR services which will result in employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities; and 3) train individuals with most significant disabilities to promote self-sufficiency and overcome barriers to employment. See Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 3, Objective 3.2., Strategy 1.

As a result of successful negotiations, the VR intends to enter into contracts for the following types of projects:

1. **Abilities Inc. of Florida** - Assist transitioning youth and their families in obtaining counseling and vocational assistance along with medical, social and behavioral health services, as needed.
2. **Best Buddies of Florida** – Provide pre-placement training, job placement, on-site training, and follow along services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities transitioning from high school to integrated employment.
3. **The Brain Injury Association of Florida, Inc.** – Serve customers by utilizing community employment resources and support in order to improve employment outcomes for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury.
4. **Hands on Education** - Assist transitioning youth by providing alternative training for 150 underserved transition students to improve their opportunities for employment.

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5. **United Cerebral Palsy of East Central Florida, Inc.** - Assist youth and adults with disabilities by providing training to develop industry-specific skills related to the hospitality and tourism industry.

6. **University of South Florida, Center for Rehabilitation Engineering and Technology** – Use virtual reality, simulators, robotics, and feedback interfaces to allow the vocational rehabilitation population to try various jobs, tasks, virtual environments, and assistive technologies prior to entering the actual employment setting.

7. **Wilson Resources, Inc.** – Educate and support select Florida businesses on the employment of and working with employees with significant mental illness. Educate and support select service providers to establish more productive relationships with employers. Establish 25 paid internships within Florida businesses for persons with most significant mental illnesses.

At this time, the Contracts Section is developing the seven Innovation and Expansion contracts. It is anticipated that the contracts will be finalized by June 30, 2011.

Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology is provided through a contractual agreement with the Center for Engineering and Technology Program at the University of South Florida. The program provides rehabilitation technology assessment and evaluation services for the VR's customers. Rehabilitation technology encompasses a range of services and devices which can supplement and enhance individual functions. It includes services which impact the work environment through changes like job redesign or worksite modifications.

VR sponsors the Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology Project that is directed by the Assistive Technology Advisory Council in accordance with Section 413.407, Florida Statutes. The project provides for the coordination and delivery of appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art assistive technology services and devices. The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST), is a not-for-profit corporation for which the Assistive Technology Advisory Council acts as the board of directors, manages the project, and provides administrative and technical support to the council.

FAAST is responsible for administering a low interest loan authority that provides funding to individuals with disabilities who may be unable to qualify for traditional loans and bank financing to purchase assistive technology (AT) devices.

AT includes both devices and services. A device is any item or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a person

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with a disability. Many high-tech and low-tech devices are available to assist people with disabilities in daily living tasks, communication, education, work, and recreation.

VR will continue to support AT services that enhance employability of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities as consistent with Goal 3, Objective 3.1, and Strategy 1.

Outreach to Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and/or who have been Unserved or Underserved

VR continues to assess its services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and individuals who may be unserved or underserved as well as those with the most significant disabilities who may be from minority populations. Some of the outreach activities include the following:

1. Continue to explore opportunities to partner with community/faith-based organizations.
2. Develop lists of contacts of faith-based and other diverse programs as resources for partnership opportunities.
3. Continue to identify outreach activities conducted by the local VR areas for under-represented populations.
4. Conduct outreach in local communities to promote VR as an agency, and assist individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who may be unserved or underserved, to return or remain in the workplace.
5. Identify what racial/ethnic groups are under-represented in VR caseloads.
6. Identify disability types in VR caseloads statewide and compare them to the national average to determine groups that may be underserved.
7. Continue to review and implement local area outreach activities.
8. Implement a contract with the Helen Keller Foundation to conduct statewide outreach activities, which include outreach to potential customers who are deaf-blind.
9. Continue to conduct outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families through contracts with community-based organizations and other partners.

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10. Continue to implement activities outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe.
11. Continue to develop partnerships with employers that result in employment opportunities for all eligible individuals with disabilities.
12. Continue to provide disability awareness education to community service agencies and employers.

Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR assesses its business processes and organizational capacity on an ongoing basis to make consistent improvements in the infrastructure. Strategies to improve business relationships with community rehabilitation programs include:

1. Conduct needs assessment and vendor outreach based on results (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 1).
2. Implement electronic billing and payment processes for vendors and contract vendors (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 3).
3. Design and implement contract monitoring and fraud detection processes. (Goal 4, Objective 4.1, Strategy 2).

Strategies to Improve the Performance Related to Goals, Priorities, and Performance Indicators

Program performance is influenced by many factors, including the overall economic climate in the state. As of February 28, 2011, Florida's unemployment rate (11.5 percent) continues to be higher than the national average (8.9 percent). Additionally, 43 of the state's 67 counties have unemployment rates in the double digits (Office of Economic and Demographic Research, The Florida Legislature, March 2011). Recognizing these issues, VR will collaborate with partners at the state and local levels to maximize employment services for people with disabilities. Strategies to accomplish this objective include the following:

1. Assume a leadership role to foster cooperation and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels with partners involved in the employment of people with disabilities (Goal 1, Objective 1.1, and Strategy 1).
2. Implement contractual agreements for Innovation and Expansion services that utilize innovative approaches to improve the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services that result in successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. These services are to be provided to VR's customers in order to increase employment opportunities; improve the effectiveness

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of vocational rehabilitation services; and/or train individuals with the most significant disabilities to promote self-sufficiency and overcome barriers to employment. See Attachment 4.11 (c) (1), Goal 3, Objective 3.1., Strategy 2.

3. Implement a contract with the Helen Keller Foundation to conduct statewide outreach activities, which include outreach to potential customers who are deaf-blind.

Strategies for the Statewide Workforce Investment System to Assist Individuals with Disabilities

VR continues to be geographically aligned with the workforce regions and complies with requirements to partner with regional workforce boards. The following are strategies used for collaborating with the statewide workforce investment system to assist individuals with disabilities:

1. Continue implementation of the three-party Memorandum of Agreement between VR, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the Workforce Investment Board.
2. Continue implementation of the Memoranda of Understandings with the 24 Regional Workforce Boards.
3. Collaborate with, and offer training to One-Stop Centers and Employment Networks to provide services.
4. Continue Area Directors' participation on the local Workforce Investment Boards.
5. Continue to promote VR's presence in the One-Stop Centers through co-location of VR's units in One-Stop Centers; staff being out-stationed; and/or through regular itinerant visits by VR staff to One-Stop Centers.
6. Increase the numbers of appropriate referrals to One-Stop Centers and Employment Networks by offering training on appropriate referrals and available services (Goal 3, Objective 3.6, Strategy 2).

Equitable Access

To ensure equitable access for individuals with disabilities, VR will:

1. Continue to identify barriers preventing access to services and provide training to VR Counselors on the topics (Goal 3, Objective 3.1, Strategy 1).
2. Utilize services of the Technical Assistance Continuing Education Center to improve the delivery of Supported Employment Phase 2 services (Goal 3, Objective 3.4, Strategy 2).

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3. Continue to use interpreters and translators, and VR's online resources, as well as the websites of other partners and stakeholders (where permitted), to reach underserved populations and to increase communication with customers.
4. Offer reasonable accommodations to facilitate equitable access to services and continue efforts to ensure that materials and other program information are available in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole to various agencies, employers, churches, community leaders, health clinics, and other settings.
5. Continue to designate counselors and consultants to serve specialized populations such as the deaf and hard-of-hearing, transition students, mental health customers, and brain and spinal cord injury customers. These staff members possess or receive the specialized training necessary to effectively serve these specialized groups as well as perform as community liaisons for the populations. See Attachment 4.10.
6. Improve collaboration and partnership with other agencies, such as Veterans Administration, Division of Blind Services, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Children and Families, and Agency for Workforce Innovation to maximize opportunities and resources for customers (Goal 1, Objective 1.1, Strategies 1 and 2).

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Attachment 4.11 (e) (2): Evaluation and Report of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), in collaboration with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC), established the six goals for Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011. These goals and priorities were developed based on an analysis of VR's performance on the federal and state level standards and indicators, the preliminary result of the statewide needs assessment, and input from consumers, providers, and other stakeholders.

The following section provides VR's evaluation and report of progress in achieving the goals. Also, this attachment reports summary results from VR's Climate Survey and the FRC's customer satisfaction survey research.

FEDERAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

- A. Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: Increase over previous year)
 - Previous Year (2009): -6,000
 - Actual Performance (2010): -2,492

- B. Indicator 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (RSA Target: 55.8 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2009): 45.74 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 37.68 percent

- C. Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment Outcome (Primary) (RSA Target: 72.6 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2009): 99.48 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 99.59 percent

- D. Indicator 1.4: Significance of Disability (Primary) (RSA Target: 62.4 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2009): 76.1 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 93.01 percent

- E. Indicator 1.5: Earnings Ratio (Primary) (RSA Target: 52 percent or greater).
 - Previous Year (2009): 57.7 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 53.50 percent

- F. Indicator 1.6: Self-Support. (RSA Target: 53 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2009): 48.4 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 51.42 percent

- G. Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (RSA Target: 80 percent or greater)
 - Previous Year (2009): 95.2 percent
 - Actual Performance (2010): 94.53 percent

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Explanation about performance: Two primary factors have contributed to a decrease in performance outcomes. These factors include the following: 1) Invoking an order of selection on August 4, 2008, and 2) a very high rate of unemployment in Florida, which is higher than the national unemployment rate.

GOAL 1: Strengthen Leadership and Collaboration

Objective 1.1: Collaborate effectively with partners at the state and local level to maximize employment services for people with disabilities.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.1):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2)
Target: 55.8 percent; Actual 2010: 37.68 percent
2. Number of Memorandums of Agreement-Target: 23; Actual 2010: 16
3. Number of Memorandums of Understanding-Target: 33; Actual: 22
4. Percent of Employment Outcomes for Individuals from Specific Disability Groups-Target: Any group served below the national average
Cognitive Impairments: Target: 42 percent; Actual 2010: 37.50 percent;
Psychosocial/mental: Target: 40 percent; Actual 2010: 34.10 percent

Objective 1.2: Educate individual employers and the business community about the benefits of employing qualified individuals with disabilities and the services available to support successful employment.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.2):

1. Number of employers who hire VR customers for minimum of 90 days-Target: 7,000; Actual 2010: 3,027.
2. Number of employers who provide OJT training to VR customers.
Target: 90; Actual 2010: 162

Objective 1.3: Maintain full partnerships with the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and the Florida Independent Living Council (FILC).

Indicators and Targets (Objective 1.3):

1. Percentage of partnership requirements completed.
Target: 100 percent; Actual 2010: 100 percent
2. Satisfaction Rating for Strategic Partners
Target: 80 percent; Actual: Data to be collected

Described below is a summary of VR's partnership efforts with three of its strategic partners listed in Objective 1.3.

Florida Rehabilitation Council

FRC works in strategic partnership with VR to facilitate policy and practices consistent with federal and state law, and to promote economic independence for

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persons with disabilities. In FFY 2010-11, FRC members evaluated VR performance and met with VR staff to understand, monitor, and provide feedback regarding the ongoing impact of VR policy changes, which included financial participation and order of selection. FRC members also met with Florida legislators and others to seek feedback and provide education regarding VR services. Customized education packets have been disseminated, including information about cost of services, return on investment, number of individuals successfully employed, and average wage. Individuals are able to see the positive, direct impact and contributions of VR's customers not only in their home areas, but statewide as well.

The FRC monitors customer satisfaction by contracting with Florida State University to conduct two independent surveys. The results of the FRC customer satisfaction surveys assist the FRC in providing feedback to VR regarding VR services. The surveys measure customer satisfaction on multiple scales at the time individuals begin working on their Individualized Plans for Employment. Additionally, all closed cases are surveyed. For fiscal year 2009-10, the overall satisfaction rate of customers in active case status was 77 percent. The overall satisfaction rate of customers with closed cases was 74 percent.

The FRC continues to work with VR staff to provide recommendations and advice in the development of the Federal/State Plan. FRC and VR hosted eight public meetings to gather comments, concerns, and recommendations about the program from interested persons. The public provided comments and feedback which were reviewed by the FRC State Plan Task Force and served to assist in the development of FRC comments and feedback about the State Plan. The FRC voted to approve the VR State Plan with attached comments and recommendations and it will be sent to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), United States Department of Education.

Florida Independent Living Council (FILC)

1. RSA approved the new three-year state plan for independent living. The plan was developed in partnership with the Centers for Independent Living and the FILC and includes goals that, if achieved, will promote enhanced independent living opportunities for people with disabilities.
2. VR and FILC operate under a three-year Memorandum of Agreement. The agreement aligns with the three-year state plan for Independent Living.
3. More than 20,000 independent living plans were developed, and more than 30,000 independent living goals were set through the network of 16 Centers for Independent Living.

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Client Assistance Program (CAP)

1. VR continues to receive and address comments from CAP. As a member of FRC, CAP's director is further involved in providing input about VR's functions regarding policy, the development of state plan goals and priorities, evaluation of the effectiveness of the program, and assessment of customer satisfaction.
2. Staff of the CAP review VR policy and work together with VR's staff on rehabilitation service delivery to ensure that services to eligible consumers are effective, efficient, and appropriate.
3. CAP consults with the VR ombudsman unit in resolving many of the service delivery issues that are received.

GOAL 2: Improve Service Delivery through Strengthened Workplace Environment and Improved Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Objective 2.1: Improve benefits, salaries, and advancement opportunities for VR employees.

Indicators and Targets:

1. Percent of employees participating in variable time schedules-Target: 100 percent; Actual 2010: All employees can request a non-standard work schedule based on needs. Approximately 95 percent of all non-standard work requests are approved.
2. Percent increase in VR employee compensation-Target: 1.5 percent; Actual 2010: Due to budgetary issues, target pay increases were not an option during this time.
3. These two indicators have been changed for 2011-12. See Goal 1, Objective 2.2 in Attachment 4.11 (c) (1).

Objective 2.2: Ensure personnel policies and practices are clear and effective and are openly communicated to all VR employees.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 2.2):

1. Percentage of all targeted employees who acknowledge receipt of policies
Target: 100 percent
2. Percentage of employees indicating that policies are clear
Target: 100 percent; Actual Performance: This objective was discontinued because VR is implementing a SharePoint operating environment and developing a learning management system. These solutions will provide quick

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attestation of policies as well as assessment of policy clarity. All VR employees will have access to SharePoint.

Objective 2.3: Improve service delivery by enhancing employee skills.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 2.3):

1. Percentage of employees successfully completing training (defined as demonstration of knowledge and demonstration of behavior)
Target: 80 percent; Actual: Data to be collected during 2010-11

Objective 2.4: Provide professional, comfortable office environments that ensure accessibility, safety, and security for employees.

Indicator and Target (Objective 2.4):

1. Employee satisfaction with office environment (accessible, comfortable, safe)
Target: 90 percent; Actual 2010: 83.78 percent

GOAL 3: Improve Customer Success and Satisfaction

Objective 3.1: Increase the rehabilitation rate.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.1):

1. Rehabilitation Rate (RSA Indicator 1.2)
Target: 55.8 percent; Actual 2010: 37.68 percent
2. Number of Innovation and Expansion Proposals Adopted-Target: The number will be determined after the proposal evaluation process is completed; Actual Number Adopted: Seven
3. Percentage of Customers Indicating Overall Satisfaction with Services
Target: 80 percent; Actual 2010: 78 percent

Mental Health

Objective 3.2: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with mental health disabilities.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.2):

1. Percentage of individuals receiving services under an IPE that have a mental health disability-Target: 35 percent; Actual 2010: 62.30 percent
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE that have mental health disabilities-Target: 40 percent; Actual 2010: 56.60 percent

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Self-Employment

Objective 3.3: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 3.3):

1. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal-Target: 1 percent; Actual 2010: .46 percent
2. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals receiving services under an IPE with self-employment as a goal-Target: 1 percent; Actual 2010: .56 percent

Self-Supporting at Closure

Objective 3.4: Increase the percentage of individuals served who are self-supporting at closure compared to at application.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.4):

1. Percent of individuals served that are self-supporting at closure compared to at application (RSA Indicator 1.6)-Target: 53 percent; Actual 2010: 51.42 percent

Transition

Objective 3.5: Increase the percentage of employment outcomes for transition-age individuals who receive VR services under an IPE.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.5):

1. Number of referred transition-age individuals-Target: 17,170; Actual 2010: 15,718
2. Percentage of individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age-Target: 30 percent; Actual 2010: 36.30 percent
3. Percentage of employment outcomes for individuals who receive services under an IPE who are transition-age-Target: 25 percent; Actual 2010: 27 percent

Policy and Practice

Objective 3.6: Modify VR policy and practices to more effectively address changing requirements of customers and the workplace.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.6):

1. Number of customers who participate in: a) On-the-Job Training, b) apprenticeship, 3) internships, and 4) one-stop services
Target: Baseline data is being collected during FY 09-10; Actual 2010: 324 for On-the Job Training. 758 referrals from One-stop Centers. It is recommended

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that apprenticeship, internships and One-stop services be deleted from this indicator.

Service Delivery

Objective 3.7: Promote a consistent service delivery process throughout the state.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 3.7):

1. Percent of findings identified in the quarterly quality assurance reviews that are resolved-Target: Baseline data is being collected during FY 10-11

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Objective 3.8 (ARRA): Continue employment of 24 temporary employees.

Objective 3.9 (ARRA): Increase the number of individuals served by VR.

Indicators and Targets (Objectives 3.8 & 3.9):

1. Number of temporary employees hired-Target: 24;
Actual 2010: 61 temporary employees have been hired with ARRA funds
2. Number of customers on the waiting list-Target: a) Priority Category 1 = 0; b) Priority Category 2 = 0; c) Priority Category 3 = Less than 3,000; Actual 2010: There are no customers on the waiting list for Priority Categories 1 and 2. As of March 2011, there were 2,426 customers on the waiting list for Priority Category 3.
3. Length of time between customer notification of invitation from the waiting list and plan development-Target: 95 percent of IPEs completed in less than 120 days; Actual 2010: 61.2 percent (83.7 percent as of March 2011)

Objective 3.10 (ARRA): Continue On-the-Job Training (OJT) and pre-placement as services to VR's existing Employment and Supported Employment contracts.

Indicator and Target (Objective 3.10):

1. Number of VR customers with OJT services as a part of the IPE-Target: 1,259; Actual 2010: 3,746
2. Number of OJT training agreements with businesses-Target: 75; Actual 2010: 90

Objective 3.11 (ARRA): Improve and expand Independent Living (IL) services for individuals with significant disabilities.

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Objective 3.12 (ARRA): Distribute IL funds to the 16 Centers for Independent Living (CIL).

Indicator and Target (Objectives 3.11 & 3.12):

1. Design and implementation of innovative, replicable projects-Target: 16; Actual 2010: Close to \$672,000 has been distributed to the CILs to improve and expand IL through the activities listed in Objective 3.12. The agreements are scheduled to conclude in September 2011.
2. The outcomes from 16 consumer-controlled projects based on the needs of the local area served by each CIL-Target: Baseline data being collected during FY 09-10; Actual 2010: A majority of the CILs expended some of their ARRA funds to increase the long-term technological core of their programs. Several updated computers, data management systems, and telephone systems. These activities will enable individuals with disabilities to access services and increase accountability. Several CILs used funds to assist individuals' transition from school or institutions to more independent living. A large number of CILs used the funds on other special projects that are consistent with the State Plan for IL, including increasing mental health services, employment services, home modifications, assistive technology, and accessibility.

GOAL 4: Improve Infrastructure for Business Processes / Organizational Capability

Objective 4.1: Improve vendor and contract processes.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.1):

1. Percent of vendors completing the certification process within 10 days-Target: 100 percent; Actual 2010: 96 percent
2. Average time for vendor certification-Target: 48 hours; Actual 2010: 48 hours
3. Percent of contracts meeting all contract process timeframe requirements-Target: 100 percent; Actual 2010: 98 percent

Objective 4.2: Update data systems and technology to better support customers and staff.

Indicators and Targets (Objective 4.2):

1. Percent of VR offices meeting employee and customer technology requirements-Target: 80 percent; Actual 2010: In 2010, VR procured technology services to develop and implement the Rehabilitation Electronic Billing Application (REBA), a web-based system that will allow for referral acceptance, notification of approvals by the counselor, vendor invoice submission, and monthly progress report submission. During 2011, VR will

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develop a procedure to assess the percent of VR offices that meet employee and customer technology requirements.

GOAL 5: Improve the System for Ensuring Quality

Objective 5.1: Design an integrated system for managing business processes, reporting performance, and improving performance.

Indicator and Target (Objective 5.1):

1. Percent of indicators trending in the right direction-Target: 90 percent by December 31, 2013; Actual 2010: VR is developing a management report that will contain this information.

2. Other performance information for this objective is listed below. From January 2010 through March 2011, the Bureau of Compliance and Oversight completed reviews of 16 Internal/External Unit Projects:
 - A. Human Resource Development Training Follow-up Review – 03/10
 - B. Leon County School District TPCA – 04/10
 - C. FAAST – Federal Follow-Up Review – 04/10
 - D. VR Budget Section Review – 06/10
 - E. Gulfstream Goodwill, Inc. – 07/10
 - F. Boley Centers, Inc. – Employment, Supported Employment, and OJT – 08/10
 - G. Goodwill Industries of South Florida – 09/10
 - H. Suncoast Center for Independent Living Follow-up Review – 09/10
 - I. Empowerment of Florida – 11/10
 - J. Life Concepts, “Quest” – 11/10
 - K. Ticket-to-Work SS Reimbursement Program, Areas 1 and 2 – Follow-up – 12/10
 - L. Ticket-to-Work SS Reimbursement Program, Areas 4, 5, and 6 – 01/11
 - M. Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida – 01/11
 - N. Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc. – 01/11
 - O. Space Coast Center for Independent Living – Follow-up Review – 02/11
 - P. Center for Social Capital, Inc. – 03/11

Explanation about Performance: The strategies listed under Goal 5 and the completion of the Bureau’s work plan contributed to VR’s efforts in maintaining internal controls to assure effective, efficient operations in the delivery of services to eligible individuals with disabilities.

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Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

In FFY 2010-11, VR, with the agreement of the FRC, continued to use funds designated under this section to support the functions of the FRC and FILC and to embrace opportunities for improving the efficiency of service delivery.

Actual Performance:

VR continues to support and partner with the FRC and FILC as required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Specific progress information for these councils is discussed under Goal 1 above.

Explanation about Progress:

The collaborative efforts helped strengthen leadership and improved services which led to increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Evaluation of Supported Employment Program

Attachments 4.11 (c) (4)

This is an update of VR's progress in providing supported employment services. For specific information about the goals and strategies, see attachment 4.11 (c) (4) and attachment 6.3.

Goal 1: Increase service capacity for individuals with the most significant disabilities

Actual Performance:

1. VR allocated VI-B funds among its six areas on the same basis as Title I funds to ensure individuals with most significant disabilities have equal access statewide to VR services.

Goal 2: Utilize Title VI-B funds to achieve the maximum number of quality employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities

Actual Performance:

VR provided supported employment services, when appropriate, to individuals with most significant disabilities, including those with developmental disabilities, who may benefit from supported employment services. Data below represent VR's performance in serving consumers under Title VI-B.

1. Average number of active cases: Previous Year (2009): 3,540
Actual Performance (2010): 4,541
2. Number of Individualized Plans for Employment: Previous Year (2009):1,949

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Actual Performance (2010): 2,319

3. Number of Rehabilitations: Previous Year (2009): 141
Actual Performance (2010): 122

Goal 3: Utilize the five percent permitted for administration to fund development and delivery of training and technical assistance

Actual Performance:

1. VR collaborated and partnered with the Department of Children and Families and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) at all organizational levels.
2. The supported employment administrator continues to provide training on service delivery for individuals with the most significant disabilities to new counselors as well as follow-up trainings and technical assistance to seasoned counselors and supervisors at conferences, meetings, workshops and upon request.
3. VR collaborates with the APD to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities access Medicaid Waiver funding for extended services.
4. VR provides education about on-the-job supports for individuals in supported employment to the following:
 - a. Business Leadership Networks
 - b. Florida Developmental Disability Council
 - c. Family Care Council
 - d. Waiver Support Coordinators
 - e. Florida Rehabilitation Council
 - f. Florida Project Search Participant Sites
 - g. Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultant Area Training
 - h. Transition Committees
 - i. Individualized Trainings
5. The following strategies were used to support collaboration between VR and other community resources through networking and leadership activities:
 - a. Representation on the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council and Employment Task Force
 - b. Representation on the Interagency Services Committee
 - c. Representation on the Medicaid Infrastructure Advisory Committee
 - d. Representation on the Asset Development Advisory Committee
 - e. Presentations on Supported Employment at conferences around the state including: Family Café, Florida Association for Supported Employment, VISIONS, and AmeriCorps
 - f. Participation in the development of a transition website that offers information for professionals, families, and students regarding employment options

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GOAL 4: Leverage resources for extended ongoing support services

Actual Performance:

1. Staff continue to serve as a resource member on Business Leadership Networks to educate businesses and employers about on-the-job supports for individuals in supported employment.
2. VR and APD staff continue to provide training for VR counselors, waiver support coordinators, and for APD field staff on best practices in supported employment and the roles and responsibilities of all partners.
3. VR participated in APD Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that provides Social Security Benefits training and certification.
4. VR staff participate on a periodic basis in APD hosted conference calls as well as quarterly meetings designed to make the supported employment service delivery system for mutual clients an effective and efficient one.
5. The supported employment administrator provides training to field staff on the multiple options available for extended services.

Explanation of Performance:

The strategies reported above helped VR to increase services and employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

Attachment 6.3

Actual Performance:

1. VR, in collaboration with the Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, contracts with 23 schools districts to assist with the provision of community-based work experiences to students with varying disabilities.
2. VR's supported employment program administrator presented at the Family Care Council, Family Café, Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Business Leadership Network, Florida Developmental Disability Council, and the VISIONS Conference in an effort to increase awareness about the utilization of natural supports and emphasize its use as a realistic option for successful job maintenance.
3. VR's supported employment program administrator partners with the APD to provide joint skills development training on supported employment to counselors and waiver support coordinators, and provides technical assistance, as needed.
4. Local area VR counselors and supervisors participated in the Social Security's Work Incentive Benefits and Impairment Related Work Expenses trainings provided by the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project and the APDs Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.
5. VR's supported employment administrator provides training to Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultants and VR staff to encourage the use of supported self-employment as an employment option for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

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Explanation of Performance:

The strategies reported above helped VR to improve services and employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

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Attachment 6.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Quality

Policies, contract terms, good practice guidelines, training, and technical assistance to agency staff, agency partners, provider staff, employers, individuals with disabilities, advocates, and families ensure the quality of supported employment services and outcomes.

Quality outcome measures emphasize achievement of a stable employment outcome as determined to be satisfactory by the client, agency counselor, employment specialist, and employer. Stable employment is achieved when all four parties agree transition has occurred. The individual is empowered to exercise informed choice in determining if a quality outcome has been achieved. VR supports the individual in making employment choices consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests in the most integrated setting possible.

VR ensures that the extended ongoing support services identified on the individualized plan for employment are provided by the extended services provider for a minimum of 60 days past stabilization.

Scope

The scope of supported employment services include all services provided under Title I, the coordination of extended ongoing support services, and the development of natural supports. The expanded scope of supported employment ongoing supports requires intensive coordination and collaboration with other agencies, employers, and families. Post-employment services may be provided when supports and services are needed which exceed the responsibility of the extended ongoing support services provider.

Individuals with severe and persistent mental illness are served through transitional employment, assertive community treatment teams, and other approaches that address their unique characteristics and support needs to maintain stable employment.

Extent

The extent of supported employment services is determined by the following: a statewide needs assessment; analysis of historic performance data; number of students exiting schools; and data provided by agency partners, particularly the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), and the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program.

Supported Employment services are provided to the extent permitted by available resources to include collaborative efforts to improve funding for Phase 2 follow-along. VR will continue to pursue expansion of supported employment

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services through the development of contracts with community providers and schools.

VR will:

1. Continue to utilize cooperative agreements with the APD and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, including maximizing funding for shared clients.
2. Implement the Interagency Articulation Agreement between VR and the APD, as well as the cooperative agreement with the Department of Children and Families, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse to decrease barriers for individuals working with multiple agencies while seeking employment.
3. Develop strategies to implement the cooperative agreements at the local levels with appropriate stakeholders.
4. Develop strategies to clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved in the cooperative agreements.
5. Maximize the quality of service delivery ensuring an efficient and effective referral process, individual program planning, coordination of intensive vocational services with extended services, information collection and dissemination, confidentiality, and technical assistance.
6. Implement an interagency planning process between VR and APD that defines and projects the number of persons in need of intensive and extended services each fiscal year and facilitates program and fiscal planning.
7. Expand the extent of available services through the School to Work Program's collaboration with local school districts.
8. Emphasize the provision of services to all racial/ethnic minorities.
9. Seek additional resources for Phase II services through legislative funding requests and/or collaboration with agency partners, including APD, Agency for Healthcare Administration, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Department of Education, and others.
10. Collaborate with the Department of Health's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, the Brain Injury Association of Florida, and other non-profit entities to provide follow-along services and natural supports for individuals with brain injuries.

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11. Collaborate with community organizations, employers, families, and support groups to develop natural supports for supported employment extended services.
12. Partner with Mental Health's Florida Assertive Community Treatment teams to provide supported employment services to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and individuals exiting psychiatric/mental health facilities.
13. Participate in the Interagency Services Committee to expand interagency initiatives and increase employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES – PHASE II

Transition to Extended Services

Transition occurs a minimum of 90 days after "stabilization." Responsibility for funding ongoing support services transitions at this time from the DVR to the source of funding for the ongoing support services.

Supported Employment Outcome Closure of a person successfully rehabilitated in a supported employment outcome occurs when the following criteria are met: (a) 90 days following stabilization and 60 days from transition to closure (to assure on-going supports are successful following transition), or (b) a minimum of 150 days of continuous employment following stabilization.

Extent of Extended Support Services

VR has developed a supported employment action plan to address needs of the most significantly disabled and others who may require supported employment services. VR's action plan focuses on improved collaboration, enhanced staff and provider skills, and better utilization of existing resources.

VR will continue its collaboration and partnership efforts with the Department of Children and Families and APD at all organizational levels. VR will work towards the following:

1. Collaborate with the APD Medicaid Infrastructure Grant staff to provide training for counselors on Social Security Benefits Planning.
2. Obtain and distribute information, and train counselors about Social Security Impairment Related Work Expenses.
3. Train or refresh counselors on the use of Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency.
4. Increase natural supports to include self-pay, family/friends, and employers.

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5. Develop provider “best practices” of funding Phase II extended services to share with other providers.
6. Train employers, families, friends, co-workers, VR staff, and providers on the use of natural supports.
7. Provide joint skills development trainings for counselors and waiver support coordinators on supported employment related issues.
8. Obtain training from the work incentives planning and assistance projects for counselors in local areas. When feasible, include community providers in training sessions conducted by VR.