

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2026 and 2027.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
(COMBINED OR GENERAL)**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

**A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.**

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER-CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR SRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

Select A or B:

*(A) is an independent State commission*

*(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council*

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	First	12/23
Parent Training and Information Center	First	05/24
Client Assistance Program	Second	02/23
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	Second	02/23

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Second	02/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	First	05/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	First	05/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	First	05/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	First	09/25
Disability Advocacy Groups	First	05/24
Disability Advocacy Groups	Second	02/23
Person with a Disability	First	09/25
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	First	05/24
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	N/A	N/A
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Second	05/24
State Workforce Development Board	Second	02/23
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Second	07/22

3. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

With active and on-going engagement with Boards and Commissions, the SRC composition requirements are met. New Member Onboarding was implemented to support the nine first term SRC members to the roles and responsibilities. The State Rehabilitation Council meets quarterly as required in Section 105(F) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) maintain open lines of communication. The Division reports key activities such as performance measures, programmatic and policy updates, satisfaction results, staffing, current events, and new initiatives during SRC meetings. The SRC utilized Program Year 2024 to strengthen SRC Member Engagement and performance.

To accomplish the important collaborative work laid out in the Goals and Priorities, the SRC and DVR supported and strengthened key SRC Committees and Sub Committees in Program Year 2025.

The Membership & Governmental Affairs Committee expanded to welcome four new council members and held a legislative training session for its members and the DVR leadership team. The Committee planned legislative engagement strategies, including a planned advocacy day and met with DVR Leadership to identify legislative priorities.

In addition, the SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey Committee members review the participant satisfaction process including the survey instrument and methodology.

The committee is evaluating innovative and data-informed approaches to strengthen participant satisfaction, enhance engagement, and improve the quality and usefulness of the overall feedback to support continuous program improvement.

The SRC Annual Recognition Awards Planning Committee met several times throughout the Program Year to effectively put together the State Rehabilitation Council's Annual Recognition Awards in partnership with DVR. The Annual Recognition event honored businesses, employees and DVR team members who demonstrated exceptional leadership in advancing disability inclusion.

#### 5. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation appreciates the ongoing support and collaboration with the SRC. It is excited to collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council to achieve the performance measures and recommendations. DVR accepts the SRC recommendations to implement the following goals:

##### **Goal 1: Provide quality career pathway opportunities for people with disabilities. - Agree**

DVR's Business Relations team leverages its resources for training and employing individuals with disabilities while addressing the workforce needs of Delaware businesses.

The DVR Business Relations team connects businesses with a pool of qualified candidates and offers the necessary support services to help participants thrive in their roles. Valuable resources include the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), which connects participants to various resources, including Job Postings, Geographic-Specific Resumes, Recruiter Access, Compliance and Application Reports, Hiring Data, and Interview Capability and Delaware JobLink. In

collaboration with the State of Delaware's Department of Human Resources Talent Acquisition, DVR continues to promote the Selective Placement Program and Employment Network.

Additionally, the Business Relations team is involved regularly in Chamber of Commerce meetings and events throughout the state and attended career and resource fairs to share the resources available to Delaware employers and individuals through the Department of Labor and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The DVR Business Relations team engaged with businesses to provide information about DVR business services and discuss ways to collaborate in serving the community to provide quality employment and career services. The DVR Business Relations Team facilitated 44 Employment Readiness Workshops for participants

DVR continued to collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division for the Visually Impaired to secure technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON). The primary focus has been to implement systems change to enhance competitive integrated employment in Delaware. This is the third year Delaware has been a NEON Core State. Progress in Building a Shared Foundation Collaboration with SELN (State Employment Leadership Network).

Benefits Counseling:

- Benefits Counseling Professional Development
- Benefits Planning Communication Materials
- Monthly Benefits Planning Information Sessions
- Enhanced self-employment resources for participants and the DVR team to support self-employment as a viable option:
- DVR Self-Employment Technical Assistance via the National Disability Institute (NDI)
- New Self-Employment Policy & Tools Launched
- Partnership with the Delaware Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Self-Employment Community of Practice for DVR Counselors via National Disability Institute

## **Goal 2: Support training programs that reflect high demand opportunities in the labor market-Agree**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to collaborate with workforce development partners, state agencies, businesses, and community providers to promote opportunities for participants to achieve competitive integrated employment. DVR is encouraged by the commitment and collaboration to explore opportunities such as incentives, training programs and apprenticeships, and the acquisition of additional resources for job seekers with disabilities.

DVR values the teamwork and support of its partners in strengthening the workforce system while pursuing opportunities to improve processes and address challenges.

**GOAL 3: Enhance Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and Transition Career Services to transition-aged individuals with disabilities- Agree**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted the following activities:

- Targeted Professional Development of Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
- Pre-Employment Transition Coordinators
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Programs
- Specialized Programs
- Transition Cadre
- Summer Career Exploration experiences
- 10% increase of transition students served
- 14% increase of new transition students

**GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing, and Outreach- Agree**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted the following activities:

Outreach/Education initiatives:

- Career and Community Engagement Events
- School Transition Fairs, Information Sessions,

Updated Brochure and Publications

Enhanced Social Media Platforms

- DVR website maintenance and updates with stories and current events
- Chamber of Commerce Events and Business Networking Activities
- Increase outreach efforts to minority and underserved populations to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services.
- Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, such as independence, sense of community, and financial independence.
- Enhanced Participant Satisfaction Survey Delivery to Participants via A.I. to increase feedback.

**B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).**

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

## A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT;

During 2025, Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, General and Blind) conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA was conducted using electronic surveys and individual and focus group interviews with individuals with disabilities, community partners, team members, and businesses. A total of 662 individuals participated in the DVR segment of the CSNA:

Participants: 496, Partner: 95, DVR Team: 67, Business: 4

### **The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**

1. The need for transportation to and from work, especially in the rural areas, was cited as the most pressing rehabilitation need for individuals with disabilities. Counselors have to be very creative in trying to find ways to get consumers the transportation they need for work, and resources to assist with transportation vary dramatically across the State.
2. Other commonly cited needs included training, job skills, soft skills, workplace accommodations, educating employers about the abilities of individuals with disabilities, and assistive technology.
3. DVR serves many individuals who need supported employment services. More than half of their consumers are individuals with cognitive impairments, and many need the extended services provided in the SE model once stabilization on the job occurs. The quality and availability of SE services vary across the state and has been impacted by the staff turnover at CRPs.
4. The CRPs in Delaware do not provide customized employment services, and DVR does not provide this service in-house. According to those interviewed for this CSNA, there are individuals with the most significant disabilities in Delaware that could benefit from CE, so this is a service gap that needs to be addressed in the future.
5. Participants indicated that employer perceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities are still a significant barrier to employment and education of employers is a significant need.
6. Participants indicated that individuals with mental health impairments are experiencing a delay in services due limited access to mental health evaluations, treatment and clinical services.
7. Affordable housing emerged as a significant need in the last 4-5 years in Delaware. Counselors indicated that many of their consumers are facing significant economic challenges because of the high cost of rent and lack of affordable housing. The need for housing stability is a pressing concern for many DVR consumers and directly affects their ability to participate in a rehabilitation plan.
8. Financial planning, literacy and empowerment services were noted as an important need for individuals with disabilities. While there are benefits planning services available, DVR consumers need more in-depth financial literacy services.

9. There is a need for broadband internet access in the rural areas of the State. Several partner programs indicated that often consumers in the rural areas do not have access to broadband internet access either because there isn't any available, or they do not have the money to pay the monthly fee.

**The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by DVR:**

1. The most common geographic area identified as potentially underserved for both agencies was the rural areas of the state. The lack of transportation, vendors and awareness of DVR and DVI were cited as common barriers to accessing services for individuals living in rural areas.
2. Hispanic individuals were the only group by race that was commonly cited as potentially underserved. This was noted as a likely consequence of government mistrust, resident status, fear of profiling and lack of awareness of DVR and DVI services.
3. The rehabilitation needs of minority individuals with disabilities were not noted as being markedly different from other consumers except for those unable to speak English, and then language interpreters were considered essential for DVR and DVI access and service delivery.
4. Individuals who are deaf and use sign language to communicate were noted as potentially underserved because of the lack of interpreters in many areas.
5. Although not cited as being underserved, the increase in older individuals seeking employment due to increases in the cost of living was noted as an emerging population that DVR should be aware.

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

Respondents identified help finding job as most important. Other needs include transportation; needing assistance with current job; determining accommodations; assistance getting a job (63.8%) and needing support with college or post-secondary type education (36.6%).

The number of individuals with supported employment listed as a goal on their IPE steadily increased from almost 8% in PY2021 to almost 21% at the end of PY2023.

DVR serves many individuals who need supported employment services. More than half of DVR participants are individuals with cognitive impairments, and many need extended services provided in the SE model when stabilized on the job.

Respondents indicated supported employment services can be improved by enhancing transportation, additional training, job skills, soft skills, benefits planning, workplace accommodations, educating employers about abilities of individuals, and assistive technology.

Community Partner survey results about services readily available to DVR clients identified job training, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention, supported employment, vocational/postsecondary education, and assistive technology were listed as the top items.

The DVR partner respondents indicated the following DVR services were not readily available: housing, personal care attendants, vehicle modifications, maintenance or income assistance, mental health treatment, health insurance, and medical treatment were top of the list.

Respondents to the survey identified barriers to getting or keeping a job and those identified as the top of the list: limited job skills/work experience, lack of education or training, limited job search/interview skills, employer concerns about participants ability to do the job, and lack of available jobs. It is noted that lack of childcare was the lowest ranking barrier to employment.

*DVR Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General DVR Clients*

DVR partners responded to the survey about the most common barriers to employment goals for general VR participants included: employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, limited job skills/work experience, transportation, lack of education or training, concern over loss of Social Security benefits or other benefits such as Medicaid, lack of job search/interview skills, lack of soft skills and lack of available jobs were the top barriers.

DVR will enhance training opportunities for community rehabilitation providers and DVR staff on high-quality customized and supported employment services. DVR training will focus on transition to extended services, when the transition is appropriate, and on an individualized basis.

DVR and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services will continue to enhance their partnership and strengthen the working relationship in efforts to reduce confusion and delays with transition from VR funding to extended SE services. DVR will explore training opportunities available on trauma informed care for counseling staff. DVR will encourage families of SSI-eligible youth to apply for long-term funding from their Medicaid waiver program for extended services when they are considered working in SE. DVR will increase opportunities to learn self-advocacy skills and identify resources and ways to deliver financial empowerment services to our consumers. DVR will continue to be an active partner with the other WIOA core partners which provides many regular opportunities for information sharing, planning and an overall effort to streamline services. During the monthly partner meetings, DVR shares information about vocational rehabilitation and learns what is available from other partners. DVR will also continue to participate in the Early Start to Supported Employment initiative This sharing of information with our stakeholders will enhance communication with our partners and improve the overall services that DVR provides in the community.

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – DVR participants with the Most Significant Disabilities top barriers included: employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, limited job skills/work experiences, lack of available jobs, transportation, concern over loss of benefits.

DVR Staff respondents to identifying barriers to achieving employment goals found limited job skills/work experience in the first position in the results, employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, lack of soft skills, criminal offences, transportation and concern over loss of benefits were found to be the top listed in the results. Lack of technology and lack of childcare were at the bottom of the list.

DVR staff survey respondents were asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for participants with the most significant disabilities. The top-ranking items were

employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities; limited job skills/work experience, transportation and concern over loss of benefits.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents agreed supported employment services were available to people with the most significant employment challenges. Respondents indicated supported employment services can be improved by addressing timeliness/speed of services, longer assessments, follow-along for people with more types of disabilities, transportation, longer follow-along, more service providers, professional development for service providers, and better communication.

DVR will continue to explore opportunities to engage with stakeholders. This includes educational programs, community organizations, transportation providers, the medical community, several councils, service providers, employers, other state agencies, families, and consumers. DVR will continue to be an active partner with the other WIOA core partners which provides opportunities for information sharing, planning and an overall effort to streamline services. During the monthly partner meetings, DVR shares information about vocational rehabilitation and learn what is available from other partners. DVR will also continue to participate in the Early Start to Supported Employment initiative and Community of Practice. This sharing of information with our stakeholders will enhance communication with our partners and improve the overall services that DVR provides in the community.

#### B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Respondents feedback includes increase outreach to Hispanic community groups in Delaware to increase community awareness of services available. Enhance resources including alternate languages and formats, expand hours of operation and community access, increase staff recruitment of bilingual skills, especially Spanish and staff training.

- Identify and address the impact of increasing population shift of relocating retirees to the state and older adults re-entering the workforce due to the increase cost of living and decreasing retirement funds. Enhance partnership with Delaware Aging and Disability Resource Center.
- Have representation on transportation committees and boards to advocate for transportation needs.
- Enhance collaboration between DVR and DVI to better serve individuals who are DeafBlind
- More outreach to Hispanic, Spanish speaking and other communities such as The Latin American Community Center in Wilmington and La'Esperanza Center in Sussex County.
- Regular review of diversity composition of those served to ensure that disparities in representation are for those who need VR services and due to limited access or outreach.

The CSNA provided one important consideration is the percentage of participants served by race and ethnicity as compared to the state U.S. Census data. Statewide Delaware averages exceed the National averages for ethnic diversity in the categories of Black or African Americans (9.9% higher) and for Puerto Rican (1.3% higher). The statewide Delaware average for

Hispanics or Latinos is 8.3% lower than National average. In the United States 2023 Census for the State of Delaware 58% identified as White, 21.7% as Black or African American, 11.1% Hispanic or Latino, 0.0% Other Hispanic or Latino 4.3%, Mexican 3.6% Puerto Rican 3.0% Cuban 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 7% American Indian & Alaska Native, 0.1% Asian, 4.3% two or more races. 4.3% The data on Disability, Race and Ethnicity shows the Hispanic or Latino population in Wilmington at 18.8% followed by Kent County at 18.2%, next Sussex at 11.1% and New Castle is 9.2%,

Within the Delaware VR data set for PY'24, 54% identified as White, 44.2% Black or African American, 8.2% as Hispanic or Latin, 0.6% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1.5% as American Indian/Alaska Native, and 2.7% as Asian. 44.8% identified as female, 54.8% identified as male. 4% prefer not to answer. It is also noteworthy to highlight 52.9% identified as having a cognitive disability followed by 25.1% having mental health. Thus, in addition to enhanced outreach to the unserved or underserved, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will also expend resources to engage services and service providers and continue to collaborate with community partners for resources and services to serve those with cognitive and mental health disabilities.

**C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND**

The needs of individual with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System:

1. While the working relationship between DVR, DVI and the DET centers is good in many areas, the relationship is almost exclusively one of referral. There are very few examples of braided funding.
2. Accessibility in the DET centers is a challenge in some areas of the State, especially related to serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments. The assistive technology was noted as rarely functioning, and when it was, staff at the centers do not know how to use it.
3. Staff at the DET centers need training on how to work with individuals with disabilities. DVR and DVI staff note that DET center staff simply refer individuals with disabilities straight to their agencies without any attempt to meet their needs in the centers or to accommodate them.
4. *Individual Survey: Delaware DET Job Centers – DVR and DVI Use and Accessibility*

DVR Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the DET (formerly known as One-	25	6.9%	336	93.1%	361

DVR Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Stop Centers) beyond an online account?					
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	4	14.8%	23	85.2%	27
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the DET (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	8	32.0%	17	68.0%	25
DVI Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the Job Centers at the Delaware Division of Employment and Training (DET) beyond an online account?	3	13.0%	20	87.0%	23
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	3

DVR Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
the building?					
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the DET (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3

***Delaware DET Job Centers – Training and Employment***

Individual survey respondents from DVR indicated that the services they sought at the DET Job Centers did not result in desired outcomes for the majority of respondents. Eight survey respondents (30.8% of 26 respondents) went to the DET Center to get training. Four individuals (44.4%) indicated that they received the training they were seeking and found work as a result of the training. Fourteen (58.3%) out of 24 individuals went to the Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Seventeen DVR individual survey respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment with 82.4% (n=14) indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment.

Use and accessibility of the DET centers responses from 361 individual survey respondents noted utilizing DET and beyond an online account and 6.8% indicated “yes” they used the DET services. Of the 361 responses, Based on 27 responses, 14.8% indicated they experienced difficulty with physical accessibility of the building. Based on 25 responses, eight individuals shared difficulty accessing the programs at DET through no available assistive technology or no interpreters.

Individual survey respondents from DVR indicated that the services sought at the DET Centers did not result in desired outcomes for the majority of respondents. Eight survey respondents (30.8% of 26 respondents) went to the DET Center to get training. Four individuals (44.4%) indicated that they received the training they were seeking and found work as a result of the training. Fourteen (58.3%) out of 24 individuals went to the Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Seventeen DVR individual survey respondents indicated receiving help that resulted in employment with 82.4% indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment and 1.7% did receive.

DVR will enhance collaboration efforts with DET centers to create and facilitate opportunities for cross-training staff in both systems for smoother transitions across agencies. DVR will identify cases where braided funding and joint planning opportunities and highlight the cases to encourage continued replication. Enhanced collaboration with DET to develop customized training opportunities for clients.

D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.

The needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in Delaware are similar to all individuals served by DVR in some areas and different in others. Similarities include the need for transportation to and from school and work, training, job skills and soft skills. Commonly noted differences include the need for work-based learning experiences, in-depth vocational evaluation, coordinated services with school staff, and the establishment of accommodations in postsecondary education.
2. Soft skills development is critical for youth and students with disabilities as they often struggle with some of the most basic skills such as attendance, showing up on time, appropriate social interactions, accepting constructive criticism, and staying on task.
3. Self-advocacy skills are needed by youth and students with disabilities. Young people with disabilities and their families often have low expectations related to working and ever becoming self-sufficient. This impacts their self-confidence and efficacy expectations.
4. There is a need for benefits planning to help young people and their families understand that it is possible to work and eventually achieve self-sufficiency or at least reduce the level of dependency on SSI.
5. DVR staff regularly coordinate services with school staff, ensuring that the school's IEP and DVR's IPE are aligned whenever possible.
6. All five of the required pre-employment transition services are beneficial and needed for students with disabilities in Delaware. DVR has focused on increasing the availability of work-based learning experiences in PY 2024, and this has helped to expose students to the real world of work and the necessary soft skills to be successful in the future.
7. DVR uses CRPs, independent contractors and in-house staff to deliver pre-employment transition services. The agency has worked to try and get pre-ETS delivered across all schools in the State, but some schools are resistant because of the time that is required during the school day to deliver the services.
8. The mental health of many youth and students served by DVR presents a major barrier to employment. There is a need to develop more resources to be able to address these barriers. DVR needs to cultivate partnerships with mental health organizations that serve youth with mental health impairments and integrate transition services into the behavioral health treatment process.
9. There is a need to increase awareness of DVR services in the school and with family members.

10. There is a service gap noted between students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transition services and youth that are justice involved, in foster care, or who have dropped out of school. While DVR is aware of the need to serve these youth, the critical partnerships to reach them and establish service models have not been uniformly developed across the state and the available resources are limited to accomplish this outreach

## 2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

1. There is a need to establish additional clinical vendors to provide diagnoses for mental health impairments that are needed to determine eligibility. This is complicated by limited mental health services in several communities throughout the state, with some rural areas having no access to any mental health services.
2. There is a need to establish customized employment in the State.
3. There is a need to develop and improve SE services in the State. The capacity of CRPs to provide the services varies throughout the state and many areas have to wait long periods for consumers to receive services because of limited capacity of service providers to serve the individuals referred.
4. DVR staff indicate a desire to improve the quality of employment outcomes obtained by CRPs.
5. Providers indicated that the payment process can be slow for delivered services, which causes them to hesitate to expand the menu of available services as they do not have the resources to implement new services without available funding.
6. There is a need to establish driver evaluation services for individuals that need vehicle modifications.
7. There is a need to develop CRPs for employment services of all kinds in the rural areas of the State.

The need of Business and effectiveness in serving employers:

1. There is a need to increase the understanding and willingness of employers to hire/accommodate employees with disabilities. This can be accomplished through increased training and educational events for employers across the State.
2. DVR relies heavily on vendors to do job development and placement services, but they have Business Relation Specialists that also do direct job placement and DVR staff praised this unit and the work that they do including developing higher-level jobs.

## C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program,

including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

Annually DVR and the SRC facilitate a retreat to review performance, survey results, and establish new goals and priorities for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The SRC met in November of 2025 to review the Goals and Priorities recommended for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;

B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

GOAL 1. Provide quality employment outcome for people with disabilities.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Enhance relationships with business community through participation in the Chamber of Commerce, CSAVR Employment Resources and government and non-governmental agencies
2. Provide technical assistance to employers on the benefits of employing individual with disabilities and working with DVR
3. Increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for participants with significant barriers to employment
4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment on the well-being of the client.

5. Review opportunities to promote financial independence
6. Increase outreach efforts to minority participation to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services
7. Enhance self-employment opportunities

GOAL 2. Support training programs that reflect high demand opportunities in the labor market.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Focus on their Career Pathways
  - a. Enhance collaboration with WIOA partners in the development of Career Pathways programs for both youth and adults.
  - b. Access professional development resources for the DVR team and Community Rehabilitation Providers on accessing credential-bearing programs that lead to employment within identified Career Pathways.
2. Business-Recognized Credentials
  - a. In conjunction with WIOA partners, including the Delaware Technical and Community College and the Department of Education, identify and/or develop training opportunities in each county that lead to credentials and employment in the top five fields of employment in each county.
3. Coordination with WIOA Partners
  - Increase the access and utilization of training programs by individuals with disabilities
  - Provide technical assistance to WIOA Partners on disability etiquette, accommodations, accessibility, and vocational rehabilitation

GOAL 3. Enhance Pre-employment Transition Services and transition career services to transition-aged individuals with disabilities.

Performance Objectives and Measures

1. Quality of Pre-Employment Transition Services
  - a. Maximize the number of students who receive Pre-ETS by increasing remote and in-person services
  - b. Enhance collaboration with districts, charters, and private schools through outreach and opportunities
2. Quality of Transition Services
  - Promote resources available to support informed career decision making
  - Enhance collaboration with districts, charter, and private schools through outreach and opportunities
  - Maximize the number of students who receive transition services by increasing participation in transition services
  - Maintain the 4 Project Search locations and analyze opportunities to expand locations.

GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing and Outreach

1. Participant Satisfaction Surveys

2. Outreach/Educate the public and legislators through a. Data b. Success Stories c. Social Media platforms d. Monthly updates to DVR website with stories or updates
3. Increase outreach efforts to minority and underserved populations to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services
4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, independence, sense of community, and financial independence

#### D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

##### 1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

The SRC members scored the agency on a scale of one to five, one being the lowest mark and five being the highest.

The SRC shared feedback from the council members' scoring summaries, highlighting positive comments about DVR's progress in employment programs and partnerships, with one council member providing a recommendation on the creation of a homeschool liaison. The SRC provided individual ratings to the DVR Goals and Priorities, with scores ranging from 3.6 to 5, indicating generally positive feedback across all areas. The SRC presented average scores across the four goals to the DVR Leadership team. The overall scores ranged from 4.5 to 5, with Goal 4: Communications, Marketing, and Outreach slightly lower at between 4 and 5.

The SRC indicated that DVR has made significant progress towards achieving the Goals and Priorities established for the agency. The SRC noted that areas of strength for DVR include, but are not limited to, the strong relationships DVR has forged with Participants, families, WIOA and other community partners. SRC Members also expressed that DVR is innovative in their service delivery and programming and the SRC strongly encouraged DVR to maintain and expand these efforts, where practicable. The SRC noted that one area that presents an opportunity for additional growth for DVR would be for DVR to continue to increase the opportunities to outreach and communicate about DVR services to the public. Additionally, the SRC recommended that DVR consider including home schooled students with disabilities specifically and intentionally as part of their outreach efforts.

#### **GOAL 1: Provide quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities.**

##### **SRC Rating of Goal 1: 4.4**

The DVR Business Relations Team connects with businesses throughout Delaware to build and maintain strong working relationships. The Business Team partners with businesses to understand the hiring manager's staffing needs, and the job duties of the positions available so they match DVR participants with the right employment opportunities for their skills, abilities,

and interests, serving the dual customer of both business and participant.

The Business Relations Specialists work closely with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure participants' success with their employment goals and that they have the support and guidance they need during their job search. The Business Relations Specialists provide VR Counselors and participants labor market information and trends, career job fairs, and networking, DVR seeks to bring the best career opportunities to participants. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation customizes services to meet the needs of the individual.

DVR remains committed to strengthening supported employment services through rapid engagement, systems change, professional development, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The DVR and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) partner on case reviews of mutual clients including quality reviews; monthly cross agency-collaboration and development and education of both teams to strengthen services for clients. DVR and DDDS are collaborating on a marketing campaign targeted for businesses and participants to increase access of supported employment services.

System changes initiatives to address transportation, limited-service providers (which impacts timeliness of services), and professional development remain an area of focus.

## **GOAL 2: Support training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.**

### **SRC Rating 4.4**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides career guidance and assistance to individuals with disabilities in mapping out career pathways in occupations that build on interests, skills, abilities, and preferences. The goal is to match the participant to job opportunities that offer the potential for upward mobility with the needed credentials to advance. VR Counselor's conduct career assessments to gather information for person centered employment planning assisting to eliminate barriers that may interfere with success. VR Counselors coordinate participant assessments focused on strengths, areas for growth, challenges, opportunities, and goals.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's job skill training providers assist participants with the appropriate training opportunities leading to recognized credentials. DVR collaborates with Employment and Training for DVR participants to have access to Individual Training Account (ITA) providers. The credentials that DVR participants obtain are industry recognized and recorded at exit of the training program.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partners via the following platforms: technical assistance for disability-related accommodations, accessibility, and awareness, monthly leadership meetings, WIOA One-Stop/AJC meetings, participation in the WIOA Adult Pathways work group, attendance of the WIOA annual convening, collaboration on the combined State Plan under WIOA, and attendance of the Career Pathways Conference.

DVR collaborates with community service providers and workforce training partners in the provision of training services. Delaware DVR's aim is to work with skills and training programs to build a strong labor force within the occupation sector, with better benefits, more stability, and/or higher pay. Collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Delaware Workforce Development Board and Employment and Training has been implemented, giving VR Counselors access to Employment and Training's Delaware Job Link portal to over two hundred and eighty approved and vetted ITA training providers to assist DVR participants with obtaining

the skills necessary to pursue employment in their chosen career fields. Additionally, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitations' Contracting Unit has solicited and awarded contractual agreements to partners to provide competitive integrated employment training and assessment programs for VR participants with disabilities.

**GOAL 3: Expand opportunities for students to transition from school to work.**

**SRC Rating 4.4**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to monitor the quality of Transition services through quality assurance activities, provision of training, utilization of tracking tools, case management reports, referrals, quarterly Team meetings and individual counseling sessions.

DVR collaborates and coordinates with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Department of Education to identify challenges and find solutions. The goal is to ensure the students and families are supported in the transition process and that there is a seamless transition from the educational system into adult services. The DVR team collaborates with education and community- based organizations to actively participate in school-sponsored sessions, resource fairs and other career events.

**GOAL 4: Communications, Marketing and Outreach**

**SRC Rating: 4.2**

1. Participant Satisfaction Surveys
2. Outreach/Educate the public and legislators through
  - Data
  - Success Stories
  - Social Media platforms
  - Monthly updates to DVR website with stories or updates
3. Increase outreach efforts to minority and underserved populations to promote awareness of vocational rehabilitation services
4. Educate parents and guardians on the benefits of employment, independence, sense of community, and financial independence

**2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND**

DVR actively reviews and monitors its performance on the measures in section 116 of WIOA. The division's case management system, has accessed several enhancements to comprehensively gather, monitor, and report performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Actual Level Delaware	PY 2022 Actual Level National
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Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Actual Level Delaware	PY 2022 Actual Level National
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.8%	0.49	0.42	0.56
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	47.9%	0.5	0.41	0.53
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,391	3815	4494	5130
Credential Attainment Rate	53.8	0.26	0.52	0.38
Measurable Skill Gains	66.9	0.44	0.49	0.49
Effectiveness in Serving Employers*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The results of the statewide PY24 indicators are represented in the table below. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to access technical assistance and provide training to the DVR team on performance indicators, engagement strategies, case management and data quality, increasing quality case reviews, refining its data validation processes, and updating and maintaining its casework manual and case management system manual.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Actual Level Delaware	PY 2022 Actual Level National
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.8%	0.49	0.42	0.56
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	47.9%	0.5	0.41	0.53
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,391	3815	4494	5130
Credential Attainment Rate	53.8	0.26	0.52	0.38
Measurable Skill Gains	66.9	0.44	0.49	0.49

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Actual Level Delaware	PY 2022 Actual Level National
Effectiveness in Serving Employers*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

DVR and the Division of Unemployment Insurance continued its Memorandum of Understanding agreement to obtain employment data in the second and fourth quarters following closure. DVR, along with the other Core WIOA Partners, will be using the State Wage Information system to gather employment information regarding participants who have obtained employment outside of Delaware.

Each quarter DVR submits a request for Unemployment Insurance wage data. This request is accompanied by a list of DVR participants and sent to the Division of Unemployment Insurance. The UI Wage Request is returned to DVR with two files attached, a Wage file and a Case Management File. The Case Management System file is uploaded to the Case Management System. Documents are recorded Delaware wages for DVR participants. DVR will also upload the DVR participant list to SWIS to determine if DVR participants earn wages in other states. SWIS files and UI files are not stored once the wages have been uploaded.

**3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation through innovation and expansion resources supports the SRC's Resource Plan to maintain NCSRC membership, attend NCSRC professional development and Council development.

In collaboration with the State Independent Living Council and a Center for Independent Living, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation utilizes innovation and expansion resources to provide independent living and advocacy skills, and an on-campus experience to transition-aged youth.

**E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.**

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:**

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

**2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.**

VR will provide quality supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR intends to increase the number of people served to ensure eligible people with the most significant disabilities have a greater opportunity to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Goal 1: Ensure fiscal policies, procedures and practices are fully aligned with Title VI regulations and fiscal controls are implemented.

Goal 2: Provide the DVR team with continual professional development, oversight and guidance regarding Title VI fiscal regulations in relation to purchased services and reasonable, allocable, allowable, and necessary costs. Ongoing professional development will include the non-delegable nature of this provision in WIOA, technical assistance, and tracking of supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported Employment Title VI funds are to be used for the provision of supported employment. Allowable costs include:

**Ongoing Support Services** are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, in supported employment. Ongoing support services begin at the time of job placement and last until the transition to extended services. Extended services include an assessment of employment stability and the provision or coordination of specific services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability. Other examples include the provision of skilled job trainers for the individual at the worksite, social skills training, follow-up services, and facilitation of natural supports at the worksite. Title I funds may also be used for ongoing supports.

**VR Extended Services** are only available to youth with the most significant disabilities. Youth may receive extended services up to four years or until reaching age 25, whichever comes first. Other sources of extended services are provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resources.

- (Basic VR) Title I funds are used for all services that are not allowable Title VI funds but necessary for supported employment eligible consumers to achieve their employment outcomes. Examples include:
  - job placement
  - situational assessments
  - skills training
  - interview clothing
  - assistive technology

DVR utilizes the services of vendors, on a fee-for-service basis, to provide comprehensive supported employment services for those individuals with the most significant barriers to employment. Participants and/or their representatives select the vendor to provide these services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funds supported employment services statewide for participants under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act and allocates all funds

for services. Program Funds are used to purchase supported employment services from the community rehabilitation programs under a Purchase of Services Agreement with DVR. In order to provide supported employment for all participants who require services, Title I funds are used to supplement the Title VI, Part B allocation. Supported employment is competitive integrated employment, with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Delaware's supported employment services may be provided for up to 4 years or until age 25, whichever comes first.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has a long-standing partnership with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) in regard to providing supported employment (SE) services. Individuals with intellectual disabilities who need long term supports in order to obtain and maintain employment are referred to DVR and DDDS. The individual works with a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) of their choice to complete a supported employment career profile and community-based assessment to identify a vocational goal and the necessary supports to be successful in employment. The CRP assists the individual with job placement and coaching for a total of 90 days or until the individual is stable on the job. At that time, DVR pays the CRP the final milestone payment at which time DDDS provides funding to the CRP for the long term supports in order for the individual to remain on the job. DVR will continue to monitor the case for an additional 90 days once the individual enters into extended services through DDDS; however, no additional funding is provided by DVR. For individuals not eligible for DDDS services, but needing long term supports to be successful on a job, DVR assists the individual to identify other sources of long term funding or natural supports on the job.

DVR has quarterly focused conversations with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to strengthen collaboration through resource sharing and development, case reviews, reconciliation of funding strategies, and education of policies and procedures. DVR has increased efforts of monitoring vendor services as a method for quality review and communication with all partners. This aligns with increased customer service practices.

Although Delaware has a strong SE program with collaborative partnerships with the Department of Education (DOE), DDDS, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and DVR, there are still many students who are potentially eligible for SE services who are not being referred. Each year the DOE identifies the number of students statewide who are enrolled in school and have a disability typically meeting the criteria for DDDS services and/or requiring SE services to obtain and maintain employment. There are a variety of factors which influence the referral process for students, including:

- school staff not believing a student can work (low expectations, lack of understanding of adult services and supports available, etc.),
- families not supporting employment as a goal for their child (safety concerns, fear of losing benefits, lack of understanding of adult services and Supported Employment, low expectations etc.),
- students not choosing employment (limited or lack of exposure to career options, limited understanding of disability and support needs, lack of training in self-advocacy, etc.), and

- lack of CRP availability and experience to provide SE services to individuals with the most significant disabilities (personnel shortage/lack of training and/or experience).

Goals and priorities for supported employment (SE) services include:

- expanding the reach of SE services to more students prior to them exiting from high school by providing more outreach to schools, students and families
- connecting students to adult services while still in school, thereby eliminating gaps in services,
- providing students opportunities to participate in assessments and career exploration activities
- increasing student understanding and preparation for work and the chance of becoming employed right out of high school and providing them access to a team of professionals all working towards the same goal.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) will revisit and revise the MOU that supports mutually shared participants expanding access to DVR placement supports.

DVR leverages long-term extended services that are funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and re-engaging opportunities to leverage resources for transition students and youth with mental health disabilities with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. By leveraging the long-term supports through DDDS and DSAMH, DVR is able to expand supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities up to four years or until a student with disabilities reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. Once a student with disabilities reaches age 25, alternate sources of extended service supports are identified.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation administers the Supported Employment Program under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act. Supported Employment occurs in an integrated setting where individuals with the most significant disabilities receive minimum wage or above for work. In the absence of the services available as part of supported employment, many of the participants would not obtain or retain employment.

The Division is focused on providing quality services using the following strategies:

\*Quality Assurance Reviews of all supported employment programs operated by rehabilitation providers. DVR meets with Community Rehabilitation Programs on a quarterly basis to review progress and resolve programmatic issues.

\*Oversight monitoring in partnership with long term funding agencies. At least quarterly, representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) meet with DVR

to address issues related to the smooth transition from DVR services to the extended services. In addition, DVR is represented on the Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDDS) Day Service Advisory Committee which includes supported employment.

\* Ongoing professional development of the DVR team

In 2024 and 2025, DVR received technical assistance from the VRTAC-QE to enhance capacity to provide Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) professional development in Supported Employment in the following areas:

- Federal policy and historical overview of supported employment
- Components of a customer profile to include situational assessments, vocational evaluations, and functional resumes
- Discovery
- Job development for career paths
- Matching a customer's strengths with the prospective employer's business needs
- Job-site training strategies (e.g., natural cues, workplace supports, compensatory strategies, instructional strategies, assistive technology) and their applications
- High-quality, long-term support plan.
- Alternative funding sources for supported employment
- SSI and SSDI
- Impact of working on benefits

In addition, there is on-going Customized Employment Bootcamp training offered on the discovery process, job development, business engagement and coaching to front line team members of the community rehabilitation programs (CRP), local education agencies (LEAs), DVR, families and businesses.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides supported employment services for individuals considered to have the most significant disabilities and for whom long term funding has been secured for extended services or natural supports can be developed on the job. To qualify for extended support services for DVR, individuals must be a youth that requires supported employment services. Youth are eligible for extended supports through DVR for a maximum of four years or until the age of 25, whichever occurs first. Individuals who do not meet this requirement will receive assistance securing other potential sources of funding for extended services (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities, PASS plans etc.)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and Local Education Agencies to identify appropriate referrals for supported employment services. Primary indicators for supported employment are:

\*Demonstrated inability to maintain employment utilizing traditional employment programs without extended follow-along services as the result of a most significant disability.

\*Indication that, due to the significance of the disability, the individual is not likely to obtain and maintain employment in the absence of intensive services from DVR and extended services from DDDS or natural supports.

Individuals with the most significant disabilities who are identified for supported employment services will have the following services available; Title 1 funds are used for the 1st and 2nd milestone payments and available Title VI funds are used once job placement has occurred:

1. Supported employment career profile/assessment to identify the individual's unique strengths, resources, interests, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities.
2. Development of a Job Placement Plan to identify a suitable vocational goal based off informed choice and career profile data.
3. Job placement in an integrated work environment based on the results of the job placement plan.
4. Intensive job coaching/training services on-site and/or off-site to enable the individual to become stabilized in his or her employment.
5. Upon stabilization, DVR and the agency identified to provide extended services commence the transition to extended services. DVR will be the lead service provider, facilitating communication with the individual, the employer, and the extended service provider for a minimum of 90 days following stabilization.

Individuals with mental illness who are receiving services from the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health are primarily served with traditional DVR supports including job coaching and through the ACT teams. Individuals for whom more intensive supported employment needs, including individuals with dual diagnosis, may be served through supported employment vendors.

With a goal toward competitive integrated employment (CIE) for all — including individuals with disabilities — the Delaware General Assembly enacted HB 122, the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act on June 29, 2021. HB 122 mandated the phased elimination of subminimum wage employment by January 2024. The legislation anticipated the need for careful planning and therefore outlined components to address the resource and funding requirements to ensure all individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability, could become employed in CIE.

The key priorities contained within this Competitive Integrated Employment for People with Disabilities Implementation Plan for HB 122, the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act (Section II) and as identified by both the Employment First Oversight Committee (EFOC) and Employment First Task Force (EFTF) and adopted by the EFOC, are as follows:

1. Expand the pool of employers participating in supported employment programs
2. Invest in strengthening and diversifying the provider network delivering employment support services
3. Ensure cross-agency collaboration and support to maximize system capacity and employment outcomes.

4. Focus on employment opportunities at an earlier age, incorporating employment into goal setting as early as possible in the transition process:

DVR continued to collaborate with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division for the Visually Impaired to secure technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor's, Office of Disability Employment Policy National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON). The technical assistance received is used to address the priorities in the Implementation Plan and systems change to enhance competitive integrated employment in Delaware. This is the third year Delaware has been a NEON Core State. The milestones include:

- Exploration and commitment to pilot quality incentive recommendations across NEON Partners
- Employment Awareness Campaign Analysis and Communications Engagement
- Benefits Planning Technical Assistance for NEON Partners
- Progress in Building a Shared Foundation Collaboration with SELN (State Employment Leadership Network).

The 2025 Core State Plan achievements were:

- Benefits Planning Education
- Benefits Planning Communication Materials
- Research and review on model employment awareness campaigns
- Analysis of 2024 Provider recommendations for quality and efficiency incentives.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Division for the Visually Impaired are committed to continuing systems change collaboration ultimately enhancing competitive integrated employment.

In addition, the division uses needs assessments, surveys, and its strategic plan to identify and address the needs of unserved and/or underserved populations.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

To provide supported employment services throughout Delaware, DVR is revising its cooperative agreement with the agency that serves individuals with intellectual/cognitive disabilities, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS). The agreement is monitored by workgroups that review the program, identifying best practices and areas that

need improvement. As delineated in the cooperative agreement, DVR and DDDS will collaborate to provide supported employment services to transition-age students, youth, and to adults with cognitive disabilities. The Contract Administrator engages with the DDDS to ensure best practices for the transition from DVR to DDDS Long Term Supports.

DVR maintains a protocol with DDDS to allow for clients to achieve timely access to long-term supports following stability on the job. This process assists individuals who have an identified need for ongoing job coaching. Steps include DDDS' Case Manager working with the individual to discuss waiver work support providers and the process for selection of a provider. Following a vendor call, the approved transfer form is completed identifying key information on the business site, wages, schedule, level of support, technology and natural support plan and selected work support provider. The VR Counselor works closely with the individual and case manager to ensure a smooth transition.

For individuals with cognitive disabilities, DVR and DDDS have a long-standing agreement on the Supported Employment (SE) process and financial responsibilities of each agency. For out of school youth and adults being referred to SE, typically the referral is made to DDDS and then sent to DVR with supporting documentation. DVR will assist the individual with selecting a SE provider and provide funding to that provider for:

- 1.) supported employment career profile and community-based assessments,
- 2.) development of a job placement plan,
- 3.) job placement,
- 4.) job coaching/training, and
- 5.) stabilization/closure.

DVR pays the final milestone of stabilization/closure once the individual has stabilized and is ready to transition to long term support. DVR continues to monitor the case for an additional 90 days, however once DVR payment ends at stabilization, funding shifts to DDDS for extended services, when available. DVR, DDDS and the providers work together to ensure individuals with disabilities receive quality and seamless SE services. The WIOA provision allowing VR to provide extended services is an additional resource; extended services are only available to youth under WIOA funded by VR. This does not impact the process for those who qualify for DDDS.

In regard to students, the only variation to the process is the responsibility of the schools to identify and inform students and families of the SE opportunity and assist with helping families to connect to the related services. The school refers the student to DDDS for Supported Employment 2 years prior to high school exit. the process is the same. This model, Early Start to Supported Employment (ESSE), increases the collaboration with adult service providers and schools, facilitates better communication and sharing of information and increases employment opportunities for students near the time they exit from high school. SE providers are able to include information from the schools and observations of the students in the SE career profile and assessment process and begin job development while the student is still in school. The providers also share information with the school to help them better understand how they can support students with more targeted skill development and employment preparation related to

the student’s employment goals and the needs of the businesses. Funding for ESSE remains the same as for general SE services.

Although DVR and DDDS have had a long-standing partnership and agreement for providing Supported Employment services, there are still individuals with disabilities who do not qualify for DDDS yet need this level of service to achieve and maintain employment. DVR assists individuals to identify other potential sources of funding for extended services (Mental Health, Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, PASS plans, etc.) as well as work with the SE provider agencies to develop natural supports on the job in order to provide long-term support.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	3230	3230	\$7,608,000	N/A

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	1270	1270	\$7,908,000	N/A

G. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not under an Order of Selection.

B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation does not forecast implementing an order of selection.

C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation does not forecast implementing an order of selection.

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

No.

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”

Not applicable.

**I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.**

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

**1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—**

**A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND**

**B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;**

**C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.**

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Admin Support	18	20	20
VR Counselors	38	40	45
Fiscal	4	4	5

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Administration	13	15	16
Information Technology	4	7	7
Business Relations	5	8	9

**D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:**

The ratio of qualified VR Counselors to clients is approximately 1:145.

**E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:**

The 2025 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium indicates Delaware's disability population comprises 14.3% of the Delaware population (145,000). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves 3% of Delawareans with disabilities. While DVR will continue to strengthen its outreach to people with disabilities, DVR anticipates serving 4,536 individuals in 5 years.

**2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

**A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.**

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
"none"	"none"	"none"	"none"

**B. THE VR AGENCY'S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS**

BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

DVR requires VR Counselors to possess educational credentials necessary to effectively perform rehabilitation counseling functions supporting the career goals of individuals with disabilities.

To expand the talent pool, DVR has a career ladder for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor classification. This classification has three levels. The entry level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, a Social or Behavioral Science, or a related field with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and essential functions specific to serving individuals with disabilities. The second level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Master's Degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field or Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) designation with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and experience in vocational rehabilitation. The third level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position requires a Master's Degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling, Social or Behavioral Science or related field or Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) designation with knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and essential functions specific to vocational rehabilitation and two years experience in vocational rehabilitation. DVR supports on-going professional development, tuition assistance, and professional association membership to support the VR Counselor. The qualifications, as outlined in the career ladder above, ensure DVR VR Counselors are aligned with the State's approved personnel standards for VR Counselors before they are assigned the task of determining consumer eligibility, as permitted by 34 C.F.R. § 361.42(a)(1)(iii)

DVR continues engagement with the Department of Human Resources to review the classification and compensation of the VR Counselor series. The Maintenance Review includes the evolving responsibilities of a VR Counselor, the impact of WIOA legislation, and an analysis of compensation with surrounding states.

DVR continues to advocate for incentives to retain and recruit VR Counselors.

DVR employs a multifaceted approach to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified VR Professionals. Recruitment efforts focus on attracting candidates with relevant educational backgrounds, experience in vocational rehabilitation and/or transferable skills, and a demonstrated commitment to serving individuals with disabilities. To support retention and professional growth, DVR provides structured onboarding, mentoring by experienced Senior VR Counselors, and access to a comprehensive learning management system that supports continuing education and skill development. DVR serves on the CSAVR National Human Resource Professional Network Leadership Committee to identify additional opportunities to recruit and retain qualified individuals through networking and sharing of resources.

DVR maintains a relationship with the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, Wilmington University and Delaware Technical & Community College to regularly offer practicum/internships and recruit qualified individuals to fill vacancies for students pursuing degrees in Social or Behavioral Sciences or a related field. DVR is exploring resources available

through the State's Internship program to afford high school and college level individuals an opportunity to work in the VR Program.

DVR is an equal opportunity employer and seeks to ensure employment opportunities are available to qualified individuals from minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities. The State of Delaware's Selective Placement Program offers state agencies the opportunity to interview qualified individuals with disabilities without having to post a position. This program was developed to recruit more individuals with disabilities. The Division provides training on Selective Placement statewide to all VR Counselors and Employment Specialists, community partners, and markets to state agency hiring managers.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS:

I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

DVR is committed to professional development.

DVR ensures VR Counselors receive structured supervision, mentoring, and targeted training. DVR VR Counselors are supported through a formal onboarding and training process known as the New Counselor Training Academy, ongoing professional development, and continuous quality assurance monitoring to ensure the DVR team maintain the knowledge and competencies required to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services in compliance with federal and state requirements.

Once hired, VR Counselors engage in a New Counselor Training Academy. New counselors participate in a formal mentoring relationship for a one-year period, during which they receive individualized guidance, coaching, and performance feedback. DVR's emphasis on ongoing professional development, quality assurance oversight, and career-long learning and engagement, skill progression, and retention while ensuring continuity and quality of services provided to individuals with disabilities.

The VR Counselors onboarding includes a competency checklist of core elements in the provision and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services. This comprehensive, multi-modal new counselor training academy includes:

- DVR policies and procedures governing service delivery
- in depth training of legislation, regulation, policy, and processes from referral through case closure using various training modalities,
- counseling and guidance
- informed choice
- including hands-on practice with coaching
- practical application of learned concepts by new counselors observing experienced counselors
- vocational rehabilitation processes
- understanding and application of eligibility criteria, determination of severity of disability, completion of the comprehensive assessment, plan development and approval, provision of rehabilitation services, monitoring of employment, and appropriate closure decisions and practices, and practicum (Hands on Case Management)
- effectively seeking and synthesizing disability, vocational, and labor market information
- utilizing assessments, determining service needs
- rehabilitation technology,
- Labor Market Information
- workforce development partners

Counselors regularly participate in case consultations and clinical supervision with the District Administrators and Senior VR Counselors to develop and refine skills needed to make sound clinical decisions and provide comprehensive vocational counseling and guidance. While this initial period of training focuses on new counselors, all Counselors are provided the opportunity to engage with the training academy. The VR Counselors Training Plan includes a competency checklist of core elements in the provision and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, regular coaching is available from Senior Counselors and District Administrators.

DVR regularly provides access to a broad range of professional development opportunities through workshops, webinars, conferences, and distance education to enhance skills and knowledge. Training topics commonly available include specific disabilities, ethics, equity, diversity, inclusion, case management, rehabilitation technology, assessment, job development and service delivery. Resources such as the VR Symposium are shared to gain knowledge through research in rehabilitation. DVR regularly reviews resources and expands professional development to ensure team needs are met.

DVR evaluates the effectiveness of staff training and professional development through a structured quality assurance and monitoring framework. Case reviews, documentation audits, and supervisory oversight are used to assess staff competency, compliance with policy, and service quality. Findings from quality assurance reviews and an annual Training Needs

Assessments are used to identify training needs at the individual, district, or statewide level. When trends or recurring issues are identified, DVR implements targeted or impromptu training to address gaps and reinforce best practices. This feedback loop ensures that training content remains responsive to program needs, regulatory requirements, and service delivery outcomes. Through this continuous improvement process, DVR ensures that professional development activities contribute to improved case quality, regulatory compliance, and positive employment outcomes for individuals served.

DVR has facilitated professional development in the areas of Supported & Customized Employment from the University of Wisconsin- Technical Assistance Center- Quality Employment, Benefits Planning, Self-employment through National Disability Institute, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Pre-Employment Transition Services, Fiscal Basics training, Clinical Supervision for District Administrators, Department of Labor Leadership Academy, and VR Leadership opportunities such as Pathways, LEADVR, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, and more.

DVR supports virtual learning platforms, resources available through the VR Technical Assistance Centers, communities of practice, and professional network and membership organizations for the ongoing professional development of the DVR team.

**3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—**

**A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND**

**B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

Delaware does not have state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirements for its VR classifications. Delaware has established minimum qualifications that require all VR Counselors to possess an appropriate Bachelor's level degree, experience working with individuals with disabilities, and when possible, are eligible to obtain the appropriate nationally recognized certification. VR Counselor recruitment continues to identify minimum qualifications that meet or exceed requirements. DVR works closely with the Department of Human Resources to ensure the team responsible for the initial screening of applicants is knowledgeable of the education and experience requirements needed to assure qualified personnel.

Currently, 22 of the 38 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation or a related field. DVR is having increasing difficulty successfully recruiting and retaining VR Counselors. Currently, when circumstances prohibit DVR from hiring a Master's prepared Rehabilitation Counselor, DVR often recruits at an entry-level vocational rehabilitation counselor classification. District Administrators encourage staff to pursue the additional

coursework to gain a Master's degree and/or a CRC. DVR assists these team members to connect with universities offering financial assistance and provides tuition assistance to complete graduate coursework.

While it is not a requirement by the State to possess or be eligible to sit for the CRC, DE DVR does hold the Certification directly related to the field of helping people with disabilities achieve employment in high regard. All Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are required to attend at least 20 hours of training annually directly related to serving people and businesses in regard to supporting people with disabilities.

DVR has established minimum education and experience requirements for all positions providing rehabilitation services to ensure personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. All team members providing vocational rehabilitation services are required to possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their job duties. In addition to the education requirements described in section i(3)(A), Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II and Senior VR Counselors must possess one to two years' experience in vocational rehabilitation working directly with individuals with disabilities.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

Within the Division, a Counselor position has been designated as Rehabilitation Counselor for deaf or hard of hearing. DVR has experienced challenges with recruiting and retaining an individual fluent in American Sign Language. However, DVR utilizes ASL interpreters, video remote interpreting, and relay services to communicate with participants who are deaf or hard of hearing, making DVR services accessible to consumers who use manual communication. DVR also requires the VR Counselor providing services to complete professional development in ASL and deaf culture.

Within New Castle County, one position is designated for a bilingual, English and Spanish, Counselor to serve the Hispanic population. There are currently four team members who speak both English and Spanish fluently. All offices have access to interpreter and translation resources and LanguageLine to ensure effective communication.

DVR ensures that critical forms are available in common foreign languages, including Spanish, and translates these forms to additional languages when needed. DVR continues to explore technological options to improve options for ensuring appropriate modes of communication, including Sorenson, Convo and tools available through Google, and Zoom, and contracted vendors through State of Delaware Marketplace . While these tools cannot fully replace live interpreter services, they can support on-demand communication and minimize delays.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

The DVR and the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) work closely to provide Transition services to high school students with disabilities. DVR has an assigned VR Counselor to all

public, and many private, charter and alternative schools in the state. DVR and the Department of Education's Exceptional Children's Resources collaboratively coordinate transition services.

Monthly Transition Cadre meetings provide transition stakeholders an opportunity for professional development, collaboration, best practices exchange, and enhance post-school planning and outcomes for transition-age youth. Stakeholders include the Department of Education, Local Education Agency personnel, DVR, community partners and state agencies.

Professional Development opportunities are shared and funded collaboratively to support the emerging needs of students with disabilities.

#### J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

##### 1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

The Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's Transition program works collaboratively with Department of Education partners, educators, other state agencies and Community Rehabilitation partners to identify students with disabilities that may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. DVR has dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors providing transition services in public and vocational schools. In addition, DVR collaborates with charter, private, and correctional facilities to provide access to vocational rehabilitation services.

The Transition Services team includes Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors covering the State of Delaware and Pre-Employment Transition Coordinators. The VR Counselors and Pre-Employment Transition Coordinators attend and participate in the Individualized Education Program process two years prior to exiting school. The DVR VR Counselors and Pre-ETS Coordinators provide information about VR and Pre-ETS services, activities and opportunities the students have participated in and observations, and referrals to other resources. In addition, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) collaborates with local agencies to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to transition students aged 14-22 potentially eligible for DVR services. Currently, DVR contracts with nine vendors who are monitored by DVR for quality assurance, continuous improvement, and access to compliment transition services in Delaware

Transition services in Delaware begin at age 14, however, most referrals are received while the student is in the second year from exiting school. VR Counselors meet with students to explore goals, abilities, capabilities, challenges, supports, and services aimed towards achieving employment. This engagement is person-centered and individualized to include comprehensive vocational assessments, career exploration, workplace readiness, work-based learning, self-advocacy training, preparation for post-secondary education, and assistive technology assessments. The Transition Counselors benefit from technology to maximize their relationships with students, families, educators and partners. The Transition team also works

in collaboration with partners from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDDS) for students requiring extended supports in a work environment. Together the teams collaborate to identify early in the process the needs, resources, and coordinate services.

Pre-ETS Coordinators serve students 14 years of age or in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade assisting them to explore and develop their career pathways. The primary focus is to ensure the students' career goals align with courses and work-based learning experiences including internships and apprenticeships.

There is continued collaboration between DVR and Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) in the initiative to provide intensive educational support for graduating transition students enrolled in remedial programs at DTCC. The supported education project provides workshops in Math, English and Reading to transition-age youth, along with some additional specialized study skills training. Over the years, the initiative has grown from one campus to all four DTCC campuses statewide. This initiative has been beneficial for students to receive more adequate support while in college.

Project SEARCH is an example of effective collaboration between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, local school districts, host businesses and a community rehabilitation provider. Delaware currently has four Project SEARCH partnerships; three hospitals and a state agency and includes four school districts. The students selected for the program are in their last year of high school and serves as transitional programming. The students learn specific work skills that are transferable to employment opportunities in integrated settings. The program design includes a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands on training through three worksite rotations. The worksite rotations are identified by interests expressed by the students in which gives them opportunity to experience and learn skills. The program peaks with individualized, competitive, integrated employment. Nationally the average is seventy percent success. Delaware's program success has been recognized nationally as it consistently has achieved 80-100% employment success for the graduates of the program model. Delaware is evaluating Project SEARCH expansion opportunities.

Delaware continues for the 8<sup>th</sup> year as a leading force with the National Alliance for Partnership in Equity (NAPE) Pipeline to Career Success initiative for student with disabilities. This initiative is designed to increase the enrollment, graduation and transition to post-secondary education and competitive employment for students with disabilities through Career Technical Education career pathways.

PIPELine's objective is to increase the number of students with disabilities who:

1. Enroll in CTE career pathways;
2. Participate in related work-based learning experiences in authentic employment settings;
3. Earn college and career credentials in CTE career pathways;
4. Graduate from high school with a CTE career pathway.
5. Continue their education and training beyond high school; and
6. Enter in-demand employment

DOE, DVR, DVI, and DDDS partner and collaborate on the initiative. Subject matter experts develop, modify, and adapt the program involvement process for equity (PIPE) curriculum, instructional tools and supporting resources to increase the success rate of diverse students with disabilities in CTE career pathways. The initiative supports school administrators and CTE staff to collaboratively engage with state agencies to focus on increasing work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities. This initiative has shown to be very successful and continues to expand in the state. The Pipeline provided the opportunity for students from the Delaware juvenile system to participate in a pilot during the 24-25 School Year. The pilot was a success and opened doors for opportunities incorporating students' voice.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to identify ways to increase opportunities for students and creatively develop new initiatives. DVR is analyzing opportunities to increase summer Pre-ETS opportunities and develop unique opportunities to increase exposure to work-based learning and exploratory experiences. The Delaware Pre-ETS team initiated a program of opportunities for students with disabilities interested in participating in exploratory Pre-ETS activities in the summer of 2025. The team's goal is to continue exploring ways to expand summer career exploration opportunities in a variety of industries.

DVR continues to evaluate opportunities to expand services and engage additional partners. In addition, DVR is expanding its communications footprint through social media and a strong participation in community events such as transition fairs, college fairs, career fairs, and resource events.

DVR will continue to access technical assistance and guidance from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT-C) to align with best practices.

**2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:**

**A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION (SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;**

**B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION 614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;**

**C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;**

- D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;
- E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND
- F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK COMPENSATED AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Delaware Department of Education, Exceptional Children's Resources and Delaware Local Education Agencies is in place to coordinate and facilitate transition services of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services, including:

- Pre-employment transition services;
- Assistive technology evaluations;
- Work experience development;
- Strategies for successful job placement;
- Career exploration;
- Resources and referrals

DVR provides consultation and technical assistance to DOE to plan for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.

Since May 2015, DOE and DVR have held monthly Transition Cadremetings with districts and charter schools throughout the state to engage and enhance transition services. Stakeholders receive training, technical assistance, and opportunities to work with teams at the state and local level. Throughout the school year, DVR works closely with the local schools to develop and participate in student and parent information sessions, career and college fairs and general transition fairs.

Documentation requirements under section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act for students with disabilities seeking subminimum wage employment.

#### K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

DVR's Business Relations Team's dual customer focus also provides support to assist youth and adult job seekers with developing resumes, preparing for interviews, completing applications, and connecting with employers. In addition, the Business Services team provides onsite support during employer onboarding. DVR's Business Relations team develops employer informational tours to increase industry knowledge for youth with disabilities and adult job seekers. Examples of information tours have included various industries such as information technology, retail, electrical, HVAC, production, education, and communications. DVR's Business Relations Team's dual customer focus provides support and guidance to youth and adult job seekers, employers, and community partners. In alignment with Governor Meyer's Executive Order #1, DVR is developing a host of work-based learning experiences, information sessions to enhance the career exploration for youth and students with disabilities. Specifically, DVR's Business Team collaborates with the Department of Human Resources for State of Delaware Career Fairs for Youth assisting students to apply for State of Delaware internships, Selective Placement and the Employment Network.

The Business Relations Team uses information from the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information such as the Delaware Career Compass, the Delaware Monthly Labor Review and other labor market information as a guide for creating career opportunities and establish linkages with business. In addition, DVR promotes utilization of Delaware JobLink to match job seekers and business.

The Business Relations Specialists also frequently collaborates with other WIOA Partners such as the Division of Employment and Training to attend community outreach and career job fairs, and local employers' hiring needs to bring the best career opportunities to youth and adult participants.

The Business Relations team currently functions from a dual customer perspective and exists to:

- Assist the DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to obtain meaningful & quality opportunities for all assigned job seekers.
- Identify and prepare both youth and adult DVR job seekers, including adults, transition students, and pre-employment transition students in a timely manner in response to employer recruiting needs.
- Build solid relationships and engage business and industry in collaborative activities as a resource to meet their workforce needs.
- Partner with the State of Delaware Department of Human Resources Talent Acquisition Team and the Division of the Visually Impaired to support the State of Delaware Employment Network; a Work Experience Development Program created to provide work experience opportunities for people with disabilities to gain useful, employment-based knowledge and experience within varied state government career paths. In addition, increase state agency

knowledge and participation in the State of Delaware's Selective Placement to advance hiring opportunities for people with disabilities seeking employment in State government.

- Work closely with local workforce development agencies, schools and community-based organizations who seek to build relationships with employers by engaging in career fairs, parent nights and other activities.
- Facilitate statewide communication, training, marketing, resource sharing and other activities related to consumer placement in competitive integrated employment and work-based learning opportunities and business development.
- Work closely with state and local Chamber of Commerce, SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management), and other professional organizations to promote a structure for networking and sharing information.

The DVR Business Relations team works with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program to assist businesses with Federal contracts to fulfill the Section 503 requirements regarding employment of individuals with disabilities. The OFCCCP has referred businesses that are seeking compliance to DVR for assistance. Federal contractors send lists of open positions to the Business Relations Unit. In addition, Business Relations Specialists work with the State's office of Government Support Services where Government contracts are awarded.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of VR services. Utilizing best practices, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will also:

- Engage employers in activities as strategic partners.
- Collaborate with employers to help identify high demand industries and occupations in Delaware.
- Promote and encourage apprenticeships, OJT, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities.
- Provide labor market information and other tools and resources that address workforce needs.
- Promote the Talent Acquisition Portal to highlight Delaware's workforce talent and connect job seekers with a larger network of employers.

The Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) deploys resources to employers including:

- Pre-Employment Assessment and Boarding
- Recruitment and Retention
- Disability Awareness Training
- Employment Law Education
- Consultation and Support

- Financial Advisement
- Employee Assistance
- Access to VR support at all levels
- Diverse and Inclusive Hiring
- Assistive technology
- Workplace accommodations
- Tax credits and workforce incentives

DVR is an active member of the Delaware Workforce Development Board's Business Cohort. This collaborative initiative provides Business Relations professionals the opportunity to share resources, strategically address workforce needs and provide an extensive marketing and outreach network.

DVR received technical assistance resources through the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center -Quality Employment during this period. This provided DVR's Business team with tools and strategies focused on building capacity to connect with businesses, identifying business needs, and supporting their efforts to hire and retain people with disabilities in their workforce. The DVR Business team will continue to enhance their skills in areas such as analyzing business-driven strategies and tools, engaging diverse business partners, working collaboratively with companies to analyze staffing challenges and identifying opportunities to leverage hiring individuals. In addition, Business Relations team members receive professional development in job development and placement, labor market and career information, marketing to business customers, employment readiness, soft skills training, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other areas to ensure customer responsiveness.

#### L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

##### 1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

DVR partners with the Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC) of the Center for Disability Studies' Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative. Locations are available in Kent/Sussex County and New Castle counties and include a vast inventory of equipment, software, communication devices and items that support people with all disabilities. The ATRCs house equipment that may be loaned to individuals. DVR works in conjunction with the ATRC to identify vocationally applicable equipment. DVR clients work with ATRC team to assess the individuals' needs, select, and use equipment, to assist with education/training or employment. Upon successful identification of assistive technology, a recommendation for the purchase of that equipment is provided to DVR.

As required by the Assistive Technology Act, DVR maintains representation on the Assistive Technology Loan Advisory Board.

## 2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

According to the Delaware Occupational and Labor Market statistics, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting jobs will decrease by 4.17% by the year 2030. However, when participants express interest in careers in the industry, DVR utilizes the following resources to assist with career readiness and employment development:

1. Delaware Department of Agriculture training and certification programs to assist consumers interested in Grain Inspection, Nutrient Management, Pesticide Applicators, and Farm Food Safety.
2. AgrAbility Program Resources: Although Delaware is no longer an active State participant in the AgrAbility program through the United States Department of Agriculture, DVR has access to several resources available to all states such as the National AgrAbility Project. Upon request, DVR connects with the National AgrAbility Project for information and services remotely, such as recommendations on types of technologies or technical assistance navigating the social services system. Additional resources include an assistive technology toolbox, publications, and archived webinars.

[1]Long-Term Industry (delaware.gov)

## 3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains and continues to enhance collaboration with workforce development agencies to support Out of School Youth. DVR is an active member of the WIOA Leadership team and engages with partners to address the needs of Out of School Youth. DVR will also revisit its collaboration with the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services to identify and address needs.

## 4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

State use contracting in Delaware falls under the purview of the Commission for Statewide Contracts to Support Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (the Commission). The Commission codified by DE Code 16 § 9600 is designed to encourage and assist individuals with visual impairments and other disabilities to achieve maximum personal independence by assuring an expanded and constant market for their products and services. They routinely work together to develop new set-aside opportunities and ensure existing contracts are operating within the established guidelines and regulations. DVR is appointed to the Commission.

To operate the set-aside contracts effectively and fairly, the Commission utilizes one or more Central Nonprofit Agency (CNA) as primary contractors of set-aside opportunities. Using the state procurement process, a CNA Request for Proposal is published on a quarterly basis to attract multiple types of contractors. Once contracts are secure, the CNA has the option of subcontracting or performing the job themselves. Regardless of the choice, the CNA is

responsible for ensuring the contracts maintain the proper ratios of employees with and without disabilities and provide the goods/services as described in the contract.

There is currently one CNA in Delaware, the Ability Network of Delaware (A.N.D.), who subcontracts the work to several community rehabilitation providers. The set-aside opportunities in Delaware are temporary staffing and janitorial. DVR works collaboratively with the A.N.D. and their subcontractors to help participants secure positions and provide employment supports and other services to ensure success on the job.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

DVR has active relationships with state agencies that access employment services through Medicaid resources under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

The Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) administers Title XIX of the Social Security Act for the State of Delaware. DVR collaborates with the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) while providing Supported Employment services to participants with intellectual disabilities. Eligible individuals may receive extended employment services made possible through amendments of the DDDS Home and Community Based Waiver programs, HCBS 1915(i), HCBS 1915(c) and HCBS (b)(4).

DVR aims to revitalize the partnership with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to coordinate the provision of evidence-based Supported Employment to eligible participants who have severe and persistent mental health needs. Employment services are made possible through Section 1115 of the Medicaid demonstration waiver as authorized by Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

DVR continues to work with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDDS) to maintain effective and efficient inter-agency relationships.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and DVR partner to provide a continuum of service delivery for supported employment clients for extended services and supports.

The agencies processes delineate which agency is responsible throughout the supported employment process. DVR is responsible through employment stabilization and beyond. DVR provides funding to the SE provider for 1.) discovery and community-based work assessments when needed, 2.) job placement, and 3.) stabilization/closure. DVR pays the 3rd and final milestone once the individual has achieved stabilization on the job determined by the Supported Employment Team. Once DVR pays the final milestone DDDS, through a community provider, assumes responsibility for the long-term follow-along extended services. The goal is to have a streamlined process that assists in identifying all available programs and resources, expand and improve employment services to people with significant disabilities, and maximize the use of comparable benefits. In instances when the individual has not applied for or does not

qualify for extended follow along funding DVR will continue to support the person on the job for up to 24 months. The VR Counselor is responsible to connect the family and provide counseling and guidance on resources for ongoing supports.

The Early Start to Supported Employment Model provides Supported Employment Services to students with developmental disabilities transitioning from school to work. The model has been refined adding Customized Employment principles and working with providers to begin services earlier, in the year prior to the student's exiting year. The Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are reviewing their cooperative agreements to reflect newly implemented effective practices.

DVR, DDDS, the Department of Education, DVI and a community provider support a comprehensive professional development curriculum. On a semi-annual basis, a Customized Employment Bootcamp program is offered to train DVR, DDDS, DSAMH, DVI, the Department of Education, Local Education Agencies, charter schools and community rehabilitation providers. This program is jointly funded by DVR, DDDS and DOE and offers training on effective supported employment and business engagement processes. This training facilitates skill building, networking and cross-agency understanding and collaboration to better serve mutual participants and local businesses. Both agencies also strongly encourage and support Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators certification to improve the quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

#### 7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

DVR is revitalizing its Memorandum of Understanding with the Division of Substance Use and Mental Health to address the employment needs of individuals with significant mental illness. The goal is for a collaborative framework and sharing of resources and expertise for both agencies to establish and maintain an employment program.

#### 8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) maintains relationships with other agencies, both public and private, that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DVR maintains cooperative agreements with public and private non-profit agencies such as programs that serve individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse disabilities, and community rehabilitation programs.

DVR maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with a public institution of higher education, Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC). DVR and DTCC collaborate to provide supported education services to DVR clients who are enrolled as first semester students or first year students at DTCC who could benefit from additional assistance. . The program provides additional training in study skills, time management, study techniques, workshops, and extra help in math, English and reading, and teaching advocacy for students to be successful in the school environment. DVR Counselors work collaboratively with DTCC Academic Advisors that serve as Disability Coordinators at their respective campus to assist DVR participants with accommodation plans.

The Division of Social Services, Division of Employment and Training and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation collaboratively support Delaware's Advancement through Pardon and Expungement (APEX) program to address barriers to employment for job seekers with criminal histories to seek high quality high demand employment. The job seekers who are eligible under the law for expungement and/or pardon are assisted throughout the process by APEX via form completion, filing, payment of finger printing and court documents and representation at court expungement hearings and/or Pardon Board Reviews.

#### 9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

All DVR Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations are established in accordance with Delaware Code, Title 29, Chapter 69 (State Procurement). Agreements that meet applicable competitive bidding thresholds are publicly advertised and processed through the State of Delaware Procurement Portal

Consistent with state procurement requirements, agreements that fall below the applicable bidding thresholds are still executed in compliance with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and internal approval requirements. The State of Delaware Procurement Portal serves as the centralized platform for competitive solicitations and provides guidance for entities seeking to do procurement business with the State.

The Contracting unit within Government Support Services manages all statewide contracts for goods and services and administers agency contracts, as requested. This team is the State of Delaware's central contracting unit that acts on behalf of State agencies, local government units, authorized volunteer fire companies, and School Districts.

In Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023–September 30, 2024), DVR awarded Purchase of Services Agreements to 30 entities, 14 of which were nonprofit organizations, to provide Competitive Integrated Employment Services. These agreements support individuals with significant disabilities by increasing the successful placement in integrated employment and supporting employment retention for at least 90 days

DVR maintains contractual arrangements for Supported Employment Services (SE) for individuals with the most significant disabilities, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Training programs, and other services. DVR explores individualized opportunities for agreements that support meaningful employment consistent with the consumer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice.

DVR continues to maintain effective working relationships with their contracted service providers through quarterly meetings that include administrative and operational updates, resources, and policy changes. DVR is committed to Provider engagement, collaboration, program development, standardization of reporting and quality improvement through the Contractor Provider Quarterly Meeting and one on one meetings.

#### ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

**The VR agency must select the “Edit” button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.**

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the

The State Plan must include
Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must include
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when

The State Plan must include
providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?

Yes

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Delaware General VR Agency)

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT). AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2] AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A)

OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

<sup>[2]</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>[3]</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>[4]</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN<sup>[5]</sup>, THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS<sup>[6]</sup>, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

<sup>[5]</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>[6]</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE

UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Elisha Jenkins

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

**To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the "Edit" button.**

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
<b>Name of Signatory</b>	Elisha Jenkins

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
<b>Title of Signatory</b>	Director
<b>Date Signed</b>	February 18, 2026

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

The submission of expected levels is the first step in the negotiations process. Once the expected levels of performance have been submitted, State VR programs may begin negotiations with RSA's State Monitoring and Program Improvement Division. Each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE)**

The ESE indicator has been defined in the ESE final rule and PY 2024 was the first year of data for the newly defined performance indicator. However, a minimum of at least two baseline years of data must be collected to support a statistical adjustment model that could produce sufficiently reliable estimates for the purposes of performance negotiations and state performance assessments. The Departments, in accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(c)(4) and 34 CFR §§ 361.190(c)(4) and 463.190(c)(4), will collect and monitor state ESE performance results for at least PY 2024 and PY 2025 to establish a credible baseline and provide technical assistance. After PY 2025 data are collected the Departments will develop a statistical adjustment model for ESE in accordance with section 116(b)(3)(A)(viii) of WIOA. Since the ESE indicator is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs when feasible. While states are not required to submit expected levels of performance for Effectiveness in Serving Employers for PY 2026 and PY 2027 all of core programs are expected to collect data and report as a shared indicator (as directed in guidance)

for these years.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)				
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Credential Attainment Rate				
Measurable Skill Gains				
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2026 and 2027.*

**GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application:

**GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISION ACT SECTION 427 ASSURANCE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program. All applicants for new grant awards must include the following information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program. (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

Compliance can be found on the following page(s) of the application: