

**Rhode Island
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services**

**FFY2008
STATE PLAN
UPDATES
for
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**



**Raymond A. Carroll
Administrator**

EC: 10-1-2007 SB, RR, LD, KG
✓10/2

Ltr only cc: ga/eps/Rcarroll



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

SEP 18 2007

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OFFICE OF DIRECTOR
DHS

Mr. Gary D. Alexander
Director
Rhode Island Department of Human Services
600 New London Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

Dear Mr. Alexander:

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) acknowledges your letter of June 28, 2007, transmitting the State Plan for the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program and Supplement for the Title VI-B Supported Employment (SE) Services Program in the form of a preprint of affirmative assurances and required attachments on behalf of the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services, in compliance with Sections 101(a) and 625 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the act).

The State Plan in the form of a preprint of affirmative assurances and required attachments, along with the Certifications Regarding Lobbying for both the VR and SE programs, were reviewed to ensure conformity with statutory provisions of the act, implementing regulations and the administrative requirements of RSA. Based on this review, the State Plan is approved. In accordance with the approval of the State Plan materials, RSA is making available to Rhode Island its FY 2008 Title I, Part B, and Title VI, Part B, grant awards.

If you or your staff have questions relative to this review or the approval of the FY 2008 State Plan, please contact your state liaison, Joseph F. Doney, at (202) 245-7526 or Joseph.Doney@ed.gov.

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R.I. OFFICE OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Page 2 – Mr. Alexander

We appreciate your timely submission of this information and your continuing efforts to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve high quality employment outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward Anthony". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "E".

Edward Anthony, Ph.D.
Delegated the authority to perform
The functions of Commissioner for the
Rehabilitation Services Administration

cc: Raymond Carroll
Joseph Doney



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Office of the Director

June 25, 2007

United States Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Attention: Pedro Romero
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. PCP Room 5007
Washington, DC 20202-2800

Re: Transmittal of the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services Annual State Plan FY2008 Update for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program under Title I, Section 101(a) and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program under Title VI, Section 625 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended (the Act).

Dear Mr. Romero:

The purpose of this correspondence is to submit for approval the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services Annual State Plan FY2008 updates for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Plan for Supported Employment. The State Rehabilitation Council assisted the Designated State Unit (DSU) in the development of the State Plan update. Moreover, the DSU conducted a public meeting to provide the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to comment on the plan; and actively consulted with the Client Assistance Program.

Rhode Island has selected the option of submitting a separate "stand alone" plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). The Annual Update to the State Plan is approved as of October 1, 2007.

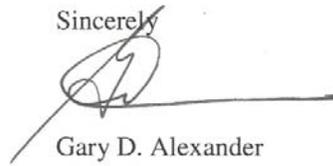
The enclosed required narrative attachment and assurances are included with this letter.

Attachment 4.2 (c): Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

- Attachment 4.8(b):** Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities
- (1) Cooperation with Agencies that Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities
 - (2) Coordination with Education Officials
 - (3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers
 - (4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services
- Attachment 4.10:** Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Attachment 4.11:** Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports
- (a): Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs
 - (b): Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services
 - (c)(1): State's Goals and Priorities
 - (c)(3): Order of Selection
 - (c)(4): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
 - (d): State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities
 - (e)(2): Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities
- Attachment 6.3:** Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

The State Plan and its Supplement are not subject to the State Single Point of Contact review process.

If you should have any questions or require additional information, please contact Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator, Office of Rehabilitation Services at (401) 421-7005 ext. 301. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gary D. Alexander
Director

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

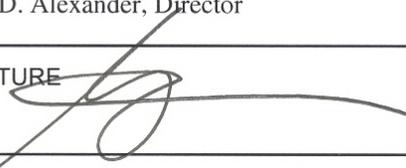
As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;

(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME
Rhode Island Department of Human Services Office of Rehabilitation Services	Vocational Rehabilitation – Basic Support H126A070058
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Gary D. Alexander, Director	
SIGNATURE 	DATE
	June 25, 2007

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

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(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME
Rhode Island Department of Human Services Office of Rehabilitation Services	Supported Employment Services Program H187A070059B
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Gary D. Alexander, Director	
SIGNATURE	DATE
	June 25, 2007

**STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

STATE: RHODE ISLAND

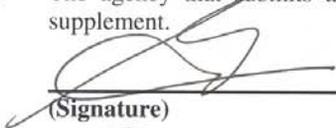
AGENCY: OFFICE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL BLIND COMBINED X

SECTION 1: STATE CERTIFICATIONS

- 1.1 The **Office of Rehabilitation Services** (name of designated state agency or designated state unit) is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under Title VI, Part B of the Act.
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **Department of Human Services** (name of the designated state agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan.
- 1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law.
- 1.7 The **Director, Department of Human Services** (title of state officer) has the authority under state law to receive, hold, and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.8 The **Director, Department of Human Services** (title of state officer) has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services.

1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.



(Signature)

Gary D. Alexander

(Typed Name of Signatory)

June 25, 2007

(Date)

Director

(Title)

1 Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

2 Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

3 All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

4 No funds under Title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.

5 Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.

6 No funds under Title VI, Part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Act.

7 Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**2.1 Public participation requirements.** (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))**(a) Conduct of public meetings.**

The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.

(b) Notice requirements.

The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

(c) Special consultation requirements.

The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)

- (a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Act.
- (b) The state submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.
- (c) The state submits to the commissioner at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
 - (1) Comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - (2) Assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - (3) Innovation and expansion activities; and
 - (4) Other updates of information required under Title I, Part B or Title VI, Part B of the Act that are requested by the commissioner.
- (d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, 34 CFR 361, or 34 CFR 363.

3.2 Supported employment State plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

- (a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B of Title VI of the Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B of Title I of the Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.
- (b) The supported employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN**4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit.** (Section 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))**(a) Designated state agency.**

- (1) There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
- (2) The designated state agency is:
 - (A) a state agency that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; or
 - (B) X a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.
- (3) In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

(b) Designated state unit.

- (1) If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or unit that:
 - (A) Is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
 - (B) Has a full-time director;
 - (C) Has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
 - (D) Is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
- (2) The name of the designated state vocational rehabilitation unit is Office of Rehabilitation Services.

4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

- (a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission that:
- (1) Is responsible under state law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the state and is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(A) of this section.
 - (2) Is consumer-controlled by persons who:
 - (A) Are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
 - (B) Represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated state unit under the direction of the commission is the state agency for individuals who are blind;
 - (3) Includes family members, advocates, or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and
 - (4) Undertakes the functions set forth in Section 105(c)(4) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4).

or

- (b) X The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17 and the designated state unit:
- (1) Jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually state goals and priorities, and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress, in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Act, 34 CFR 361.29, and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;
 - (2) Regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (3) Includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan, a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
 - (4) Transmits to the Council:
 - (A) All plans, reports, and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be submitted to the commissioner;

- (B) All policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
- (C) Copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(c) *If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c)* provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21)

The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) Individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) Personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) The director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) The State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a Council.

4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state, or if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency. **Yes** ___ **No** **X**

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) Ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and

- (b) Develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program, in accordance with the State Plan.

4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities. **Yes** **No** X

If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) A description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) The services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) The respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) The share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

4.7 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

- (a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:
 - (1) Nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual;
 - (2) Services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
 - (3) State, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in **Attachment 4.7(b)(3)** a waiver of the statewideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - (A) Identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - (B) Written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - (C) Written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - (D) Written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

- (c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

4.8 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

(a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment system.

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

(b) Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:

- (1) Cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;
- (2) Coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
- (3) Establishment of cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
- (4) Efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.

(c) Coordination with education officials.

- (1) **Attachment 4.8(b)(2)** describes the 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 who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.
- (2) The State Plan description must:

- (A) Provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
- (B) Include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
 - (i) Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (ii) Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (iii) Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (iv) Procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.
- (d) **Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.**
The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.
- (e) **Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.**
 - (1) There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations.
Yes **No** X
 - (2) **If "Yes",** the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Act.
 - (A) Strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;
 - (B) Procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

- (C) Provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and, .51(a) and (b))

(a) In general.

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the Plan and 34 CFR 361.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B of Title I of the Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Act.

(c) Facilities.

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the regulations implementing these laws.

4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.

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

(1) Qualified personnel needs.

- (A)** The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- (B)** The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and

- (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state 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.
- (2) **Personnel development.**
 - (A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
 - (B) The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
 - (C) 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.
- (b) **Plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel.**

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.
- (c) **Personnel standards.**

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including:

 - (1) Standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.
 - (2) To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.
 - (3) The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:
 - (A) Specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;

- (B) The specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
- (C) Procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period; and
- (D) The identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards and the identification of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

(d) **Staff development.**

Policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

- (1) A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology.
- (2) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

(e) **Personnel to address individual communication needs.**

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

(f) **Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

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.

4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

(a) **Comprehensive statewide assessment.**

(1) **Attachment 4.11(a)** documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every 3 years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a Council). The assessment describes:

- (A) The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- (i) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
 - (ii) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and
 - (iii) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.
 - (B) The need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.
 - (2) For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.
- (b) **Annual estimates.**
Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:
- (1) Number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the Plan;
 - (2) Number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
 - (3) Costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.
- (c) **Goals and priorities.**
- (1) **Attachment 4.11(c)(1)** identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
 - (2) The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.
 - (3) **Order of selection.**
If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3):**
 - (A) Shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) Provides a justification for the order; and
 - (C) Identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

(4) **Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B funds.**

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(d) **Strategies.**

(1) **Attachment 4.11(d)** describes the strategies, including:

- (A) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
- (B) Outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- (C) As applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs;
- (D) Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Act; and
- (E) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

(2) **Attachment 4.11 (d)** describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:

- (A) Address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);
- (B) Support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the Plan; and
- (C) Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) **Evaluation and reports of progress.**

(1) The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a Council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.

(2) **Attachment 4.11(e)(2):**

- (A) Provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in **Attachment 4.11(c)(1)** and, if applicable, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3)** were achieved;
- (B) Identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
- (C) Describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
- (D) Assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Act; and
- (E) Provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.35)

- (a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Act for the:
 - (1) Development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in **Attachment 4.11(a)** and goals and priorities of the state identified in **Attachments 4.11(c)(1)** and, if applicable, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3)**; and
 - (2) Support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).
- (b) **Attachment 4.11 (d)** describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.
- (c) **Attachment 4.11(e)(2)** describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.
- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**5.1 Information and referral services.** (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.37)

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services, if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

(a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services.

Yes No

(b) If "No":

(1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.

(2) **Attachment 4.11(c)(3):**

(A) Shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;

(B) Provides a justification for the order of selection; and

(C) Identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

(3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

(a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.

(b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:

(1) Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

(2) Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Act;

(3) Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;

(4) Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;

(5) Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and

(6) Post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.

- (c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
 - (1) Progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) An immediate job placement; or
 - (3) Provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, an individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- (b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.

5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.52)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, their representatives, are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.30)

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.55)

- (a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:
- (1) Who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
 - (2) Whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.
- (b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for 2 years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.
- (c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (d) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative, has input into the review and reevaluation, and through signed acknowledgement attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

- (a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.

- (c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

(b) Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**SECTION 6: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1 Designated state agency.** (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))
The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B of the Act.
- 6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs.** (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))
Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.
- 6.3 Quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))
Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations, or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.
- 6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B funds.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Act.
- 6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services.** (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))
Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.
- 6.6 Minority outreach.** (34 CFR 363.11(f))
Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated state agency submits 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 Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Act.

SECTION 7: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

- 7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs.** (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))
The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.
- 7.2 Use of funds in providing services.** (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))
- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B of the Act are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
 - (b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
 - (c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- 8.1 Scope of supported employment services.** (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))
- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).
 - (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
 - (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- 8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities.** (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))
- The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Act and funded under Title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.
- 8.3 Individualized plan for employment.** (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))
- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
 - (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - (1) Specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) Describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) Identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
 - (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.2(c)

**SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE REHABILITATION
COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR
REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Issue #1

The Council raises its concern as an inquiry as to the role of Counselors working in Colleges (see VR Counselor as teacher at Salve Regina University). Is this a viable use of counselor's time with the shortages of Counselors the program is currently experiencing? We would also like to know whether the teaching at colleges is going on during regular business hours.

Response #1:

At times ORS staff may have the opportunity to enhance their career development and professional skills through teaching courses at local colleges. The time devoted to teaching has and will continue to occur outside of the regular business hours.

Issue #2

The Council is concerned with the Bill for licensure of VR Counselors and how the exemption for State Workers from licensure would affect the VR program. The Council recommends removing the exemption if possible.

Response #2

The Department of Human Services and the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is committed to holding the ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to the highest possible standard. While we

support efforts to establish licensing requirements for individuals providing vocational rehabilitation counseling to persons with disabilities in Rhode Island, we are concerned with the impact this legislation will have on our state vocational rehabilitation counselors. The federal law regulations require a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) to ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation personnel. The federal Rehabilitation Act as amended requires that State vocational rehabilitation counselors meet the highest requirement in State relative to licensure. If this licensing requirement is passed into law, although there is an exemption for state employees, the federal requirement may still be interpreted to require counselors to obtain this license.

DHS has an additional concern, DHS state vocational rehabilitation counselors presently are able to receive certification through Department of Labor and Training with respect to Workers Compensation benefits in accordance with RIGL 28-33-41(f). This proposed legislation (H-5021) specifically provides that the certification through DLT will only satisfy these new proposed licensing requirements until April 2009. After April 2009, the certification through DLT will not be sufficient. This seriously burdens the state Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Assuming federal law impacts DHS counselors, and they are not able to take advantage of the exemption for state employees in this proposed legislation, DHS would urge that all state vocational rehabilitation counselors who have obtained certification prior to April 1, 2009 be “grandfathered” and allowed to renew their license.

Issue #3

The Council is interested to know how many IPE's in 2006 had short-term goals versus career type goals, and what is the Agency doing to address the development of career oriented IPE's.

Response #3

All Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE's) are individualized based on the individuals' strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice. Although federal reporting requirements do not distinguish between short-term career goals and long-term career goals, training and educational programs vary in terms of length of time and duration. All individuals with disabilities have IPE goals that are targeted at achieving competitive, integrated employment outcomes consistent with the individuals' preferences and informed choice. Moreover, an in-service training will be provided to staff during FFY2008 to renew emphasis on RSA policy directives that relate to an employment goal for an individual with a disability. Particular focus for the training will consider the concepts of career advancement and upward mobility under the vocational rehabilitation services program.

Issue #4

In regards to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, the Council had expressed concern this year about Counselors leaving the Agency, some being promoted, FTE's being frozen, high caseload numbers and contractual issues unresolved affecting the morale of the Agency. The Council raised a concern that the customers may be feeling the consequences of these shortages. The Council encourages the Agency to continue to develop new Counselors (particularly those with diverse backgrounds and bi-lingual skills) to quickly fill vacant positions and maintain reasonable caseload sizes.

Response #4

Recognizing current state fiscal and budget deficits have had an affect on hiring practices of new state employees throughout the course of the current fiscal year, ORS has endeavored to fill positions as rapidly as possible. In order to recruit potential candidates for vacancies, ORS has developed a relationship with the Master's level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling at Salve Regina University and Assumption College. In addition, this relationship has consisted of ORS functioning as an internship site for students in Master' level programs, which has resulted in several graduates recently being hired as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.

Issue #5

The Council has utilized the 2005 Comprehensive Needs Assessment as a guidepost for the Council's work in 2006-07. Since a new Needs Assessment will be undertaken in 2007-08, the Council would encourage the Agency to continue the practice of analyzing data from sources beyond ORS for information in the Needs Assessment. Further, there has not been a Quality Assurance Analysis completed in several years. Understanding the complexity and cost of conducting a research based satisfaction survey; the SRC would encourage the Agency to develop and implement an ongoing satisfaction survey for customers served by the Agency and include the results in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment annually.

Response #5

ORS encourages the SRC to play a lead role in the development and implementation of the federally mandated Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment (SCNA). The 2005 SCNA was a compilation of six separate needs assessments completed throughout the state by four providers outside of ORS

including The Governor's Commission on Disabilities, The New England Customer Quality Assurance Survey, The Rhode to Independence Focus Group Report Survey, and The Division of Development Disabilities Quality Consortium Employment Survey. Additionally, the 2005 SCNA included two separate surveys completed by the SRC and ORS. ORS and the SRC will partner in the design and development of the 2008 SCNA.

Issue #6

The Council has recognized the transportation issue as a leading barrier to employment in Rhode Island for individuals who are transit dependent. The Council would encourage the Agency to continue to work with the Council in identifying the gaps in service and develop an aggressive plan for closing the gaps.

Response #6

ORS recognizes the development of the SRC Transportation Ad Hoc committee. Currently ORS' Deputy Administrator for Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) serves on the SRC Transportation Ad Hoc committee which is developing a statewide survey which is examining ways to improve transportation opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island. Additionally, ORS has staff who currently serve on statewide committees devoted to improving transportation services including the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the Governor's Para-Transit Task Force.

Issue # 7

The ORS benefits planning service was presented at the Council's May breakfast meeting which

included the financial planning supports being provided by the Agency to individuals. These services are critical in aiding Rhode Islanders with disabilities to comfortably return to work without the fear of the loss of benefits. The Council recommends continuing the expansion of this service and developing an education component in order to reach benefit recipients before they become dependent on the benefits and dismiss employment as an option.

Response #7

ORS acknowledges the benefit of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program. ORS is exploring expanding benefits counseling through alternative funding streams. Additional training for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on benefits planning ensures that the issue is addressed early in the rehabilitation process. ORS is planning to develop outreach strategies to high school and college students in order to ensure that employment is perceived as a viable option rather than dependence on public benefits.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.8(b)(1)

COOPERATION WITH AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE

INVESTMENT SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER ENTITIES

ORS collaborates with programs and agencies providing services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach an employment goal. Agencies that ORS works with include: medical and disability support organizations, educational institutions, professional associations, shelters, community centers, community mental health agencies, substance abuse treatment facilities and advocacy groups. For example, MOUs have been established with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Department of Health, and Sstarbirth (SSTAR).

ORS has cultivated a strong working relationship with independent living centers to augment our vocational rehabilitation services with their ability to provide case management, transportation training, advocacy services, home assessments, and daily living skills assessment.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.8(b)(2)

COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education (RIDE) and Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/ORS) targets students with disabilities for transition services with DHS/ORS for the purpose of achieving successful employment outcomes. Incorporated into the MOU is an expectation that all students eligible for services have an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to graduation. The MOU describes interagency collaboration and coordination, the role and responsibilities of each partner, the process for resolving disagreements, as well as, providing a Collaborative Services Chart (CSC). The CSC identifies which agency is primarily responsible for services in each of the following categories:

- Assessment Services
- Career Development Services
- Community Living Services
- Related Services
- Auxiliary Services

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) also exists between the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/ORS) and three state institutions of higher education: Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC) and the University of Rhode Island (URI). The MOU clarifies the role of each partner in fostering a seamless delivery system intended to support DHS/ORS customers attending post-secondary programs. It also defines the financial parameters for each partner in a cost sharing formula for support services, accommodations and assistive technology for college students with an active IPE with ORS.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.8(b)(3)

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NON-PROFIT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

ORS will continue to expand both contractual and fee-for-service agreements with a wide network of private vocational rehabilitation providers in order to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities. An identified need, as determined by the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment or by individualized needs of customers, initiates efforts to create a new service or training option. ORS determines the contractual obligations through a negotiation process that includes establishment of measurable performance goals that are monitored at least quarterly.

In addition, fee-for-service agreements incorporate a similar process with the Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) being funded based upon service provision and outcomes. Some examples of needs identified in our Comprehensive Needs Assessment resulting in new service options include the development of two travel-training programs, one through Cranston Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) and Goodwill Industries; and a short-term job coaching resource through Goodwill Industries. During FFY2008, ORS anticipates initiating a Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment to obtain current information on customers' vocational rehabilitation needs.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.8(b)(4)

**EVIDENCE OF COLLABORATION REGARDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
AND EXTENDED SERVICES**

ORS continues to embrace supported employment services as a means to enable individuals with the most significant disabilities to have access to work opportunities. The agency has increased the number of supported employment providers, has maintained involvement with two Supported Employment Advisory Councils and has cooperative agreements with the Department of Mental Health Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH). The Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities are organized within MHRH.

For FFY2007 and FFY2008, the Office of Rehabilitation Service (ORS) will continue to partner with CRPs of supported employment services so that customers can make informed choices about supported, integrated, and competitive employment options. ORS will continue to participate with the Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities through membership in their respective Supported Employment Advisory Councils. The Advisory Councils function as a resource in clarifying procedures, identifying best practices, addressing issues, and reviewing quarterly statistics about employed individuals. ORS staff also provide ongoing training and technical assistance to the supported employment CRPs. A 2007 ORS-sponsored joint meeting with both Advisory Councils, agency leaders and direct service personnel educated the providers about VR services that can assist their customers in realizing an employment goal as well as highlighted best practices.

ORS will continue to provide leadership in ensuring customer access to supported employment services

by creatively examining service delivery. ORS has encouraged CRPs to share aspects of the assessment, placement and job coaching process for customers who have complicated employment needs beyond the resources or expertise of any one agency. This effort has resulted in customers having access to the best services of several providers. Another effort addressed a structural change within the MHRH Division of Behavioral Health and the local community mental health centers that adversely impacted the number of referrals to VR for supported employment services. ORS worked with MHRH Division of Behavioral Health to identify the distinctions between VR services and community mental health vocational services in order to clarify concerns about funding streams. In FFY2008, ORS will continue to examine service delivery systems to ensure customer access to supported employment options.

ORS has a long-standing history of cultivating collaboration between ORS, CRP's and the netWORKri One-Stop system. It is anticipated that this effort will continue into FFY2008. An ORS initiative, the Ocean State Employer Service Networks (OSESN) is intended to improve employment services and outcomes by enabling CRP representatives, ORS staff, and Department of Labor and Training staff to meet on a regular basis and share knowledge about resources and employment leads. This type of collaboration encourages integration into the one-stop system, access for all individuals with disabilities, and consultation and guidance about universal access. ORS, through its parent agency, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, is a financial partner with Rhode Island netWORKri One-Stop Centers where ORS counselors are located in order to provide more enhanced access to ORS services including applications, orientations, and placement services.

ORS is a member of an interagency steering committee that provides input to the "Family Support 360" five-year systems change grant awarded to the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island

College. The goal of this grant is to assist students with the most significant developmental disabilities experiencing a seamless transition from high school to adult services and employment. The work of the Steering Committee will continue throughout FFY2007 and FFY2008.

The extended supports that are essential to sustaining employment for individuals with significant disabilities are referenced on page #2 and #3 in Attachment 6.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

The ORS Supported Employment Services program provides competitive employment opportunities in an integrated setting for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The array of services that are required to obtain and sustain employment is based on a determination of the individuals' needs and are specified in the IPE. Supported employment is a place/train model, which includes training by job coaches at the work site in most cases. The job coaching, generally provided by the long-term support CRP is gradually reduced to a maintenance level depending on the individual needs.

As ORS involvement is generally time-limited, engaging a provider for extended long-term services is addressed when the IPE is developed. The CRP responsible for providing long-term supports signs an agreement to continue providing extended services so that the individual has a seamless transition from ORS to the long-term support provider.

The time frame for transitioning an individual from the support services provided by both ORS and a CRP to extended supports provided solely by the CRP varies based on the individualized needs of each customer. The transition to the extended services generally occurs when the individual is closed with

ORS. Establishing a long-term support CRP early in the process ensures a smooth transition to extended services. The on-going support services can be provided by a state agency, a private non-profit organization or any other appropriate resource.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.10

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is committed to providing quality rehabilitation services to its customers. Our commitment to this standard has resulted in a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling being required of all newly appointed Rehabilitation Counselors. ORS has developed a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as a systemic approach to developing its human resources. This system is intended to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation, direct service, supervisory, administrative, fiscal and support personnel. Our CSPD plan follows:

DATA SYSTEM

1. PERSONNEL DATA AND PROJECTIONS

- In FFY2007, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program has served approximately 7066 individuals, with an average caseload of 144. VR has a total of 84 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions which includes 41 counselor positions. Since September 2006 ORS has filled 3 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I vacancies and 2 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II vacancies, all with Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. Currently, there are 4 vacancies for rehabilitation counselors and 2 counselors are out on maternity leave with another to start maternity leave. ORS has two vacant Supervisors positions, one due to retirement and the other due to promotion of a supervisor to Assistant Administrator. ORS also hired an Assistant Administrator for the

Business Enterprises Program (BEP).

- Over the next 3 to 5 year period, ORS estimates that approximately 20 individuals (administrators, supervisor, counselors and support staff) will be eligible for retirement. Given this number of employees that could potentially leave state service, ORS is actively pursuing graduates from local universities and colleges.

2. PERSONNEL SOURCES

- ORS has cultivated a relationship with the two area colleges that offer graduate training in rehabilitation counseling: Assumption College in Worcester, MA and Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I. There are approximately 97 enrolled in the graduate programs (65 at Assumption and 32 at Salve Regina) and 29 expect to graduate in May 2007 from these programs.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE)

- ORS has ongoing communication with Assumption College and Salve Regina University to ensure that the present and projected needs of ORS are considered in the program planning. In addition to the satellite Masters' degree program offered to ORS staff through Assumption College, Salve Regina University is also offering a Master level program through a combination of distance learning and facility-based courses at a satellite office in Providence and their Newport, R.I. campus.
- ORS continues to provide both practicum and internship sites for their graduate students. ORS currently has two graduate students from Salve Regina University

doing practicum assignments.

- Personnel from ORS teach in the program at Salve Regina University.
- The ORS Training Coordinator serves on the Training Project Advisory Council at Assumption College.
- The ORS Administrator serves on the Advisory Board for the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Salve Regina University.

2. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- In addition, our efforts to recruit qualified personnel have consisted of maintaining an active relationship with the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). The Training Coordinator is the current President of the Rhode Island Rehabilitation Association (RIRA).

3. EFFORTS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, MAINTAIN PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- ORS makes every effort to hire staff in accordance with the agencies affirmative action policies.
- ORS job announcements are distributed to community-based agencies and the internet to attract qualified individuals, particularly, individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds.
- ORS has hired a number of qualified individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds (visual impairments, Deafness, psychiatric/emotional etc).
- In FFY2008, ORS will explore long-term strategies for recruitment of personnel

from diverse cultural backgrounds.

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

1. ADEQUATELY PREPARED AND TRAINED STAFF

- Personnel have the option of applying for and maintaining a nationally-recognized certification as a rehabilitation counselor (CRC). ORS counselors receive continuing education credits towards maintenance of the CRC by attending various trainings and conferences.
- Rhode Island does not have a state approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirement for rehabilitation counselors. However, a bill was introduced in the legislature this year regarding licensure. ORS is expecting and preparing for Rhode Island to obtain licensure, if not this year, within the near future with concerns that hiring will be more difficult with an already limited pool.
- Rhode Island has elected to base its minimum personnel standards for recruitment of counselors on the requirement of a MA degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. This degree requirement exceeds the national CRC requirements.

2. NEW PERSONNEL

- All new rehabilitation counselors are expected to meet the standard of a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from an accredited program.
- ORS has been able to fill all vacancies with individuals with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling since 10/01/2000.

- ORS has worked aggressively with the institutions of higher education to recruit qualified individuals to fill vacancies.
- Rhode Island expects that it will continue to hire individuals who meet the standard.
- Minimum qualifications exist as a condition for new support staff positions.

3. EXISTING PERSONNEL

- As of April 2007, 36 out of 41 ORS counselors meet the standard (88% compliance), all field VR Supervisors and Administrators meet the CSPD standard. Since October 2000, all new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors hired meet the CSPD standard. However, currently five counselors do not meet the CSPD standard. Three of the five counselors are eligible to retire and one has given notice of a retirement date at the end of 2007. ORS will continue to encourage these individuals to participate in the steps necessary to meet the CSPD standard. In the interim, ORS will maintain the necessary supports and clinical supervision to ensure quality rehabilitation services are provided by these individuals. A fourth counselor was attempting to complete the last course to meet the CSPD standard but had to withdraw due to health reasons. Once this issue is resolved, it is expected that she will complete the CSPD requirements by 2008. The fifth counselor is currently taking classes and is expected to complete and meet the CSPD standard by December 2008.
- The counselors who do not have a MA in Rehabilitation Counseling are functioning within the parameters of an approved plan to achieve the standard and

are limited in their ability to practice independently.

- ORS has addressed the CSPD training needs of the 5 individuals in the following manner:
 1. to update each individuals' training plan.
 2. to clarify the CSPD requirements of their jobs.
 3. to educate the counselors regarding the upcoming trends in proposed licensure.
 4. to establish a monitoring system for quarterly updates on staff progress with their plans.
 5. to engage supervisor and Staff Development personnel in the process.
- ORS continues to dedicate resources to support the CSPD plan.
- ORS encourages retraining and hiring of staff from minority backgrounds and staff with disabilities for all positions within the agency.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- ORS recognizes the importance of insuring that its staff has the necessary skills and abilities to provide quality services in a professional and timely manner.
- A new training coordinator was hired in April 2006 and conducted a needs assessment of personnel training needs for all ORS staff in October 2006.
- The needs assessment was analyzed for priorities, and a training schedule was determined and implemented. The implementation was restricted by the large number of vacancies and maternity/medical leaves (at one point in time there were 10 vacant positions that were covered by Regional Supervisors and

Management Staff).

- The training plan continues to address training opportunities presented by the inclusion of the Rehabilitation Act into the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and specifically in the One Stop Career Centers and issues related to the implementation of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). Although new regulations regarding the Ticket to Work had been expected to be released in the fall of 2006, these regulations have been delayed and are now not expected to be released until the Summer/Fall 2007. Once they are finalized, training will be made available to staff.
- In order to retain qualified staff and in anticipation of retirement plans, ORS will offer leadership development training, succession planning and capacity building opportunities to interested staff. Management staff in very specific job categories will provide in-depth job analysis of their positions to include contact information for their peers in neighboring states. This is of particular importance, given the number of personnel that could potentially retire in the near future and the uniqueness of some positions.
- The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston has been awarded the New England Rehabilitation Education Program (NERCEP) grant, which will be utilized to provide state of the art training programs for all counselor and supervisory staff at ORS as well.

COMMUNICATION NEEDS

- Interpreters and CART reporters are available for staff to communicate with

diverse customer populations, for staff trainings and supervision. ORS contracted with Hamilton Relay and Sorenson to establish four Video Relay Stations to enable communication in ASL between Deaf staff and their colleagues and customers.

- ORS is in the process of videotaping all staff trainings which will be available in a video library for new staff and for current staff for refresher opportunities. These training tapes can also be a resource for Supportive Action Plans as necessary.
- The Information Services Technician II manages the ORS and the ATAP web pages, has expertise in providing materials in alternate formats and develops electronic tools for counselors. ORS assures that all information disseminated to staff with disabilities and customers is accessible.
- ORS' Cultural Diversity Cadre meets regularly to recommend strategies to raise cultural awareness of personnel and ensure that agency materials are accessible to culturally diverse populations.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

- ORS relies on supervisory observations, program evaluation reports, and self-identified training needs to enhance professional development.
- The annual needs assessment conducted by the training coordinator elicits input from counselors and supervisors regarding training needs.
- If a Supportive Action Plan (SAP) is necessary, the Supportive Action Plan would be in compliance with the CSPD.

COORDINATION OF THE CSPD and IN-SERVICE TRAINING

- ORS will continue to implement a CSPD plan as part of the In-Service Training Program.
- The plan for training will focus on program areas that enhance the ability of state personnel to function in their present position and to acquire new skills to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- ORS will continue to coordinate transition services according to IDEA. ORS has a counselor assigned to every high school in the state to work cooperatively with students, parents, special education professionals and 504 coordinators to develop quality transition plans.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

- Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act, ORS offers to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) the opportunity to review and comment on the CSPD.
- ORS will attach the comments and include them in the FFY2008 update.
- The members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) have all been appointed by the governor. The Administrative Assistant for the Council maintains file copies of the appointment letters signed by the governor. These can be provided to you if needed.

Below is a list of the current and prospective SRC members:

State Rehabilitation Advisory Council

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Rocco Bruno | 11. Steven Florio |
| 2. Edward Costa | 12. Jeanne M. Giroux |
| 3. Rick Costa | 13. Anne LeClerc |
| 4. Linda Deschenes | 14. Gary Levine |
| 5. Domenic DiOrio | 15. Lucille Massemينو |
| 6. Susan Donovan | 16. Lorna Ricci |
| 7. Dr. Mona Dorisville-Phanor | 17. Vincent Rossi |
| 8. Dr. Judith Drew | 18. Catherine Sansonetti |
| 9. M. Kathleen Ellis | 19. Rev. Robert A. Shaldone |
| 10. Joseph Ferreira | 20. J. David Sienko |
| 21. Herb Weiss | |

In the process of being appointed to their first full terms:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Janice Belasco | 5. Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett |
| 2. Michael Hazard | 6. Aun Taing |
| 3. Margaret Hoye | 7. Juan Troncoso |
| 4. Silvermoon Mars | 8. Mary E. Wambach |

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.11(a)

**RESULTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP,
OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandates the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), in partnership with the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to periodically complete a statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. In FFY2006, the Needs Assessment Report (Appendix A) was developed from six separate surveys that document the employment needs of individuals with disabilities.

The most recent survey, mentioned in last year's annual update but distributed and analyzed in FFY2006, was a needs assessment questionnaire conducted by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council. The survey was distributed to Office of Rehabilitation Services supervisors and counselors, Community Rehabilitation Programs, and netWORKri/One Stop Center staff. The results of this survey are incorporated into the Needs Assessment Report and are being utilized by the State Rehabilitation Council and the Office of Rehabilitation Services to assist in the planning and development of a five-year strategic plan for the Office of Rehabilitation Services, focusing on employment of individuals with disabilities.

The survey was designed by a committee consisting of representatives from the Office of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. The intent of the survey was to identify the interventions that people with disabilities including individuals with the most significant disabilities need in order to obtain and maintain employment. These interventions include supported employment services and the availability of these services throughout the state, the obstacles that customers confront in attempting to work, the groups of people with disabilities who are underserved, and the resource/training needs of personnel. The purpose of the survey was to assist the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council in examining program design, delivery systems and gaps in services so that the agency can more effectively help individuals with disabilities to become and stay employed.

Several themes emerged from the 53% of the questionnaires that were returned. In determining what people with disabilities need most in order to achieve an employment outcome, skills training and education, support from a job developer, transportation, and job retention services were identified as the major areas of need. When these areas were rated for availability, skills training and education, support from a job developer, and job retention services were rated the highest in terms of availability.

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey reinforced findings from other studies, including those from workforce investment systems, that some of the main barriers to individuals with disabilities working include the following: transportation obstacles, lack of skills to compete in the job market, individuals' expectations of rapid ascent to an ideal job and fear of losing benefits. In addition to the barriers noted above, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment highlighted the need to continue addressing access and employment outcome issues with underserved and minority populations.

In FFY2007, the State Rehabilitation Council (10/16/06) and the entire Office of Rehabilitation Services staff (10/3/06) participated in planning meetings to continue discussion and plans to overcome some of the issues identified by the Needs Assessment Report. The feedback and brainstorming from these two meetings were organized into a Strategic Planning matrix, which prioritizes topics and solutions for FFY2008 in preparation for the five-year plan.

The areas that were identified by the State Rehabilitation Council include the following:

- To develop a Strategic Plan
- To establish an Ad hoc Transportation Committee
- To ensure that our Community Rehabilitation Programs reflect the employment needs of customers and labor market trends.
- To evaluate the impact of interventions on preparing customers to compete for jobs.
- To examine group work as an additional resource to better address the employment needs of our customers.
- To minimize the impact of transportation barriers on customer employment options.
- To develop a marketing plan for the agency that enhances employment outcomes for our customers.
- To establish a more structured relationship with the local colleges so that student access to supports, funding and preparation for jobs is more organized.
- To examine the task demands of field staff so that timely response to and ongoing contact with customers is assured.

In FFY2008, ORS will be conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to gather current information about customer's vocational rehabilitation needs.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.11(b)

ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED AND COSTS OF SERVICES

1. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES UNDER THIS STATE PLAN

For FFY2006 there were 2,125 new applicants, and 2,004 individuals were deemed eligible. There were a total number of 1,465 individuals who developed their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

For FFY2007, ORS has a goal of 2,126 new applicants, given staff vacancies, and expects 1,950 individuals to become eligible. The goal for new IPE development is 1,466 and 737 successful outcomes.

For FFY2008, ORS projects 2,200 new applicants, given filled vacancies, with 2,000 individuals to become eligible for ORS services. ORS anticipates that 1,500 individuals will develop Individualized Plans for Employment and projects 745 successful outcomes.

2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER TITLE 1 AND TITLE VI AND NUMBERS TO BE SERVED IN EACH ORDER OF SELECTION PRIORITY CATEGORY.

In FFY2008, the projected number of clients to be served under an IPE is 4,000.

One hundred percent of those expected to be served will be classified in the Order Of Selection as either category #1 most significant, or category #2, significantly disabled.

For FFY2008, ORS is expected to serve:

Category #1 (most significant) 3,200 (Title I – 90% Title VI – 10%)

Category #2 (significant) 800 (Title I – 100% Title VI – 0%)

3. COST OF SERVICES FOR PROJECTED TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS TO BE SERVED INCLUDING SERVICE COSTS UNDER EACH OOS CATEGORY

Average expenditure per client in FFY2008 is estimated to be: \$1,369

Total cost of services for OOS category #1 are estimated to be: \$4,380,800

Total cost of services for OOS category #2 are estimated to be: \$1,095,200

ATTACHMENT 4.11(c)(1)

STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The state's goals, priorities, policies and planning activities are jointly agreed upon by the State Agency (ORS) and the State Rehabilitation Council. They include the following:

GOAL #1 : TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY 5% ANNUALLY

TRANSITION SERVICES:

- Transition of students from high school to post-secondary training and employment by coordinating and expanding opportunities will continue to be a priority. ORS and the Department of Education (RIDE) utilize a shared vision and philosophy to enable students to be more self-sufficient and to prepare for employment upon graduation from high school. Attachment 4.11(d)(1) provides additional details.
- The ORS Administrator, as a member of the CSAVR (Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation), participates on the national Transition Committee.
- Personnel from the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired meet with their counterparts within the high schools to ensure students with visual impairments have access to vocational rehabilitation services. These activities encourage cooperation between the two groups working with blind high school students and increase teachers' understanding of the Vocational Rehabilitation process to prepare students for employment.
- ORS co-sponsors the annual Youth Leadership Forum, which is intended to build leadership skills in youth with disabilities who are transitioning to adult life. The goal of

the forum is to expose the youth to community leaders and other adults who live with disabilities. Each student completes an action plan for incorporating into their daily lives the leadership skills that they acquired through participation in the forum. Alumni of the four-day August forum return as peer counselors or staff. The recruitment goal for 2007 is 15 individuals. Plans for 2008 include moving the forum to an education facility and revising the application form and interview process to encourage more students to apply.

- ORS will continue to utilize Disability Mentoring Day each October to connect high school and college students with employers who mentor them in order to increase students' knowledge of the labor market and career opportunities.
- ORS encourages students to participate in internships and co-operative education to gain the necessary work experience while in school. This includes a summer state internship program specifically for individuals with disabilities.
- Staff from ORS present annually at the College Planning Forum for Students with Disabilities. The workshop for students focuses on the transition to college, learning how to request accommodations, and learning to become a self-advocate.
- ORS continues to operate under an MOU with three state colleges: Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC) and the University of Rhode Island (URI).

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:

- ORS is actively working with public and private agencies to expand and improve supported employment opportunities in the community. Attachment 6.3 has additional details.

- ORS has held joint (Department of Mental Health, Retardation, & Hospitals (MHRH), Division of Behavioral Health , and Division of Developmental Disabilities) meetings to reaffirm ORS' capacity to provide services in conjunction with MHRH in providing supported employment services, thereby clarifying funding streams.

TRANSPORTATION:

- Travel training services have been expanded and clinical supervision includes dealing with transportation planning issues.
- An innovative strategy to overcome transportation issues will result in van transportation for students from Aquidneck Island to summer jobs.
- ORS encourages traveling by providing bus passes or Riptiks for eligible customers, and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) provides orientation and mobility training to customers with visual impairments.
- ORS participates on several statewide committees, including a committee initiated by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, addressing ways to improve transportation options.
- The SRC transportation subcommittee plans to conduct a needs assessment in FFY2008.

JOB TRAINING:

- Outreach efforts will continue to diversify referral sources including agencies that work with minorities and underserved populations. A bi-lingual C.N.A. training program and a bi-lingual computer-training program have been added in 2007. Assessment services will be purchased from Progresso Latino, which will allow for better matching of appropriate

- training and encourage taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
- SBVI has begun a pilot program in FFY2007 to train individuals who are blind to use computers. For FFY2008, graduates from this program will be referred to Goodwill's training and placement program to assist with job development.
 - ORS staff are represented on the Workforce Investment Board of Providence and Cranston and participates on its Youth Council, which is working on coordinating services to youth. ORS is participating in United Way's system change for the Workforce Development system in Rhode Island.
 - The FIP/LD Project (Family Independence Program – TANF/Learning Disabilities Project) continues to obtain employment outcomes at a time of changed welfare regulations. In addition, the rehabilitation counselor assigned to this project is an active participant in the Education Subcommittees to the Welfare Reform Implementation Task Force and the Department of Education's adult education committees. The latter committees are working on system change in adult education to improve and expand adult education and link these services with workforce development efforts.
 - ORS has created another FTE Rehabilitation Counselor position to work specifically with the FIP recipients with disabilities who live in Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence.
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Try-out Agreements with community-based employers will continue to be used, especially for individuals who need, for financial reasons, to quickly earn income while gaining a skill or for someone with no previous experience. In 2006 there were 15 successful outcomes from On-the-Job Training, including employment in nursing homes, auto related jobs, fitness center, edible arrangements, graphics, mortgage companies, security and jobs within non-profit

organizations.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS:

- ORS continues to be involved at the national and regional level with the **VR** National Business Network, the CSAVR initiative that shares contacts with major employers. This initiative now has a website with SharePoint software donated by Microsoft.
- ORS is active in various Chambers of Commerce and has increased employer contacts and visibility by joining additional Chambers of Commerce including the Central Rhode Island Chamber.
- ORS will continue to recruit employers for Disability Mentoring Day annually.
- Customers are alerted to the variety of Job Fairs for both career exploration and job leads.
- ORS will continue to have interviewing skills workshops for clients. Specialty workshops on interviewing are held periodically. For example, individuals who are Deaf need additional training in communication accommodations and the use of interpreters when interviewing with potential employers. ORS will provide a workshop in Spanish with the collaboration of netWORKri.

BENEFITS AND WORK INCENTIVES:

- Benefits planning, both before and after employment, have become and continue to be an integral part of informed choice in rehabilitation planning. A new Cooperative Agreement called the “Work Incentives Planning and Assistance” (WIPA) SSA program was awarded to ORS in a competitive process and became effective October 1, 2006. This new program is more specific in its requirements than the previous Benefits

Planning Assistance and Outreach Program (BPAO), in not allowing for general information and referral. This has resulted in additional training of ORS counselors to understand in greater depth how work impacts on an individual's SSDI/SSI benefits.

- Benefit Planning Specialists will be providing informational seminars at the netWORKri sites and at ORS for customers receiving SSI or SSDI.
- Ticket to Work continues to be implemented resulting in some successful outcomes. A new supervisor was hired to administer this program. New Ticket to Work regulations are due to be promulgated in the summer of 2007 and will be part of training of counselors.

**GOAL #2: TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR
MINORITY POPULATIONS**

In order to effectively engage minority populations and increase successful employment outcomes, ORS has sought to develop strong partnerships with community-based agencies and training programs, which serve primarily minority populations. In addition, ORS is examining internal ways to ensure minority access to services and participating on statewide efforts to address employment of individuals who are minorities with disabilities. These include:

- ORS provides liaisons to such community-based organizations as: Dorcas Place, Genesis Center, International Institute, Narragansett Tribal Health Center, Progresso Latino, South East Asian Socio-Economic Center, and the Urban League. This liaison role contributes to the type of relationship building that ensures a effective referral system and creates the foundation for technical consultation.

- As Rhode Island has a significant Latino population, it has been critical to create fee for service opportunities specifically for agencies that work with Spanish speaking communities. Progreso Latino, for example, has been able to provide academic screening so that appropriate training options are explored. Progreso Latino offers a Clerical training program that has been in existence about two years. In addition, Progreso Latino provides such wrap-around services as case-management, crisis intervention, a health promotion center through the Office of Minority Health of the Department of Health, as well as a day care center for ORS customers.
- The International School for Health Care provides training in such areas as: Certified Nurse Assistant (C.N.A.) and Homemaker Home-Health Aide. These training programs are unique in that the training is offered in the participants' primary language as well as English. The bi-lingual training prepares the participants for certification and licensing tests that are generally offered in English, thus increasing the prospect of becoming successful employed.
- The Center for Advancement of Minorities in the Building Industry has created training opportunities in non-traditional areas in the building and construction field.
- ORS has developed a program in tree trimming training, which has prepared ORS-sponsored participants to obtain employment with one of five subcontractors hired by National Grid.
- The Cultural Diversity Cadre facilitates agency-wide attention to cultural competence as a foundation for successfully working with diverse populations of individuals with disabilities. The Cadre also monitors agency performance on Standards & Performance Indicator Two, which reviews equal access to services by minority populations. The

- Cadre is developing an additional orientation tool that relies on oral communication rather than written fact sheets. This presentation will be narrated in several different languages to ensure access to the information regardless of reading level. The PowerPoint presentation will be also be interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL).
- ORS is one of 16 Pilot States chosen to be part of the Advanced Level Technical Assistance Shared Youth Vision Forum. The Youth Vision Forum plans to develop a coordinated infrastructure between state and federal agencies in order to provide services to the highest risk youth: 47 per cent of these youth are minorities. Many of these youth have been identified as having disabilities. The intent of this initiative is to create a One Stop Youth Center that will be a physical and virtual hub of information for youth employment.
 - ORS is an active member of the two Rhode Island Youth Councils and provides technical assistance on disabilities. ORS personnel participated in reviewing the Request for Proposals (RFP) generated by the state WIA and the Governor's Workforce Board. The initiatives are cultivating interagency collaboration to assist youth, many of whom are minorities, with employment issues. For the first time statewide RFP's were issued for both WIA and Governor's Workforce funds and they addressed the target group of youth with disabilities.
 - ORS has recently interviewed and selected a bi-lingual support staff person to provide enhanced outreach to the minority community.

GOAL#3: TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

- ORS has increased customer choice through the addition of ten ORS vendors and

- community rehabilitation programs.
- All new ORS counselors have been trained in informed choice.
 - The new training policy has added greater flexibility for ORS customers when selecting short-term training providers. As described previously, there is much more diversity in the training opportunities which include a wide range of new occupational choices.
 - Fact sheets regarding informed choice and transportation planning are distributed widely, and an agency-wide training which was provided to ensure all counselors were aware of the various choices in transportation.
 - All policies are being reviewed to ensure that informed choice is reflected clearly.
 - Customer satisfaction surveys occurred and were reported in previous years. In FFY2005, a needs assessment contract was developed and results reported, in preparation for a new five-year plan. This has been the foundation for planning for program improvement.
 - The ORS Customer Relations Office will continue to provide early intervention services for resolution of issues.
 - ORS is committed to the customers' right to informed choice and customer satisfaction.
 - ORS will continue to train new counselors in informed choice and will provide continuing training to current vocational rehabilitation counselors in informed choice to further refine and expand on the intent of informed choice to be as comprehensive as possible.
 - ORS has utilized information from RSA's 107 Monitoring Report through the development of a previous Corrective Action Plan and a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.
 - ORS will continue to promote and value informed choice in all of its publications and

will make sure that informed choice is clearly reflected in its policies and procedures.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.11(c)(3)

ORDER OF SELECTION

The current Order of Selection will continue through FFY2007 and FFY2008, thereby allowing ORS to serve all eligible individuals under these two categories.

Vacancies due to retirement, promotions and maternity leave reinforce the need for the current Order of Selection. All clients with Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) are individuals with the most significant and significant disabilities. These individuals require multiple services over an extended time. The Order of Selection consists of the following three categories:

1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities
2. Individuals with significant disabilities
3. All other individuals with disabilities who cannot be classified in a higher category.

ORS assures that its Order of Selection (OOS) policy gives first priority to individuals with the most significant disabilities, within a comprehensive, coordinated program that is designed to assist these individuals to prepare for and engage in gainful employment in an integrated setting. The Order of Selection does not discriminate by type of disability, economic status, or protected class.

The Code for Federal Regulations defines an individual with the most significant disability in the following manner:

- An individual who has a severe physical or mental disability that seriously limits three or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of employment outcome, and
- whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time, and
- who have one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorder, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disabilities, end-stage renal disease, or from another disability or combination of disabilities, which based on an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, causes comparable substantial functional limitations.

ORS notifies all individuals assigned to Category Three of information and referral services to assist them with preparation for obtaining employment and related services.

Individuals are reassessed when additional information relevant to OOS is received subsequent to a classification decision. Requests for post employment services are not subject to Order of Selection.

Projections for numbers to be served in FFY2008 are based on recent performance:

OOS Category 1 3,200

OOS Category 2 800

The goal for all the consumers referenced by the Order of Selection categories is an employment outcome. This employment outcome reflects the individual's informed career choice that has evolved from information about skills, interests, preferences, abilities and the labor market. The Individualized Plan for Employment is then developed to reflect that choice and the specific services/interventions needed by the individual to reach that employment outcome.

It is anticipated that multiple services will be necessary over an extended period of time in order for the individual to reach their employment goal. Quantifying the exact time is difficult as the necessary services, duration and outcome is so individualized.

ATTACHMENT 4.11(c)(4)

GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI, PART B FUNDS

Title VI, Part B provides \$300,000 of federal funding annually. These funds continue to be distributed through the fee-for-service basis with the emphasis on individually planned services and outcome-based payments. Two hundred and seventy eight individuals were classified as receiving supported employment services through twenty-one CRPs during FFY2006. Throughout FFY2007 and FFY2008 there will be continued efforts to develop new supported employment vendors. Due to supported employment CRP staff turnover, ongoing training and technical assistance have been necessary. The Community Rehabilitation Program Specialist, Regional Supervisors and counselors all participate in this training and technical assistance.

ORS is critically reviewing supported employment outcomes, specifically the number of hours/week that customers are employed. In FFY2008, a new fee structure will be developed that provides incentives to CRPs for helping customers become employed in full time jobs. As part of this initiative, ORS will also be relying on benefits information to ensure that customers, families and CRPs are aware of work incentives and the state Medicaid buy-in program.

The provision of supported employment services is included in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and Attachment 4.11(d) . However to summarize the major supported employment efforts:

- ORS is actively working with public and private agencies to expand and improve supported employment opportunities in the community.

- Travel training services have been expanded and clinical supervision includes dealing with transportation planning issues.
- ORS is working with both the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Behavioral Health Services Advisory Councils to examine best practices, explore employment strategies, and track outcomes.

Technical assistance and training is being offered in FFY2007 to the staff of the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation vendors through a contract with the Paul V. Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College.

ATTACHMENT 4.11(d)

**STATE STRATEGIES FOR TITLE 1 FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION FOR
FFY2008**

In FFY2008, I & E funds will be utilized for transition services for youth with disabilities, the Youth Leadership Forum, the State Rehabilitation Council and other initiatives including Partnership to Employment Conference, Employer Honor Roll event, and Goodwill Industries job coaching grant.

TRANSITION SERVICES:

- I&E funds were used to provide a summer work program for students from the RI School for the Deaf in FFY2006. This summer work-experience program was so successful that it will be repeated in the summer of FFY2007 and FFY2008.
- Students from Rhode Island School for the Deaf have an increased need for transition services due to communication and cultural barriers. ORS offered a work preparation program focusing on career exploration, career development and community-based work experiences for students within approximately two years of graduation. It is anticipated that for FFY2008 ORS will collaborate with Rhode Island School for the Deaf in modifying the program to reflect the changing demographics and needs of the students.
- The Cooperative Agreement between DHS/ORS and the Rhode Island Department of Education was renewed in FFY2006 for another five years. During FFY2008, it is anticipated that I&E funds will continue to fund the vocational assessment services provided by the Regional Vocational Assessment Centers at the Regional Educational

Collaboratives for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to post secondary activities.

- In FFY2008, the Workforce Development Supervisor will continue to lead the Agency's efforts in the Annual Disability Mentoring Day that is designed to assist high school and college students in refining their vocational goals.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP:

- ORS co-sponsors the annual Youth Leadership Forum, which is intended to build leadership skills in youth with disabilities who are transitioning to adult life. Each student completes an action plan for incorporating into their daily lives the leadership skills that they acquired through participation in the forum. Alumni of the four-day forum return as counselors and trainers. ORS in collaboration with several community-based organizations is working to expand recruitment, with a goal of fifteen suitable candidates for a Youth Leadership Forum in the summer of FFY2007. Plans for 2008 include moving the forum to a college campus and revising the application and interview process to encourage increased participation.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL:

- In FFY2008, Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds will be utilized to fund activities and projects of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).
- I&E funds in FFY2008 will support orienting and training new members on the SRC and their work on developing projects and priorities for FFY2008. Development of

the five-year plan will also be a focus.

- I & E funds will be utilized to sponsor the Employer Honor Roll that is organized as a collaborative effort by the SRC and ORS.
- The SRC has a transportation subcommittee, which is exploring strategies to overcome transportation barriers.

OTHER INITIATIVES:

- During FFY2008, I&E funds will be utilized to support training for Community Rehabilitation Program staff in the areas of supported employment, situational assessments and job development. This training is being provided through the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities.
- I & E funds were utilized in FFY2007 for the Partnership to Employment Conference to help individuals with disabilities learn about employment options.
- In FFY2007, establishment funds are being utilized to provide job-coaching services through a contract with Goodwill Industries to enhance job placements and retention.
- In FFY2008, ORS will continue to cultivate liaison relationships with community-based agencies to ensure access to services and training programs, which primarily serve minority populations.
- Increasing linkages between the Assistive Technology Access Program (ATAP) resources, existing rehabilitation technology contractors, and ORS counselors, to allow assistive technology to be incorporated into customer services on a statewide basis throughout each stage of the rehabilitation process.

- Exploration will continue of a new computer system that will integrate case management, MIS and billing functions.
- In FFY2007, the Supported Employment Councils for Developmental Disabilities and the Supported Employment Council for Behavioral Health decided to schedule a joint meeting in which ORS informed participants about the ways to access services and shared some best practices.
- In FFY2008, the possibility of adding staff to function as Benefits Counselors, without the restrictions imposed by the SSA WIPA grants will be explored.
- Periodic Standards & Indicator Performance Reports are provided to ORS staff for review.
- I & E funds will be utilized to fund the resource plan of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). The resource plan will enable the SILC to monitor the 2008 – 2010 State Independent Living plan. In addition, the SILC and ORS will jointly develop the next three-year Independent Living State Plan.

ATTACHMENT 4.11(d)(1)

**TO ADDRESS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND TO
ACHIEVE IDENTIFIED GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

In FFY2008, ORS plans to address identified needs as listed in Attachment 4.11(A) in the following manner:

I. ACCESS ISSUES:

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment highlighted the need to continue addressing access and employment outcome issues with underserved and minority populations, specifically (A) Temporary Aide for Needy Families (TANF), (B) minority populations and (C) individuals with sensory impairments.

A. FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVES:

Individuals with learning disabilities who are in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program have traditionally been underserved. ORS developed the Rhode Island Learning Disabilities (LD) Project in conjunction with Rhode Island Department of Human Services Family Independence Program (FIP). This program has been nationally recognized as a best practices program that assists individuals with learning disabilities to become economically self-sufficient. Due to the number of referrals and demonstrated need, the program was expanded statewide, and an additional full-time Rehabilitation Counselor position was created. In FFY2008,

ORS will continue to work with the Department of Education Adult Education Project to advocate for specific services to address the needs of learning-disabled adults including advising and providing necessary accommodations to assist students to achieve outcomes consistent with stated employment goals. ORS will seek to expand the number of LD specific educational services available through the Department of Education. The number of learning disability testing providers has been expanded statewide which provides LD assessments for Spanish-speaking clients, thus providing increased choices for customers participating in the program. For FFY2007 and FFY2008, the ORS liaison to the project will continue to train DHS and ORS field staff on learning disabilities and the screening process using the Bridges to Practice model. ORS will provide cross-training on revised DHS policies informing ORS counselors of FIP changes that affect employment/outcomes in addition to providing educational services to DHS staff. The liaison will also review and comment on proposed changes to DHS policy and the impact these changes may have on the population of disabled adults through the field operations administrator at ORS.

ORS will continue to participate in the Welfare Reform Implementation Task Force and Education Sub-Committee to promote job opportunities for TANF participants.

B. MINORITY POPULATIONS:

Attachments 4.11(d)(3) and 4.11(c)(1) address ORS' efforts in outreaching to

minority populations.

C. SENSORY IMPAIRMENT:

For FFY2007 and FFY2008, ORS will continue outreach efforts to individuals with visual and hearing impairments. Ensuring that potential customers are aware of the services available requires a focus on developing relationships with rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, pharmacies, college disability offices, college financial aid offices, local SSA branches, and allied health professionals. Coordinating transition activities with existing ORS school liaison counselors and educational representatives are expected to reinforce the referral system to ORS for all students with sensory impairments. In addition, the ORS Career Assessment Center continues to be a resource to assist customers in becoming more knowledgeable about computers, adaptive equipment and assistive technology. Equipment is available to customers of the agency for demonstration and loan through ORS or the equipment demonstration, loan and recycling programs of the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP). New computers allow customers to learn how to search for jobs on the Internet using screen enlargement software and voice recognition software including JAWS, develop resumes and or improve computer literacy skills. ORS has installed four Video Relay stations so that communication with Deaf customers, colleagues and staff can occur in their preferred language and method of communication.

A new service agreement with IN-SIGHT has been negotiated to provide assessment

and training in basic computer skills to ORS customers with visual impairments. The program will focus on typing proficiency with JAWS or Zoom Text in combination with Microsoft Suite. For participants who complete the computer competency training, ORS is developing a job development and placement initiative with Goodwill Industries.

II. CONTACT WITH CUSTOMERS:

The ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) highlighted the need to examine the task demands of field staff and formulate recommendations so that timely response to and ongoing contact with customers is assured. Revised standards about IPE development occurring within three months of eligibility is a relatively new standard within ORS. Strategies are being explored to enable staff to meet that standard as indicated by the individualized needs of customers. ORS purchased the assessment tool “Career Scope”, of which one is in Spanish, in order to expedite the plan development. Additionally, ORS has purchased the “Wonderlic” personnel test, which many employers use to assess readiness of potential employees.

III. FEAR OF LOSING BENEFITS:

The loss of financial benefits and medical coverage, for both beneficiaries and dependents, has been and continues to be a major barrier to customer’s efforts to seek and maintain employment. Several efforts have been made in FFY2007 to help address these concerns. The Medicaid Buy-In, effective in January 2006, provides the option of purchasing (on a

sliding scale) continued medical coverage once employed. During FFY2007, training at the local DHS offices made accessing the Medicaid Buy-In more consumer-friendly.

In addition, ORS has emphasized the importance of incorporating knowledge about employment income and benefits as a critical element of informed choice pre- and post-employment. Information about the impact of employment on customers benefit is essential in order to make informed choices. ORS had been awarded the SSA grant Benefits Planning Outreach and Assistance (BPAO), which provided consumers with important information about the impact of work on SSA benefits, and other state and housing benefits. The BPAO grant expired on September 30, 2006.

In July 2006, ORS applied for (a national competitive cooperative agreement process) the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project. ORS was awarded this contract and services started on October 1, 2006. It is expected that this program will last for a total of three (3) years. However, SSA is awarding this cooperative agreement with various time periods (8 months, 10 months, 10 months and 8 months). Each time period requires a new competitive bid process. ORS has applied for the second phase as of February 2007. In March 2007, one staff person was certified through the University of Missouri-Columbia as a Benefits Planning Specialist. Because SSA is requiring the benefits counselors (now called Community Work Incentives Coordinators - CWICs) to spend more time with individuals who are working and using the SSA work incentives and less time providing general information to individuals who are not currently employed, it became necessary to provide

more in depth training to the ORS counselors on the SSA work incentives. ORS, in conjunction with the SSA Area Work Incentives Coordinator (AWIC) and a staff attorney from the Protection and Advocacy of Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS program) at the R.I. Disability Law Center, provided a “hands on” training to the ORS counselors on the SSDI and the SSI work incentives. This training will be provided to new staff and will be offered periodically to the current ORS staff.

ORS identified that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing customers were under-represented in the use of benefits counseling and that they had been denied “effective communication” services at the local Social Security District Offices. Customers who had been denied “effective communication” services at the SSA District Offices were referred to the Rhode Island Disability Law Center for legal advocacy regarding this issue.

IV. INDIVIDUALS’ EXPECTATIONS:

Informed choice requires an understanding of one's skills, interests, barriers, the changing job market and current trends in employment wages. The individual, with assistance from the ORS counselor identifies the steps needed to reach a chosen career goal as identified in the Individualized Plan For Employment (IPE). The ORS Comprehensive Needs Assessment indicated that the process of informed choice, including the concept of –a– building one’s career through a series of employment experiences, the importance of lifelong learning, knowledge about and use of labor market information needed to be enhanced in the vocational guidance and counseling aspect of ORS services. ORS counselors are reinforcing

the use of Labor Market Information (LMI) to clarify career opportunities, informational interviewing and mentoring to further explore specific career tracks and informing customer about new short-term training options. Future training to update counselor knowledge about labor market information and trends will be incorporated into the training including the CSPD plan for FFY2008.

ORS will continue to provide training to its' counselors on how to access, interpret and use Labor Market Information to provide necessary data to customers so that they will be able to make informed choices. ORS's trainings are now videotaped with ASL services and available on the ORS website for refresher training to any counselor at any time.

V. INFORMED CHOICE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:

ORS continues to address informed choice in all aspects of our relationship with customers. At application, through intake and IPE development, and even at closure, customers are provided with information intended to assist in the decision-making process. Orientation Checklists, Fact Sheets, ongoing communication and decision-making guides are incorporated into each aspect of customer service. These documents are developed and revised as appropriate and are included on the ORS website. These documents are also available in alternate formats and various languages.

The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Specialist has developed new resources around the state so that customers have increased options to select an appropriate vendor

within their geographic area. This expansion has included enhancing the provision of supported employment services to individuals with significant disabilities and cultivating programs to improve training options to culturally diverse customers. The Agency's Fee Schedule has been revised so that it can function as a tool for person-centered planning and informed choices for customers.

The ORS Policy Review Team has reviewed and updated all policies to ensure that informed choice is incorporated in all policies. The efforts by ORS counselors and their supervisors to resolve issues as close to the counseling relationship as possible has had a positive impact on the number and frequency of mediation and hearing requests. Throughout FFY2007 and continuing into FFY2008, ORS will continue to educate customers to their options for resolution of any disputes and informed choice as a foundation to the rehabilitation process. New ORS staff will participate in trainings about informed choice and ethics organized through the CSPD Training program. All personnel, on an ongoing basis, have access to supervisors and administrators for consultation on practices that assure customer rights within the ORS program.

VI. LACK OF SKILLS TO COMPETE IN THE JOB MARKET:

ORS has recognized the need to develop career choices, which will enable consumers to obtain high-paying occupations in today's competitive market. ORS' Workforce Development Supervisor has created an Employer Advisory Council consisting of 21 businesses and companies in Rhode Island, which traditionally offer high-paying

employment opportunities.

ORS has increased the number of short-term training options for customers. In addition, a job try-out system enables customers to participate in an evaluation of a particular type of work at the actual work site. Job-seeking skills workshops are being conducted on a regular basis to increase customer competence in conducting a job search. A workshop on job-seeking skills was offered to specifically address the unique communication challenges of Deaf customers in applying for jobs. The workshops include such topics as: interviewing techniques, resume development, the importance of references, application completion and mock interviews. Besides efforts at increasing customer competence in preparing for and getting a job, ORS is also training staff in resume development and labor market information. ORS has developed customer skill development and competence in preparing for, getting and keeping jobs as customer needs and labor market trends dictate.

VII. MARKETING PLAN:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has developed an Employment Subcommittee that includes the ORS Deputy Administrator, Work Force Development Supervisor and a Rehabilitation Counselor. This Employment Subcommittee is examining and implementing a marketing and public relations strategy. Several activities have generated from the efforts of this SRC subcommittee. An Employer Advisory Council consisting of 21 companies has been convened in FFY2007 at the CVS Corporate Headquarters. ORS' Workforce Development Specialist has been asked to participate and recruit new members to the Rhode

Island Business Leadership Network. The BLN is part of a National network with a Rhode Island chapter. The ORS Workforce Development Specialist also has provided to ORS staff in-service marketing programs in such areas as Healthcare, Boat Building, Manufacturing and Food & Hospitality industries.

VIII. RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEGES:

ORS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the three public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to ensure access to academic programs and services for ORS eligible students with disabilities. In FFY2007, the ORS College Relationship Task Force formulated some recommended strategies to improve the coordination between ORS and the Financial Aid and Student Service Offices of the State's colleges and universities, as well as to develop more efficient ways to implement ORS training policies and procedures. Implementation of the recommendations has been delayed due to staff vacancies. It is anticipated that implementation will be possible in FFY2008. In the interim, the ORS Deputy Administrator has met with officials from URI's Disability Student Services office to promote improved communication, mutual referral process, and information exchange. ORS has designated a rehabilitation counselor as a university liaison.

IX. TRANSPORTATION OBSTACLES:

The ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment identified transportation as one of the greatest unmet needs. Barriers include lack of access to any public transportation, lack of

information about available resources, attitudes and fears about traveling and need for expanded resources.

ORS has increased the number of travel training vendors and expanded use of travel training as a resource. CRPs providing transition assessment services will be encouraged to incorporate travel training in their service. The transportation planning fact sheet has been widely used, and the need for transportation planning is addressed in the IPE on an individual basis. Overcoming transportation barriers with new strategies has been a focus in FFY2007 and will continue to be in FFY2008.

In addition, the SRC Ad hoc Transportation Subcommittee, which includes ORS staff and representatives from the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) are conducting a survey of customers. ORS also has staff representation on a statewide Transportation Task Force.

ATTACHMENT 4.11(d)(2)

**TO CARRY OUT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS
WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES FOR
FFY2008**

The following strategies will be continued or expanded to increase and serve minority customers of ORS. Every year since FFY2002, ORS has met Standard 2 (Minority Ratio Equal Access to Services) of the VR Standards and Performance Indicators.

In FFY2007, ORS has sought to ensure that minorities have equal access to and knowledge about rehabilitation services. Outreach efforts have included establishing and enhancing our liaison relationships with several community-based organizations who serve minority populations. ORS has a liaison relationship with such agencies as Dorcas Place, Genesis Center, International Institute, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Vocational Program, Narragansett Tribal Health Center, Progresso Latino, Southeast Asian Socio-Economic Center and the Urban League. These outreach efforts have sought to increase awareness of services, to ensure equal access to the ORS program and to facilitate the referral process. By having a presence at community-based agencies, ORS has an opportunity to increase cultural competence, to meet with possible customers in an environment of familiarity, to include the referral source into the rehabilitation process as an additional support, to ensure that the customer and referral source know about assistive technology needs, and to help the customer develop a rehabilitation team. The rehabilitation team, in turn, has the potential to function as a support and resource to the customer in developing and implementing the

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) including assessing assistive technology at each point in the rehabilitation process. Often the referring agency will continue to provide long-term supports to the customer.

The Spanish community is the largest and fastest growing minority group in Rhode Island. In FFY2007 and continuing into FFY2008, ORS provides bi-monthly orientation sessions, at different sites, for our customers who primarily speak Spanish. In order to ensure access to information about ORS, the Cultural Diversity Cadre is developing a presentation about the agency that will be translated in several languages to accommodate minority individuals with limited literacy skills. ORS has a dedicated Spanish phone line to assist customers who communicate in Spanish and ensures that documents are translated into Spanish to enable informed choice. Besides developing closer relationships with agencies that provide adult literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL), ORS utilizes a bi-lingual psychologist who can provide psychological and learning disability assessments.

ORS is a partner with the six netWORKri's One-Stop Centers in the state. Some of the netWORKri sites have Spanish and Portuguese speaking staff to serve the geographic areas with the highest concentration of minority population. ORS staff have been trained in the use of the Language Line Interpreting Service and a "How To" instruction guide was provided to all regional staff. ORS provides technical assistance to the One-Stops around assistive technology and access issues.

ORS is striving to expand its training and service options to better support a commitment to

minorities with disabilities. CRPs have been encouraged to increase their capacity to serve minority populations. An ORS provider, Goodwill Industries, has addressed this need by hiring case management and job development staff with bilingual capabilities. In FFY2008, ORS will continue to expand its capacity to serve non-English speaking customers. As mentioned in Amendment 4.11(c), ORS has developed several training programs with agencies who service primarily minority populations.

The Cultural Diversity Cadre, which consists of representatives from each ORS region as well as several administrators, is assisting in the development and presentation of trainings on the impact of cultural issues on the rehabilitation process. The Cadre is developing a simplified process for ORS Orientation that considers lower literacy levels and multiple languages. The Cadre also monitors compliance with Standards and Indicators Performance Standard Two, which reviews access to services by minority populations. The committee meets quarterly and reports to the Administration of ORS. ORS representative addresses cultural diversity issues on several committees: Rhodes to Independence, DHS, Women's Health Advisory Council and the Office of Minority Health Advisory.

ORS provides liaison activities with the Narragansett Tribal Health Center through our South County regional staff for referral exchange and consultation. In FFY2007, ORS participated in a disability research project conducted by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program (MPTN-VR). In an effort to increase cultural competence and build capacity to provide services to Native Americans, the MPTN-VR conducted a one-day training conference

that was well attended by ORS rehabilitation counselors and staff. ORS has in turn sponsored a meeting of all ORS supervisors and the MPTN-VR staff to increase collaboration, provided office space to the Tribal VR Technician and attendance at regional ORS meetings to discuss referrals to and from Tribal VR and coordinate services available. ORS has engaged the services of a Tribal VR Counselor to assist in the development of a partnership between the Rhode Island Indian Council and ORS.

ATTACHMENT 4. 11(d)(3)

TO OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM FOR FFY2007

The updates in attachments 4.11(a), 4.11(c)(1), 4.11(d)(1), 4.11(d)(2), 4.11(d)(3) and 4.11(d)(4) also address the efforts to overcome barriers so equitable access is assured. Barriers related to benefits planning, transportation, informed choice, cultural barriers, employment opportunities, and options for individuals with sensory impairments have been previously addressed in other sections of the Annual Update to the State Plan.

ORS has continued to enlist an array of interpreters to ensure customer access to ORS services in their preferred language and method. Through the Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH) and Allied Court Reporting services, ORS has been able to access ASL interpreters or real-time closed captioning for customers and personnel. ORS has installed four Video Relay stations to facilitate communication between Deaf customers, colleagues and ORS personnel. In addition, ORS utilizes language interpreters through various vendors so that customers have access to rehabilitation services in their primary language. ORS has developed the capacity to use the AT language line as well to enhance communication with customers.

Several of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) who provide supported employment services have bi-lingual staff: Gateway Healthcare, Northern Rhode Island Mental Health Center, and Providence Center. In addition, West Bay Community Action offers the Senior Employment Program.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.11(e)(2)

**EVALUATION AND REPORT OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING IDENTIFIED GOALS AND
PRIORITIES AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION
ACTIVITIES**

I. TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY 5% ANNUALLY

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) has increased the number of new applicants and successful outcomes annually for each of the past five federal fiscal years. Seven hundred and thirty-six (736) individuals were closed successfully employed in FFY2006, while the goal for FFY2007 is seven hundred and thirty seven (737) successful outcomes. All Federal Standards and Indicators have been met successfully since FFY2003, and it is expected they will continue to be met through FFY2008. Rhode Island is one of the few states in the country who met all of the standards in FFY2006. Rhode Island was one of only four states who have met all of the standards and performance indicators for FFY2003-FFY2005 inclusive. During FFY2007, ORS continues to monitor compliance with all standards and indicators through caseload management days, MIS reports, and clinical supervision. Wage information for tracking purposes was realized in FFY2006 through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Labor and Training (DLT).

TRANSITION SERVICES:

School to Career activities with high school students, provides a seamless system for youth who transition to adult service providers. Dedicated personnel work collaboratively with Local Education Administrations (LEAs) in order to identify and refer students for transition services.

In addition, ORS personnel assist high school and college students in benefiting from vocational evaluations, situational assessments, mentoring opportunities, summer work experiences, internships and the Youth Leadership Forum. In FFY2007, RI School for the Deaf students had access to transition activities through summer work and work preparation services during the school year. In FFY2007 into FFY2008, ORS is seeking to engage the 504 Coordinators of each school district so that students with physical disabilities are referred to ORS.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:

Supported employment continued to provide a valuable service available through a fee-for-service and outcome-based model with 21 vendors around the state. ORS worked with both the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Behavioral Health Services Advisory Councils to examine best practices, explore employment strategies, and track outcomes. I&E funds have been and will continue to be used for technical assistance and to train staff of the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation vendors.

TRANSPORTATION:

Development of new vendors to address transportation and training needs was a focus for ORS. Transportation presented a significant obstacle to employment as referenced in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment findings.

JOB TRAINING:

In terms of training, ORS increased the number of short-term training options available so that customers had more training options. Changing labor market trends have also influenced the

need to cultivate additional options. On-the-Job Training and Work Try Out will continue to be valuable resources available to ORS customers.

I&E funds were utilized in FFY2007 to create a new pattern of service through a two-year establishment grant awarded to Goodwill Industries to provide short-term job coaching to individuals. At the conclusion of the grant, it is anticipated that the service will continue through a fee-for-service agreement.

RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS:

The relationship between ORS and employers has expanded by involving employers in ORS interview training classes, participation in annual Business Expos and Chamber of Commerce activities, involving employers in mentoring day, and continued presence at job fairs through the netWORKri system. ORS has developed a Business Advisory Council consisting of a twenty-one (21) business leaders.

The Workforce Development Supervisor is the Rhode Island Point of Contact for the CSAVR VR National Business Network, participates on the Business Leadership Network, is a board member of the Workforce Investment Solutions Providence/Cranston, and is the key organizer and facilitator of ORS interviewing workshops.

The State Rehabilitation Council utilized I&E funds to support its work, which includes an Employment Subcommittee. In FFY2007, I&E funds were used to sponsor the Annual Employer Honor Roll, planned collaboratively by ORS and the State Rehabilitation Council.

This annual event acknowledges employers for their contribution to successful employment and advancement of individuals with disabilities towards increased independence and economic self-sufficiency.

BENEFITS and WORK INCENTIVES:

Work Incentive Counseling has been well integrated into the service spectrum of ORS. The information is now incorporated into employment plans and is provided early in the rehabilitation process. Once employment is procured, the WIPA staff are able to assist customers in examining the impact of employment income on benefits.

II. TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS

Attachment 4.11(d)(3) and 4.119d)(4) addresses this goal.

III. TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

The Community Rehabilitation Specialist (CRP) continues to add new assessment, training and job development vendors thus increasing customer's options. Additionally all new counselors have been trained in informed choice. The training policy has provided flexibility to ORS customers when selecting short-term training providers. Customers are encouraged to explore different training programs and sites in order to make an informed choice. As described previously, there is much more diversity in the training opportunities which include a wide range of new occupational choices. Fact sheets regarding informed choice and transportation planning

are distributed widely, and an agency-wide training was provided to ensure all counselors were aware of the various choices in transportation.

All policies are being reviewed to ensure that informed choice is reflected clearly. Customer satisfaction surveys occurred and were reported in previous years. The ORS Customer Relations Office will continue to provide intervention services for early resolution of issues.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 6.3

QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Supported employment continues to be an important option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The 21 CRP vendors had a combined total of 278 successful closures. The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Specialist and assigned ORS staff continue to be active partners in both Mental Health (MH) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) Supported Employment Advisory Councils. The Councils focus on exploring employment strategies and methods of tracking outcomes, which will lead to quality employment while focusing on the needs of individuals with mental illness and those with developmental disabilities. There continues to be increased efforts to share and utilize best practices from each of the vendors on the councils. In addition, expert speakers are invited to discuss topics of shared interest, Work Incentives, Ticket-to-Work and Disability Business Enterprise. In FFY2007, both MH and DD Councils requested to hold a combined meeting. As requested, this meeting provided updated information on how to access ORS services and showcased best practices. In addition, ORS is reaching out to those DD providers who are not on the Council in order to recruit them for both the Council and as an ORS vendor.

During FFY2008, ORS will continue to explore funding sources in order to expand access to supported employment services for underserved populations in need of supported employment. ORS is taking the lead in coordinating services of multiple agencies to serve the same client. Services from one agency may address one particular need that the other agency could not meet. Separately, neither agency would be able to service the customer.

Natural supports are encouraged whenever possible. The Cooperative Agreement between the Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals (MHRH) and DHS/Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) describes the commitment of the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Behavioral Health Services to provide funding for Supported Employment services.

In FFY2007, ORS became part of a Regional Planning Committee led by the New England Rehabilitation Continuous Education Program (NERCEP) to discuss provider needs for each one of our states. NERCEP will then plan to provide trainings in each state for the target area of needs.

TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

The ORS Supported Employment Services program provides competitive employment opportunities in an integrated setting for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The array of services that are required to obtain and sustain employment is based on a determination of the individuals' needs and are specified in the IPE. Supported employment is a place/train model, which includes training by job coaches at the work site in most cases. The job coaching, generally provided by the long-term support CRP, is gradually reduced to a maintenance level depending on the individuals' needs.

As ORS involvement is generally time-limited, engaging a provider for extended long-term services is addressed when the IPE is developed. The CRP responsible for providing long-term supports signs an agreement to continue providing extended services so that the individual has a seamless transition from ORS to the long-term support provider.

The time frame for transitioning an individual from the support services provided by both ORS and a CRP to extended supports provided solely by the CRP varies based on the individualized needs of each customer. The transition to the extended services generally occurs when the individual is closed with ORS. Establishing a long-term support CRP early in the process ensures a smooth transition to extended services. The on-going support services can be provided by a state agency, a private non-profit organization or any other appropriate resource.

Appendix A
2005
Needs
Assessment
Report:

Vocational Rehabilitation
Needs of Rhode Islanders
with Disabilities



State of Rhode Island
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council

*The Mission of the Rhode Island
Office of Rehabilitation Services is:
“To empower individuals with disabilities
to choose, prepare for, obtain and maintain
employment, economic self-sufficiency,
independence, and integration into society.”*

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Introduction

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandates the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), in partnership with the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to periodically complete a statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities. Six separate surveys which document the needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities completed from 2003 to present were included in the creation of this report entitled the “Needs Assessment Report: Vocational Rehabilitation Needs of Rhode Islanders with Disabilities”.

The surveys that make up the body of this report include:

- 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey
- 2004 New England Vocational Rehabilitation Customer Quality Assurance Survey
- 2004 Rhode Island Governor’s Commission on Disabilities Public Forum Employment Work Group Report
- 2003 Rhodes to Independence Focus Groups Report Summary
- 2003 Division of Developmental Disabilities Quality Consortium Employment Survey
- 2003 ORS/SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey

The 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey was designed and prepared by a committee consisting of staff from the State Rehabilitation Council, Office of Rehabilitation Services, and from the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. Sherlock Center staff Vicki Ferrara and Mary Ann Pallack conducted implementation of the instrument.

This report describes an overview of the surveys, with a description of design,

implementation, and findings of the 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey, which was conducted in June of 2005. The administration of the Office of Rehabilitation Services is grateful to all of the staff from the State Rehabilitation Council, the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Sherlock Center on Disabilities for their enthusiastic support and participation in the development of the Needs Assessment Report. We would also like to thank Jerry Lindsley from the Center for Research and Public Policy, Trumbull, Connecticut and Dr. Brian Robertson of Market Decisions, South Portland, Maine for their assistance in compiling their respective reports. Additionally, we gratefully acknowledge the work of the Rhodes to Independence; the Governor's Commission on Disabilities, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Quality Consortium Employment Sub-Committee, for their dedicated efforts in assessing the needs of our mutual consumer groups.

2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey – June 2005

130 distributed – 61 returned – Rate of return: 46.9%

1. Please check the affiliation that best represents <u>you</u>.	N° cit.	Percent
ORS Counselor	29	47.5%
Community Rehabilitation Provider	21	34.4%
netWORKri/DLT staff	11	18.0%
TOTAL OBS.	61	100%

2. Which geographic area most reflects the area in which <u>you</u> provide services? (Check only one)	N° cit.	Percent
Aquidneck Island	3	4.9%
East Bay	10	16.4%
Metro/Providence	16	26.2%
Northern RI	13	21.3%
Southern RI	8	13.1%
Statewide	9	14.8%
West Bay	10	16.4%

3. What do people with disabilities <u>need most</u> to achieve their employment goal as stated in their Employment Plan? (Check top 5)	Q 3. N° cit.	Q 3. Percent	Q 4. Services readily available	Q 4. Services <u>Not</u> readily available
Skills training/education	51	83.6%	77%	16%
Support of a job developer	45	73.8%	63%	26%
Transportation	45	73.8%	28%	60%
Career counseling	37	60.7%	83%	11%
Job retention services	37	60.7%	60%	28%
Help to refine interviewing skills	20	32.8%	79%	12%
Benefits counseling	18	29.5%	67%	12%
Resume services	14	23.0%	83%	11%
Assistive Technology	11	18.0%	72%	16%

5. What do you believe prevents the people you support from becoming employed? (Check top 3)	N° cit.	Percent
Individuals lack of skills	34	55.7%
Individual's expectations	33	54.1%
Transportation	32	52.5%
Fear of losing SSI or SSDI	30	49.2%
Jobs not available	22	36.1%
Fear of losing medical benefits	19	31.1%
Fear of losing subsidies	12	19.7%
Availability of job development	9	14.8%
Job search preparation	9	14.8%

6. How often do the following prevent people you serve from maintaining employment?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Transportation	2%	28%	56%	9%
Impact of earnings on SSI and/or SSDI	12%	30%	46%	7%
Medical/disability related issues	7%	42%	39%	5%
Lack of on-site job coaching	9%	37%	37%	9%
Impact on medical insurance, housing, food stamps	12%	42%	33%	7%
Inappropriate job placement/match	2%	63%	28%	0
Inadequate supervision	12%	46%	28%	5%
Lack of job accommodation	12%	53%	23%	5%
Lack of job retention counseling	12%	51%	21%	5%
Employer education/mediation	11%	56%	21%	4%

7. What disability groups, if any, are underserved? Identify disability group and applicable location.

Underserved Disability Groups – By Location

Underserved Disability Groups – East Bay	N° cit.
Learning Disabled	1

Underserved Disability Groups– Northern RI	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	2*
Physically Disabled	2
Developmentally Disabled	1
Behavioral Health	1

*Other: Non “CSP” clients with SA issues; ORS

Underserved Disability Groups – Providence	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	3

Underserved Disability Groups – Southern RI	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	2*
Behavioral Health	2
Traumatic Brain Injured	1
Blind & Visually Impaired	1

*Other: All; Asperger's Syndrome

Underserved Disability Groups – West Bay	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	2
Developmentally Disabled	1
Physically Disabled	1

Underserved Disability Groups – Statewide	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	4
Traumatic Brain Injured	3
Developmentally Disabled	3
Physically Disabled	3
Blind and Visually Impaired	2
Other Disability Group	2*
Learning Disabled	1

*Other: People without medical coverage who need meds to continue; MD/CP

Underserved Disability Groups – No Location	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	3*
Physically Disabled	2
Developmentally Disabled	2
Learning Disabled	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	1

*People who are deaf and have other disability; those that aren't fragile enough to receive services but need the service; Convicted felons

Cumulative Summary– Underserved disability Group- across state	N° cit.	Percent
Behavioral Health	12	20%
Other Disability Group	9	15%
Developmentally Disabled	7	12%
Physically Disabled	7	12%
Traumatic Brain Injured	5	8%
Blind & Visually Impaired	4	7%
Learning Disabled	3	5%

8. What services needs, if any, are Community Rehabilitation Providers not able to sufficiently meet? Indicate service need and applicable location.

Unmet Service Needs – By Location

Unmet Service Needs – Aquidneck Island	N° cit.
Assessment/Evaluation	1

Unmet Service Needs – East Bay	N° cit.
On the Job Support	3
Job Development	1

Unmet Service Needs – Northern RI	N° cit.
Transportation	4
Other Service	2*
On the Job Support	1

*Other service need: Job ready; Job preparation

Unmet Service Needs – Providence	N° cit.
On the Job Support	2
Other Service	2*
Job Development	1
Job retention	1
Transportation	1

*Other service need: Social/emotional difficulties; Psychiatric treatment and medication

Unmet Service Needs – Southern RI	N° cit.
On the Job Support	1
Skills training/education	1
Job Development	1
Transportation	1
Other Service	1*

*Other service need: All employment services

Unmet Service Needs – West Bay	N° cit.
Job Development	3
On the Job Support	2
Transportation	2
Other Service	1*

*Other service need: Transition programs – Transition Academy

Continued on next page

(Question 8 continued)

Unmet Service Needs –Statewide	N° cit.
On the Job Support	7
Other Service	6*
Job Development	4
Transportation	3
Career Counseling	2

*Other service need: Mental health; job accommodation & assistive technology; BCI; Long-term support; State government initiatives; more individual attention

Unmet Service Needs – No location	N° cit.
Skills training/education	3
Other Service	5*
On the Job Support	1
Transportation	1

*Other service need: Waiting period for services; Counseling Job development for deaf workers; SE sites for non-DD/MHRH clients; State supported employer incentives.

Cumulative Summary- Unmet Service Need - across state	N° cit.	Percent
On the job support	17	28%
Other Service	17	28%
Transportation	12	20%
Job Development	10	16%
Skills training/education	4	7%
Career counseling	2	3%
Assessment/evaluation	1	2%
Job Retention	1	2%

9. In the last 6 months, which of the following netWORKri/DLT employment and/or training services have you used to help a person with a disability? (Check all that apply)	N° cit.	Percent
Information/referral	46	75.4%
DLT/LMI/RI Red website	30	49.2%
Job readiness workshop	29	47.5%
Job lead from DLT/ESR	26	42.6%
Placement assistance	23	37.7%
OSES regional meeting	17	27.9%
Training grant	11	18.0%
OSES yahoo group	11	18.0%
Other	5	8%
Career Scope	3	5%

Other usage noted, as follows:

- a. Recruiting
- b. TABE Testing
- c. Work Opportunities Unlimited
- d. Assistive technology
- e. Disability counselor at Providence netWORKri

10. Regarding your organization are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities? If no, suggest a strategy for improvement:

ORS Affiliated Respondents

Regarding <u>your organization</u>, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
No	14	48.3%
Yes	13	44.8%

ORS Counselors - Strategies for Improvement	N° cit.	Percent
Increase job development resources	10	34.5%
Reduce caseload	7	24.1%
Increase staffing/funding	3	10.3%
Reduce paperwork	2	6.9%
Other	1	3.4%

Actual Comments

- a. Reduce caseload size
- b. Identify and work with vendors to develop more services related to job development and supported employment.
- c. Unfortunately, I find that I lack the time to do job development due to the number of cases in my caseload. I'm often looking to outside agencies for this service. I'm not sure how to fix this.

- d. Better vendor preparation and education.
- e. There are too many files with too many demands. Therefore, it's difficult to devote enough time for job development.
- f. Hire job developer for each region
- g. Per region designate a person who has, as part of their job, the practice of job development.
- h. Need multiple people doing job development
- i. Need more agencies that provide job development. Recently lost availability of disability netWORKri counselor. We, as counselors, have too much paperwork and large caseloads, and therefore are unable to complete intensive job development.
- j. Our grant is for evaluations only. More staff, more money.
- k. Smaller caseloads and less paperwork
- l. Counselors have too many cases (most caseloads over 100) to devote time to job development. More counselors and less cases, or more appropriate vendors to use.
- m. Counselors do not have enough time to devote to job development. Caseloads too high, develop/create a specialist in each region and give them time.
- n. It's difficult for one job developer to keep up with searches, ORS, placements, keeping experienced job coaches on staff.

NetWORKri/DLT Staff

Regarding your organization, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
Yes	7	63.6%
No	3	27.3%

NetWORKri responses - strategies for improvement	N° cit.	Percent
Reduce caseload	1	9.1%
Increase staffing/funding	1	9.1%
More staff training	1	9.1%

Actual Comments

- a. Disability specialist
- b. More training for our staff
- c. Referral process inadequate, follow through weak, complaints of heavy caseloads

Community Rehabilitation Providers

Regarding your organization, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
No	11	52.4%
Yes	9	42.9%

Community Rehabilitation Provider Strategies for improvement	N° cit.	Percent
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Increase staffing/funding	7	33.3%
Increase job development resources	3	14.3%
Other	3	14.3%

Actual Comments

- a. My agency needs support and connections to job develop.
- b. Hire more staff
- c. More time and energy spent on job development. Only one person to do it now and everyone else is used for transportation.
- d. Source based rather than time limited funding
- e. More hours freed up for job development
- f. We are establishing a supported employment committee.
- g. Increased funding to increase staff
- h. Not enough staff; limited computer/internet access
- i. Need more resources to hire staff to work in this area. Chronically understaffed and overworked.
- j. The resources are available to folks. The motivation and follow thru on the part of the individuals looking for work is very difficult to maintain.
- k. Not enough funds

11. As a professional, what do you need to more effectively help people with disabilities to obtain and/or maintain employment? (Check top 3.)	N° cit.	Percent
Time for job development	30	49.2%
Job coaching services	25	41.0%
Access to employers	21	34.4%
Smaller caseload size	19	31.1%
Less paperwork	17	27.9%
Better assessment tools	16	26.2%
Enhanced job development skills	14	23.0%
Secretarial support	10	16.4%
Training	8*	13.1%
Confidence to approach employers	8	13.1%
Other	8**	13.1%
Supervisor support	3	4.9%
Internet access	3	4.9%

***Training topics cited:**

- a. Accommodations
- b. None identified
- c. Job development, accommodations
- d. Assessment
- e. Life skills first - then work skills
- f. Computer/office technologies
- g. How to effectively support an individual in the workforce when you are a residential provider.

****Other**

- a. Rehabilitation engineer for the blind
- b. Job tryouts
- c. Our members need training for skills that will produce a job.
- d. Increased on-site assessment opportunities
- e. Realistic expectations from ORS
- f. Better working relationship with ORS
- g. More good vendors to refer clients to.
- h. Increase motivation and benefits counseling.

12 A. Make one suggestion for ORS that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities.	N° cit.	Percent
Increase job development resources	13	21.3%
Increase staffing/funding	13	21.3%
Reduce caseload	8	13.1%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	6	9.8%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	6	9.8%
Other	5	8.2%
More job seeker training	4	6.6%
Quicker response to referrals	3	4.9%
Reduce paperwork	2	3.3%
More staff training	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

- a. More time and resources devoted to job development with employers and education of employers as to disability.
- b. I spend much time on paperwork and meetings - students caseload - not much time for job development
- c. More access to employers
- d. Use of the AOSOS
- e. Do more in-house job development, resume writing with clients.
- f. Do job development on their own
- g. Decrease caseloads so more time can be spent doing job development, placement services.
- h. Move quicker to capture motivation and momentum
- i. Job development
- j. Less paperwork - quicker response
- k. Better support staff to help the counselors move their cases quicker and it would also help production.
- l. Regional placement specialist
- m. Smaller caseloads; hire more counselors
- n. Increased availability of time to job develop.
- o. Smaller caseloads; more time to job develop
- p. Specific intake counselors and placement counselors
- q. More staff

- r. More connections to employers in the community
- s. More funding for job coaches on-site
- t. More money and contact with deaf community.
- u. Offer services for longer periods of time
- v. Decrease caseloads
- w. Open-ended funding
- x. More money
- y. Develop more "disability friendly" business relationships
- z. More understanding of personal issues that prevent people obtaining employment (vast improvement over years)
- aa. Smaller caseload so that employment counselors can work collaboratively with ORS counselors, not just refer someone who has a disability to someone at ORS and that ORS counselor works with that consumer
- bb. Increased flexibility - focus on career development
- cc. Realistic goals and timelines
- dd. More staff
- ee. Solid, constant connections with ORS and CTVS
- ff. More employer education; better counselor access
- gg. Be accessible every day - not by appointment only
- hh. As counselors, we need a smaller caseload in order to have the time to job develop for our clients or better/more vendors to utilize.
- ii. Increase funding for evaluation and other services to allow more staff time with individuals.
- jj. Decrease caseloads – less quantity more quality work
- kk. Individualized job development
- ll. Education on job's affect on benefit
- mm. I have been extremely happy with ORS and their involvement. They have been great. Smaller caseloads and more counselors is needed.
- nn. Very informative, helpful and available.
- oo. Perhaps increase funding available for assessments and job development for the individual who chooses NOT to go into a sheltered workshop.
- pp. Send consumers for proper skill training.
- qq. Networking more with each other and EDC, RIPTA
- rr. Better training for all ORS workers, regarding how their funding works and equal funding for all providers.
- ss. Consistent information from the ORS worker.

12 B. Make one suggestion for netWORKri that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities	N° cit.	Percent
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More staff training-disability issues	8	13.1%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	8	13.1%
More job seeker training	6	9.8%
Increase job development resources	2	3.3%
Increase staffing/funding	2	3.3%
Other	2	3.3%
Reduce caseload	1	1.6%
More staff training-general	1	1.6%
Better job lead sharing	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

- a. More flexibility around training programs and employment services to accommodate the disability.
- b. Co-teach/lead interviewing resume classes with ORS counselors.
- c. Many workers and netWORKri do not do anything.
- d. Cooperate with ORS on training Cooperate with ORS on training
- e. I have a great relationship with the Wakefield netWORKri. They are a great resource and are always willing to help!
- f. More in tune or knowledgeable working with individuals with disabilities
- g. Have groups such as interview skills or resume development for people with specific disabilities.
- h. Be less selective - work with everyone
- i. Staff train to work with disabilities
- j. More teamwork - better communication among staff
- k. Promote services
- l. Faster turn-around to counselor, but with decrease in counselor numbers???
- m. Better understanding of disabilities.
- n. Designate as ORS liaison per site
- o. Work with partners to utilize all services available for individuals
- p. Education regarding job placement and customer needs
- q. More funding
- r. Need a counselor there to work directly with people with disabilities
- s. East Bay location has one day a month for deaf employment.
- t. Focus more on people with disabilities, only a few offices have people devoted to them
- u. Counseling and support services availability
- v. Accommodations for SPMI
- w. Specialized disability counselors
- x. Additional staff to work with youth
- y. More receptive to clients also directly working with CSP providers and ORS
- z. Faster turn-around of meeting employer's job openings - then close when filled, instead of leaving it as if it's available.
- aa. More interaction with ORS
- bb. More ORS free time to meet with unscheduled customers
- cc. Must have abilities to meet the needs of the employer
- dd. Don't expect to start a job right away @ \$14 an hour. They need to work up to that.
- ee. More job developers
- ff. Computer training/classes on a more regular basis for staff and clients
- gg. On a bus line-accessible
- hh. staff training on disabilities
- ii. More contact with vendor agencies.

12 C. Make one suggestion for Community Rehabilitation Providers that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities.	N° cit.	Percent
Increase on-the-job support/SE/retention support	9	14.8%
More staff training	6	9.8%
Increase job development resources	5	8.2%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	5	8.2%
Increase staffing/funding	4	6.6%
Other	4	6.6%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

- a. Improve retention services.
- b. Increase options, besides food service, child care, janitorial.
- c. More supported employment and job development.
- d. Less employee turnover - more competent staff
- e. Accept more referrals, have more TRAINED employees (job developers, coaches)
- f. Training, training, institute
- g. Observe and identify more programs for vocational evaluation or job development.
- h. Increase effectiveness
- i. Stick in for long haul
- j. Job development
- k. More supported employment
- l. Job coaching
- m. Decrease the number of charges within the organization which disrupts consumer service.
- n. Work with funding source to achieve identified goal written in IEP or meet to amend goal
- o. More skilled placement service providers and job coaches
- p. More staff, more funding
- q. More intensive job development and placement services
- r. Corliss can improve its partnering with ORS and netWORKri.
- s. More staff to provide services
- t. Supported Employment services move vendors.
- u. Transportation supports
- v. Ability to provide supported employment
- w. Increased agency focus on rehabilitation/recovery
- x. Solid Constant connection with ORS and Centers
- y. Sharing of clients abilities and skills
- z. Know expectations of employer and make sure the candidate can meet them.
- aa. More agencies willing to work with the disabled and provide job development, placement and retention services.
- bb. More training/education for providers to work with people with TBI, CP, mental illness.
- cc. Better skills for staff
- dd. unified expectations on services provided
- ee. More staff.

13. What other suggestions do you have to improve employment outcomes of people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
Other	8	13.1%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	5	8.2%
More job seeker training	3	4.9%
Better transportation options	3	4.9%
Increase job support and ojt	2	3.3%
Disability awareness training for netWORKri	2	3.3%
Increase staffing/funding	1	1.6%
More staff training	1	1.6%
Quicker response to referrals	1	1.6%
Better communication/relationships (ORS/netWORKri/CPR)	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

- a. More time spend with clients on goal setting so that clients are more motivated and satisfied with jobs.
- b. Individuals with disabilities should have more realistic expectations of their employment potential. On the job training may be an incentive to hire and train Individuals with disabilities should have more realistic expectations of their employment potential. On the job training may be an incentive to hire and train individuals.
- c. Increase 1-to-1 support or site visits per approval of employer and customer.
- d. Improved work incentives by RI and federal government
- e. Public awareness
- f. Improve transportation and housing
- g. More job tryouts and OJTs
- h. Semi-annual meetings between netWORKri, ORS and Community providers to identify population and goals for successful outcomes to employment for individuals, as well as provider information-sharing and goal focus between agencies.
- i. NetWORKri needs to develop programs and willingness to work with people who fall within below average ranges of abilities, e.g. people who are not computer literate, people below 7th grade math and reading levels, people who are multi- and/or severely handicapped.
- j. Provide trainings/services for employers (teach about disabilities, incentives, etc.)
- k. Make employment and training a priority for Corliss members.
- l. More ways to make a company look favorably on hiring someone with a disability. Break down stereotypes, offer more tax breaks, etc.
- m. I would like to be able to work with MI agencies, but they decline to work with TBI survivors. These agencies have long-term service delivery that we lack.
- n. Members of netWORKri need to have increased understanding of methods, strategies, philosophy to assist people with disabilities with employment.
- o. My customers need a job yesterday. There is a high demand for us to provide 3-6 months of at least these core services after writing a plan. Most of my caseload are not receiving

any income and need a job ASAP. They are the most motivated until plan is written and frustrated that ORS counselor has not been able to get them work prior to writing plan. They cannot afford 3-6 months of services when they have no income. I don't know what the answer is.

- p. A great deal of effort is focused on Employment Specialists - which is logical, but futile if employers are not on board. Concentration needs to be on RI businesses.
- q. Customers need to be more prepared - research company - cold calling - more flexibility
- r. More employer education!
- s. Realistic expectations on the part of the job seeker
- t. Be realistic about career and skills needed for the job offered.
- u. Better organized and accessible transportation system.
- v. Provide incentives to keep working.
- w. More funding and more staff. The system really doesn't work very well it is present format.
- x. Help with transportation needs; realistic goals and opportunities.
- y. Training: re - micro-businesses, DBE, BID on State Contracts

ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey

Summary of Findings

During the spring of 2005, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council conducted a needs assessment survey. The survey was distributed to the Office of Rehabilitation Services supervisors and counselors, Community Rehabilitation Program providers, and netWORKri/One Stop Center and Department of Labor & Training staff.

The survey was designed by a committee consisting of representatives from the Office of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the University Affiliated Programs of Rhode Island College Paul V. Sherlock Center. The intent of the survey was to identify the interventions that people with disabilities need in order to get and keep work, the availability of these services throughout the state, the obstacles that customers confront in attempting to work, the groups of people with disabilities who are underserved, and the resource/training needs of personnel. The purpose of the survey was to assist the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council in examining program design, delivery systems and gaps in services with so that the agency can more effectively help disabled people become and stay employed.

Several themes emerged from the 61 questionnaires returned. In determining what people with disabilities need most in order to achieve an employment outcome: skills training and education, support from a job developer, transportation, job retention services and career counseling were identified as major areas of need. When these areas were rated for availability, skills training and education, support from a job developer, and job retention services were rated highest in terms of availability. However, transportation, which was noted previously in the survey as a major need, was rated as readily available by only 28% of respondents. Again, transportation, in combination with the individuals' lack of skills and expectations, and fear of

losing SSI and SSDI were rated by respondents as some of the main reasons that people with disabilities are prevented from working.

Respondents from ORS, Community Rehabilitation Program providers and netWORKri/One Stop staff, all provided suggestions on ways that each sector could more effectively facilitate employment for people with disabilities. Some of the suggestions included: hiring additional staff for job development, building capacity & resources in certain geographic regions, and increasing contact with ORS counselors. Other recommendations included: increasing job development resources, reducing caseload size, and increasing the number of staff.

The results of this survey are being utilized by a team of individuals from the State Rehabilitation Council and the Office of Rehabilitation Services to assist in the planning and development of a five-year strategic plan for the Office of Rehabilitation Services focusing on employment of individuals with disabilities residing in Rhode Island. The ORS/SRC Employment Sub-Committee consists of: Annette Bourbonniere, Chairperson, J. David Sienko, Susan Donovan, Domenic DiOrio, Vicki Ferrara, Monica Dzialo and Stephen Brunero.

Questions related to this survey may be directed to:

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New England Vocational Rehabilitation Customer Quality Assurance Survey/Results

February, 2004

Goals

- **The New England Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies Quality Assurance Survey was designed to allow clients to provide feedback about the services they gave received**
- **The survey provides a tool to measure satisfaction with the agency and the services provided**
- **The survey is designed to gather information to allow quality improvements**
- **This administration was designed to assess whether a set of core questions could be used by agencies throughout New England to measure satisfaction**

Survey Response

- **A total of 802 clients of ORS completed the survey by telephone or mail**
- **93% of ORS clients surveyed indicated that they would recommend that friends go to the agency for help**
- **85% of ORS clients surveyed reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the choice of service providers.**

- **91% of respondents reported that the ORS staff was either very helpful or helpful in assisting them in achieving their goal.**

- **88% of clients surveyed reported that it was very or somewhat easy for them to complete an application to ORS**

- **Responses to question: “Which activity or service provided by the VR program do you feel had the greatest impact toward assisting you in your vocational goal?”**
 - **Job Training, shadowing, job coaches, job search**
 - **Education, funding for education**
 - **Counseling, counselor**
 - **Adaptive equipment**
 - **Testing, evaluations**
 - **Doctors, Therapists**
 - **Computer, Use of, purchase of/training**

Number of Surveys Completed by Service Region

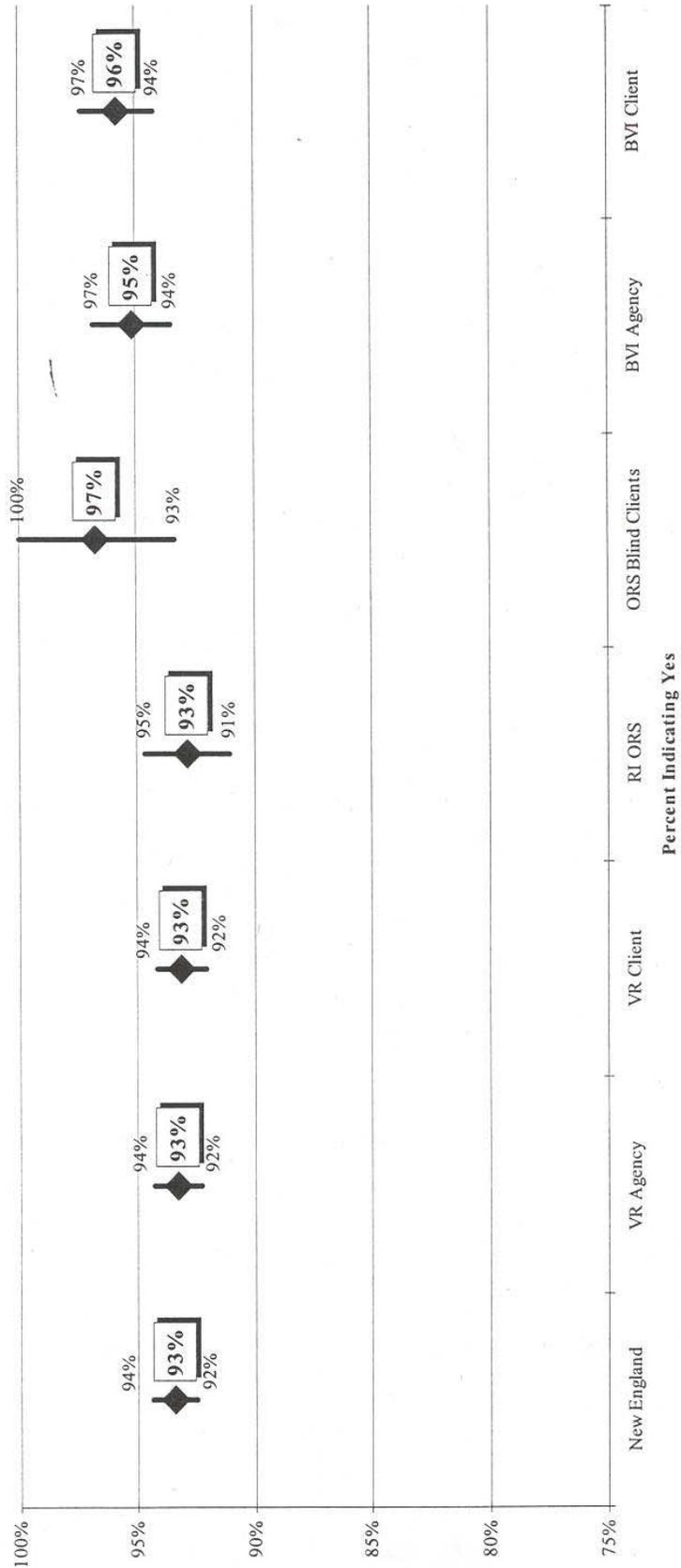
	n
Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services	802
Region 1	109
Region 2	112
Region 3	111
Region 4	109
Region 5	106
Region 6	40
Region 7	90
Blind or Visually Impaired Clients	125

Data Analysis

- The survey data has been weighted to reflect the actual population of clients based on:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Case status (open or closed)
 - Disability/Impairment Category
 - Service region

- The results from analysis using the weighted data can be generalized to the population of all RI ORS clients and service regions.

Would you recommend that friends go to agency for help
(95% Confidence Interval)



If there was anything you could have changed in your relationship or interaction with the VR program, what would that be?

- Wouldn't change anything, nothing needs to change
- More contact
- More help finding a job, job service, better jobs
- Better communication
- Better trained staff
- More/better information on services provided
- More funding for education
- Return calls sooner
- Listen to clients' needs, interests, be more understanding

RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities
2004 Public Forum Employment Work Group
Themes and Recommendations

1. Theme: Not knowing what's available or where to find out about what's available e.g. tax credits.

Recommendations:

- a. Use the Able Too...program
- b. Expand RI.gov website
- c. Provide training - hands-on, website (but not printed materials – goes out of date to quickly)

2. Theme: Need for education of employers on abilities of the individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- a. Provide training to employers
- b. Partnership to employers
- c. Success stories in local newspapers

3. Themes: Need for service provider skills/knowledge in job/person matching. Need for improved listening skills in service providers.

Recommendations:

- a. Individual skill inventory compared to available LMI
- b. Identify agency resources, needs, and funding requirement.
- c. (DLT – Labor Market Training)

4. Theme: Need for a case management system to assist the Traumatic Brain Injured become and maintain employment.

Recommendation:

- a. Legislative advocacy for funding

5. Theme: Communication barriers exist for people with disabilities securing interviews and successfully completing interviews.

Recommendations:

- a. Speech to Speech relay technology
- b. Educating employers on abilities

6. Theme: Need for equal access for the disabled including accommodations while in training and on the job.

Recommendations:

- a. Spread knowledge of JAN
- b. Develop/provide education effort focused on high school personnel to fade out reliance on others
- c. Use technology
- d. Focus on independent living to foster self-sufficiency

7. Theme: Need for Employers on the Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Recommendation:

- a. Employer representation on GCD

2003 Rhodes to Independence Focus Groups

Report Summary

In 2003, the Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee contracted with Cote & D'Ambrosio to develop a marketing plan. Cote & D'Ambrosio then conducted some focus group research to gather information and opinions about employment of people with disabilities. They conducted three focus groups: one for people with disabilities, one for families of people with disabilities, and one for employers. There is a considerable amount of overlap between the three groups, but the needs highlighted are:

- Need for volunteering and internship opportunities to gain experience for employment;
- Need for networking techniques to let people know that they are looking for jobs;
- A need for good job leads;
- A need for adequate transportation;
- A need for employer understanding of assistive technology and related accommodations;
- A need for employer education on disability issues;
- A need for more readily accessible resources for employment, including for employers;
- A need for training of coworkers to offset negative attitudes towards people with disabilities in the workplace;
- A need for better preparation for work, including benefits counseling;
- A need to align the expectations of the employer and the person with the disability;
- A need for better coordination and communication between the various agencies and support staff;
- A need for better understanding regarding ADA laws.

2003 DDD-Statewide Quality Consortium

Employment Survey

In 2004, the Developmental Disability's Statewide Quality Consortium surveyed 35 DD agencies about the number of people employed in community jobs. Thirty agencies provided the following information for each individual employed during 2003: Consumer ID, Employer Name, Job title, Hours worked, monthly income and employment type, i.e. Individual Supported Employment,* Group Supported Employment,** and Competitive Employment.*** (Types of employment were defined by the National Core Indicators/HSRI/CMS).

According to DDD/MHRH, 3,915 adults received services from them in 2003, of which approximately 3,365 received services from DD agencies.

The results of the employment survey show that 21% (699) of people receiving services from a DD agency held at least one job in 2003. 112 of those individuals reported having more than one job, for a total of 811 jobs. Ten individuals report as self-employed.

Individuals are reported as working in the following support categories:

- Individual Supported Employment - 252
- Group Supported Employment - 428
- Competitive Employment -131

Additionally, 80% or 648 jobs are less than 20 hours per week. 20% or 131 jobs are more than 20 hours per week, of which 4% or 30 jobs are full-time, 35 hours or more per week.

Throughout the state, employed individuals worked for 199 companies, in 35 job titles****with an average hourly wage of \$7.14.

Core Indicator Definitions

*ISE [Called "Vocational-Supported Employment" in BI-28.] Individuals have a job with a community employer and receive periodic publicly funded assistance, training and support aimed at securing and/or maintaining employment and /or improving job skills.

**Group SE [Called vocational-group employment" in BI-28] Two or more individuals are employed by a community provider agency and perform work as employees of the provider agency at sites in the community (e.g., mobile work crews). Group SE also includes persons who ate employed in an affirmative industry or as part of an enclave.

***CE [this is not a service or support, therefore in not listed in BI-28] Individuals have a job of their own in the community but are not receiving "Supported Employment"- that is, they do to routinely receive community job supports or job coaching. They may have access to supports as needed or may receive follow--along" but is basically working on their own.

**** 180 companies are identified as for-profit, non-profit, or state and city governments and 19 are DD organizations. Job titles with similar tasks were grouped together. For example, one grouping included housekeeper & cleaning worker; another included busboy, cafeteria aide, food service, and mess attendant. A total of six grouped job classifications are listed.

2003 ORS/SRC Consumer Satisfaction **Survey Overview**

In 2003, “closed” (600) and “active” (201) ORS customers were surveyed to assess their satisfaction with ORS services and the outcomes they achieved. The telephone survey investigated 11 areas of satisfaction related to the following: general awareness and expectations of ORS services, overall program and staff rating, satisfaction of community providers, and outcomes achieved. Participants also assessed program participation, barriers they experienced and perceptions of met and unmet needs.

People come to ORS with many expectations, the most frequent being to obtain employment. 57 % of closed respondents said that all or most of their expectations were met and reported being very satisfied with the quality of ORS personnel, i.e. counselors were knowledgeable, courteous, and kept promises, etc.

Overall, satisfaction with initial contact, awareness of services and development of active employment plans increased in 2003, along with customers’ understanding of services and the employment plan’s purpose. Additionally, most customers were *very* or *somewhat clear* about their roles and responsibilities as participants in VR services and thought their employment plans reflected their goals.

Regarding overall satisfaction with services, 84% of all customers were satisfied with access to ORS counselors and the quality of their employment plans. The top five services utilized most were also services that customers considered important. They were: help in identifying interests, strengths and abilities; help identifying appropriate vocational goals; help finding a job; help understanding how employment affects benefits; and help practicing for job interviews. Customers reported an average of 85% satisfaction rating for these services.

A little over half of all surveyed customers reported currently receiving public benefits. Almost 66% of this group had access to benefits planning and were informed about the impact of

employment on benefits.

In 2003, almost half of all respondents reported they are working full or part-time, with 74 % indicating a high job satisfaction rating. 36% reported promotions and 39% receive medical benefits. Only 29% reported that their current job is one that ORS and/or a Community Rehabilitation Partner helped secure - a decrease from 38% in 2002.

Overall, respondents reported an 80% satisfaction rating with the outcome of their participation in Vocational Rehabilitation.

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