

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program


Rhode Island Dept of Human Services - Office of Rehabilitation Services State Plan for Fiscal Year 2012
(submitted FY 2011)

Preprint - Section 1: State Certifications

- 1.1 The **Office of Rehabilitation Services** is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended [1] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act [2].
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **Department of Human Services** [3] agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan [4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations [5], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan [6], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations [7], 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. Yes
- 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. Yes
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law. Yes
- 1.7 The (enter title of state officer below)
Director Department of Human Services
... has the authority under state law to receive, hold and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.8 The (enter title of state officer below)...
Director Department of Human Services
... has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services. Yes
- 1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

State Plan Certified By

As the authorized signatory identified above, I hereby certify that I will sign, date and retain in the files of the designated state agency/designated state unit Section 1 of the Preprint, and separate Certification of Lobbying forms (Form ED-80-0013; available at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed80-013.pdf>) for both the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.


Signed?	
Name of Signatory	Sandra M. Powell
Title of Signatory	Director
Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)	6-15-11

Assurances Certified By

The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit provide the following assurance(s) in connection with the approval of the State Plan for FY 2012

Yes

Comments:

Signed?	
Name of Signatory	Sandra M. Powell
Title of Signatory	Director
Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)	6-15-11

* The signatory of the assurance with the authority to execute and submit the State Plan will maintain a signed copy of the assurance(s) with the signed State Plan.

Section 1 Footnotes

- [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, "Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- [7] Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

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
Department of Human Services Office of Rehabilitation Services	Vocational Rehabilitation – Basic Support – H126A070058
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Sandra M. Powell, Director	
SIGNATURE	DATE
	6-15-11

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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	
Department of Human Services Office of Rehabilitation Services		Supported Employment Services Program – H187A070059B	
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE			
Sandra M. Powell, Director			
SIGNATURE		DATE	
		6-15-11	

Preprint - Section 2: Public Comment on State Plan Policies and Procedures

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation 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.

Preprint - 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361 or 34 CFR 363.

3.2 Supported Employment State Plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation 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.

Preprint - Section 4: Administration of the State Plan

4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation 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

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. 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act, 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency. No

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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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. No

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 Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

This agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

(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 Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

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

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide work force 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 work force 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 work force 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 nonprofit 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 postschool 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 Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations. **No**
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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 five 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 time lines 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 Rehabilitation 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 three 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 work force 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 Rehabilitation Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act; and
- E. strategies for assisting other components of the statewide work force 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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.

Preprint - 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 Rehabilitation 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 work force investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services. 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act;
 3. referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide work force investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 work force investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation 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, and 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 two 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than nonprofit agencies and organizations.

- (b) Cooperative agreements with private nonprofit organizations.

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

Preprint - Section 6: Program Administration

Section 6: Program Administration

6.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act.

6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 nonprofit 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act.

6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act.

Preprint - Section 7: Financial Administration

7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Preprint - 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation 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.

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions. Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

SRC COMMENTS ON STATE PLAN

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council, I offer the following comments regarding the proposed FFY 2012 Annual Update for the State Plan.

Comment #1: Attachment 4.8(b)(1) - Cooperation with Agencies that are not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

The SRC supports ORS' efforts to develop and maintain Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) agreements with agencies outside the Workforce Investment System. We are especially pleased ORS was able to renew its MOU with RIDE. We believe ORS involvement in transition age students early in the process will impact success for students later in life. We hope ORS can increase its presence in high schools throughout the state.

Response #1:

At this time, we have staff presence in every public high school except in the East Bay area where we have a vacant position. In an effort to still be responsive to the transition needs of all youth, we are trying to cover this vacant caseload. Our ability to provide comprehensive services is compromised, however, with this vacancy.

ORS values the support of the SRC in our efforts to develop and maintain Memoranda of Understanding agreements outside of the Workforce Investment System. Through our renewed MOU with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), ORS anticipates ongoing collaboration with a continued focus on enhancing the provision of timely and quality transition services to students with disabilities.

Comment #2: Attachment 4.8(b)(3) - Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Providers

The SRC is also supportive of ORS expanding contractual and fee-for-service agreements with a wide network of vendors, and we are available to identify areas of concerns concerning the delivery of services by these vendors to help improve the system. We especially recognize that ORS can take a leadership role in providing supported employment services for those individuals with the most significant disabilities who need supported employment services. We recognize that CRPS and other state agencies shape the service delivery system, but we believe ORS can help to create customer demands for better opportunities for competitive and integrated work opportunities.

Response #2:

Expansion and development of contractual and fee-for-service agreements is an important component of ORS service delivery. ORS values feedback from a variety of stakeholders and would welcome input from the SRC concerning the identification of delivery of services issues. In the development of services, the Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor utilizes feedback from customers and counselors along with Comprehensive

Needs Assessment data to ensure a wide range of services are available to meet the presenting needs of ORS customers.

Additionally Supported Employment remains a vital component of service delivery, and over the past year ORS has continued to provide training to supported employment providers and ORS staff on the regulations, policies, principles and best practice of supported employment leading to quality employment outcomes in integrated employment, at competitive wage. The Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor has also initiated development of specific service-focused trainings and fact sheets for CRP's defining deliverables and outcome expectations.

Comment #3: Attachment 4.10 - Comprehensive System of Personnel Development - Staff Hiring

The SRC is concerned about ORS vacancies, and we support the filling of additional positions especially given that they are 80% federally funded. We are concerned with the excessively high caseload for counselors and believe it may impact negatively on services to clients. We also believe ORS efforts at training new counselors is very important, especially given that almost 40% of the counselors at ORS are relatively new in their positions and have been there for under two years.

Response #3:

ORS appreciates the SRC's concern related to staff hiring and caseload size and remains committed upon vacancy posting approval to the hiring of qualified counselors with Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. As mentioned in the past through linkages with colleges and universities, ORS has continued to offer practicums and internships to potential future candidates currently seeking their Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. ORS remains committed to fostering the ongoing professional development of staff, and conducts an annual Training Needs Assessment and develops a training plan. During this time of hiring many new Rehabilitation Counselors, ORS concurs with SRC that it is vital to provide the support and tools to enable ORS staff to meet the needs of agency customers. Therefore, ORS has adopted a best practices theme with training.

Comment #4: Attachment 4.11(a) Results of Statewide Assessment of Needs - Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The SRC was pleased to participate in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and evaluate the area of customer and provider needs. We support ORS' efforts to provide training to Community Rehabilitation Providers and to customers about benefits and meaningful work opportunities. We also commend ORS for meeting almost all of its standards and indicators.

Response #4:

ORS looks forward to ongoing collaboration with SRC concerning outcomes of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and ongoing quality improvement efforts in the provision of education/training to CRP's and customers as well as meeting established goals and objectives.

Comment #5: Attachment 4.11(c)(3)- Order of Selection

The SRC understands ORS challenges to continue to serve all customers and the need to implement an Order of Selection. The SRC encourages ORS to be transparent about the Order of Selection to the public by placing more information about it on its website.

Response #5:

ORS is pleased that the SRC reviewed the agency's website. With Order of Selection as with all services, ORS seeks to maintain a high level of transparency. **ORS will take under advisement** SRC's recommendation that additional information be made available on the website concerning Order of Selection.

Comment #6: Attachment 4.11(c)(1)- State's Goals and Priorities - Goals and Objectives

The SRC is pleased that the average expenditure per client has increased, as has the current average competitive wage which has increased by approximately \$1.00 per hour. Further, we are pleased so many ORS customers (41%) who have been closed successfully by ORS have been able to attend post-secondary training options.

Response #6:

ORS maintains a commitment to providing services to individuals predicated on informed choice, employment goal and objectives as outlined in the IPE. For many, this includes post-secondary training. ORS views integrated competitive employment with earnings commensurate to others in the same job as an important quality outcome and will continue to monitor this through quality improvement activities.

Comment #7: Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Lastly, we are impressed with ORS' use of AARA funds for the SWEEP program to give transition age youth opportunities for summer work experiences. Programs such as SWEEP, as well as the Work Try Out, can really assist customers in making informed choices about their vocational goals.

Response #7:

ORS commitment to collaborating with the Local Education Authorities, the Department of Education (RIDE) and partner agencies to ensure an array of Transition Services for youth with disabilities remains a priority. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds utilized to fund the Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program (SWEEP) are no longer available, ORS remains committed to providing a Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program for youth. The SWEEP program focuses on youth with disabilities who are still in high school, still in high school but at risk of dropping out, or have dropped out/graduated from high school. During FFY 2011, ORS will be offering summer work experiences to approximately 185 youth with disabilities through Title I.

Additionally, ORS remains committed to assisting adults with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment that maximizes their interest, capabilities, and abilities. On the job training, work tryouts and internships provide valuable work opportunities that have proven successful in assisting ORS customers in realizing their identified employment goal.

Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

Identify the types of services to be provided by the program for which the waiver of statewideness is requested.

The waiver request should also include:

- a written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-federal share of funds;
- a written assurance that designated state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect;
- a written assurance that all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

N/A

Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

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

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) collaborates with programs and agencies providing services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach an employment goal. Types of agencies that ORS work with include: hospitals, medical and disability support organizations, educational institutions, professional associations, domestic violence and homeless shelters, community centers, community mental health agencies, substance abuse treatment facilities, and advocacy groups. Memorandums of Understanding have been negotiated with Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Institutions of Higher Education (IHE - Rhode Island College, University of Rhode Island and Community College of Rhode Island), Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), and the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH). In order to enhance our recruitment of qualified rehabilitation counselors, ORS has a Memorandum of Understanding with Assumption College and Salve Regina University to provide practicum and internship opportunities to graduate students. ORS has cultivated a strong working relationship with independent living centers to augment our vocational rehabilitation services with their ability to provide support services, transportation training, advocacy services, home assessments, independent living skills/assistive technology assessment, and information and referral services. In order to enhance these working relationships, ORS assigns Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to function as liaisons to various community agencies.

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

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment 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.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education (RIDE) and Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/ORS) identifies students with disabilities who are eligible for ORS and transition services with DHS/ORS for the purpose of achieving successful employment outcomes. Incorporated into the MOU is the required Federal expectation that all students who are 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 and 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 post-secondary students with an active Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with ORS.

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

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) will continue to develop 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 (CNA) or by the individualized needs of customers, will initiate efforts to create a new service or training option. Contracts are negotiated according to agency criteria and include an ORS approved work plan development and monitoring of measurable performance goals, and quarterly monitoring of deliverables.

In addition to contractual agreements, fee-for-service agreements incorporate a similar process with the Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) being funded based upon authorization, service provision, and outcomes. ORS will utilize the information from the FFY2011 Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment as a foundation for expansion and/or development of new contractual and fee-for-service agreements that meet the employment needs of customers. Based on CNA findings, incorporated into the ORS State Plan the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee will work with the CRP Supervisor to develop increased options for individuals with disabilities who are considered underserved and/or minority populations based on these survey findings. In addition, ongoing Quality Improvement activities such as the quarterly satisfaction survey developed and implemented by the SRC State Plan and Continuous Quality Improvement Committee, as well as the ORS Strategic Planning Supervisor provides ongoing information that is relevant to customers' vocational rehabilitation needs.

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

Describe 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 in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation 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. ORS has maintained involvement with two Supported Employment Advisory Councils, and has cooperative agreements with the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). The Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities are organized within the BHDDH agency.

From FFY2012 through FFY2013, the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) will continue to partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) of supported employment services so that customers can make informed choices about integrated competitive employment options. ORS will sponsor and partner with the Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities Supported Employment Advisory Councils. ORS staff also provide ongoing training and technical assistance to the supported employment CRPs. Training on supported employment regulations, policy, and core values has occurred with staff of ORS and with CRPs to increase their understanding of the ORS Supported Employment process.

ORS, as a provider of supported employment services, engages community resources to provide the extended supports that help sustain employment for individuals with significant disabilities. Long-term supports are planned for and included in the customers' Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). These plans are individualized and define the scope and duration of each supported employment service. The IPE also identifies the CRP who will continue to provide support services to the individual with a disability on a long-term basis. This shift in service delivery responsibility is well coordinated by the ORS counselor and CRP agency staff so that there will be a seamless delivery of needed services to the individual. The time frame for transitioning an individual from the support services by both ORS and the CRP to extended supports provided solely by the CRP is based on the individual needs of each customer.

In FFY2012 ORS will continue to encourage CRPs to collaborate with each other to meet the diverse employment needs of significantly disabled individuals and to examine service delivery systems to ensure customer access to supported employment options. This collaboration is encouraged at individual and joint meetings of the BHDDH and DD Supported Employment Councils.

ORS has a long-standing history of cultivating collaboration between ORS, CRPs, and the netWORKri One-Stop system. It is anticipated that this effort will continue through FFY2013. ORS, through its parent agency, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, is a financial and programmatic partner with Rhode Island netWORKri One-Stop Centers. ORS counselors have designated days and times at each of the One-Stop Centers in order to provide access to ORS services including applications, counseling, information and referral, and placement services. ORS

personnel attend monthly statewide Employer Services Network meetings at the Providence/Cranston One-Stop Career Center, netWORKri. In addition, ORS personnel, through the Assistive Technology grant (ATAP), provide consultation and training to the One-Stop staff on disability issues, accessibility considerations, and assistive technology.

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

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

- 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;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- 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.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is committed to providing quality rehabilitation services to its customers. The 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 all of its human resources. This system is intended to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation counselors, direct service, supervisory, administrative, fiscal and support personnel.

Our CSPD plan follows:

PERSONNEL DATA AND PROJECTIONS

In FFY2010, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program has served approximately 8,068 individuals, with an average caseload of 192 over the course of the year. ORS has a total of 88 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions which includes 41 counselor positions. Since September, 2007 early or forced retirements have resulted in 21 vacancies of counselor, supervisory, and clerical personnel. ORS received approval to recruit for several positions, which resulted in the hiring of 14 vocational rehabilitation counselors. All new counselors have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. During FFY2010, two new counselors have been hired and a support staff has been promoted from Senior Word Processing Typist to Data Control Clerk. ORS has two VR Counselor I vacancies, one vacant Supervisor position due to the promotion of the Supervisor to Assistant Administrator, and two vacant support staff positions.

Over the next 3 to 5 year period, ORS estimates that approximately 20 individuals (administrators, supervisors, counselors and support staff) will be eligible for retirement. Given the number of employees that could potentially leave state service, ORS is actively pursuing graduate students for internships with ORS via the Rehabilitation Counseling programs from local universities and colleges.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I	27	2	5
2	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II	14	0	4
3	Case Aide	2	0	0
4	Supervisor	13	1	4
5	Deputy Administrator	3	0	2
6	Assistant Administrator	2	0	1
7	Support Staff	14	2	1
8	Administrator	1	0	1
9	Social Services	7	1	2
10	Fiscal	5	0	0

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

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

PERSONNEL SOURCES

ORS has cultivated a relationship with two area colleges that offer graduate training in Rehabilitation Counseling: Assumption College in Worcester, MA and Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. There are approximately 169 students enrolled in the graduate programs (99 at Assumption College, 70 at Salve Regina University) with 37 expected to graduate in May 2011 from these programs.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	Assumption College	99	0	0	23
2	Salve Regina University	70	0	0	14
3		0	0	0	0
4					
5					

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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, Assumption College and Salve Regina University are offering a Master's level program through a combination of distance learning and campus-based courses.

ORS continues to provide both practicum and internship opportunities for local graduate students. This program has not been as active this year because of our recent hires. During FFY2010 ORS had three graduate students from Salve Regina University completing their practicum and internship assignments (2 practicum and 1 internship).

The ORS Training Coordinator is a member of the Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE) Advisory Committee at Assumption College which assists with expanding training options for staff.

The ORS Administrator serves on the Advisory Board for the Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate Program at Salve Regina University which enhances the relationship with ORS and identifies current rehabilitation trends.

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 (RIRA). The Training Coordinator is the current Past President of the Rhode Island Rehabilitation Association.

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 recruited and retained a number of qualified individuals with disabilities (21 - visual impairments, Deafness, psychiatric/ emotional, physical disabilities, etc) and minority backgrounds (8 - bi-lingual case aides and counselors).

ORS actively recruits graduate students with disabilities and minority backgrounds for the practicum and internship program. ORS has had 19 graduate students for practicum/internships over the past few years, of which 16 were hired as Counselors, all with Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling.

ORS will continue to explore long-term strategies in FFY2012 for recruitment of personnel from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Personnel Standards

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, 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; and
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, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- 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;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

1. ADEQUATELY PREPARED AND TRAINED STAFF

Although Rhode Island does not have a state approved or recognized certification, licensure, or registration requirements for Rehabilitation Counselors, Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services has elected to base its minimum personnel standards for recruitment of counselors on the requirement of a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. ORS will continue to monitor any state efforts for licensure of Rehabilitation Counselors. This Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling requirement exceeds the national CRC requirements.

2. NEW PERSONNEL

All new personnel 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, of which 16 completed practicum/internships with ORS.

ORS has worked aggressively with the institutions of higher education to recruit qualified individuals to fill vacancies.

ORS expects that it will be able to continue to hire individuals who meet the standard.

ORS will continue to fill all fiscal and support staff vacancies with individuals who meet state requirements for education and experience.

3. EXISTING PERSONNEL

Since December 2009, all ORS counselors meet the standard (100% compliance). All field VR Supervisors and Administrators meet the CSPD standard.

ORS continues to dedicate financial and Training Coordinator time to support the CSPD plan.

ORS encourages training and hiring of staff from minority backgrounds and staff with disabilities.

All existing fiscal and support staff meet or exceed state requirements for education and experience.

Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

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; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ORS recognizes the importance of ensuring that its staff has the necessary skills and abilities to provide quality services in a professional and timely manner.

The Training Coordinator conducted a needs assessment of personnel training needs between December, 2010 and February, 2011. Examples of areas identified for training included: Case and Time Management, Transferable Skills & Labor Market Information, Specific Populations, Leadership, Professional Conduct, Stress Management, Access to Recovery (ATR) and Substance Abuse, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), On-the-Job Training (OJTs), Tax Incentives, Self Employment, Transition, Diversity, How to Deal with Unmotivated/Difficult Clients, Mediations, Hearings and Autism/Aspergers along the Persuasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) spectrum.

The needs assessment was analyzed for priorities and a training schedule is being planned and will be implemented.

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, issues related to the July 2008 regulations of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA), specifically the Partnership Plus Program, the Timely Progress Reviews, and overall best practices.

In order to retain qualified staff and in anticipation of additional retirement plans, ORS has and will continue to offer leadership development training, succession planning and capacity building opportunities to interested staff, with a specific focus on the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II's. Management staff has integrated interested personnel

in participating in specialized program operations and implementations including assistive technology, transition, training, CRP, quality assurance and strategic planning. This is of particular importance, given the number of personnel who have retired, those that could retire in the near future, and the uniqueness of some positions. However, at the same time, with 16 new counselors out of 41 with less than 2 years of experience on the job, it is also a time to focus on basic trainings and best practices. ORS believes that in many ways the next 3-5 year time period is a time of transition to help new counselors mature in their roles.

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston has been awarded the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) grant and will be utilized to provide state-of-the-art training programs for all counselor and supervisory staff at ORS. Assumption College was also awarded the TACE grant in September 2010 and will work in conjunction with ICI to provide these trainings. ORS is currently working with the TACE representative and ORS field supervisors to prioritize upcoming trainings.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in 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.

COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Interpreters and Communication Access in Real Time (CART) reporters are available for staff to communicate with diverse customer populations, for staff trainings and supervision. ORS now has four Video Relay stations to enable communication in ASL between staff who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, their colleagues, and customers.

Most staff trainings are videotaped and available in a video library on the public directory for new staff and for current staff for refresher opportunities. These training videos can also be a resource for any personnel Corrective Action Plan.

The Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist, who manages the ORS and the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (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.

The Marketing Committee is developing an orientation video that includes information about ORS and employment opportunities that will be used to convey a consistent message about ORS at the various outreach venues.

The ORS Cultural Diversity Committee has renewed its commitment to raise cultural competency of personnel and ensure that agency resources are accessible to culturally diverse populations.

Access to ORS information and services is provided through use of a Language Line, interpreters from a variety of resources, bilingual staff.

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

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

ORS relies on supervisory observations, quality assurance reviews and self-identified training needs to enhance professional development.

The annual needs assessment conducted by the training coordinator elicits input from counselors, supervisors, support staff and administrators regarding training needs.

If a Corrective Action Plan around personnel performance is necessary, the Corrective Action Plan would be in compliance with the CSPD, ORS policy & procedures, and union regulations.

ORS will implement performance evaluations after probationary period of staff interns and practicum students as well as requesting evaluations of ORS from the students.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Pursuant to the Act, ORS offers to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) the opportunity to review and comment on the CSPD.

ORS will include the comments in the FFY2012 Attachment 4.2(c) update.

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

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 that the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, complete a Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) at three-year increments. The CNA is intended to identify the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those in need of Supported Employment, minorities with significant disabilities, underserved individuals, and individuals with disabilities served by other components of the workforce development network. In addition, the CNA is intended to identify the need to develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). ORS views the CNA as an evolving process that incorporates information from several diverse sources rather than from any one event or data source.

During FFY2011, ORS addressed the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment using several resources including:

- Agency strategic planning
- Annual personnel needs assessments
- Community Rehabilitation Provider Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey
- Compliance with Rehabilitation Services Administrations' Standards & Performance Indicators
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Environmental Scan of data including: FFY2009 RSA Annual Agency Review, Internal MIS reports, 2009 Information Works: Measuring Rhode Island Schools, 2010 Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training (DLT) and Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics, Training and American Community Survey
- Implementation of the ORS 107 Monitoring Report
- Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disability Public Forums
- VR Counselor Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) seeks to involve agency staff in identifying the challenges and solutions needed to more effectively assist all individuals with significant disabilities to select, prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Information for strategic planning was gathered through 2011 CNA activities, meetings with the seven field services regions, FFY2011 agency work plans and Quality Improvement Activities. ORS will continue to address the concerns raised in the RSA 107 Monitoring Report. Therefore, the strategic planning objectives have been modified in the following way:

- Outreach to underserved and unserved disability and minority populations through developing and maintaining liaison relationships with referral sources
- Emphasize marketing strategies that showcase customer movement toward increased self-sufficiency, highlight customer capabilities, target underserved and unserved disability and minority populations and address the needs of specific businesses
- Maintain the Marketing Committee, which was re-implemented in FFY2010
- Encourage assessment activities as a pre-cursor to development of an employment plan, thus promoting informed choice, self-determination, job retention and the value of life-long learning
- Educate field staff to the benefits of job shadowing, internships, volunteerism, skill assessments, situational assessments, and utilization of SOC, O'NET and DLT Job Seeker Labor Market sites
- Coordinate joint training opportunities for CRP and ORS personnel
- Maximize our collaboration with the netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers, Department of Health outreach initiatives, and the business community

ANNUAL PERSONNEL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The Training Coordinator of ORS conducts an annual training needs assessment. From December 2010 to February 2011, information elicited from staff is used to establish a list of training topics and concerns. This year along with the VR Counselor CNA survey, staff was asked to identify their top two areas of training needs. Example of areas identified for training include: Case and Time Management, Transferable Skills & Labor Market Information, Specific Populations, Leadership, Professional Conduct, Stress Management, Access to Recovery (ATR) and Substance Abuse, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), On-the-Job Training(OJT), Tax Incentives, Self Employment, Transition, Diversity, How to Deal with Unmotivated/Difficult Clients, Mediations, Hearing and Autism/Aspergers along the Persuasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) spectrum. A training schedule is being developed based upon the identified needs and will be implemented throughout the year. ORS has many new counselors (16 out of 41) who have been on the job 3 or less years. ORS will also be providing some specialized training to Management staff and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor II's in the areas of clinical supervision and leadership skills. In addition, ORS works with TACE and ICI to provide training opportunities for new and existing personnel. These trainings provide opportunities for all staff to improve on their professional practices. The agency continues to maintain a relationship with two colleges and one on line distance program that offer MA programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. An adequate supply of qualified Rehabilitation Counselors, supervisory, administrative, and fiscal and support personnel are essential to provide quality rehabilitation services to customers of ORS.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROVIDER (CRP) COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

During the fall of 2010, ORS and the RI State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted a needs assessment survey. The survey disseminated to CRPs and netWORKri One-Stop Center Managers sought to identify the following:

1. Services received by people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment
2. Availability of services throughout the state
3. Obstacles customers confront in attempting to work
4. Individuals with disabilities who are underserved

The survey distributed to 67 providers resulted in a 51% return rate. Several significant findings were reflected by the results:

- Fear of losing SSI and SSDI, medical benefits and other subsidies, along with cost of transportation ranked as the top three issues preventing the obtaining of employment.
- The top three issues preventing individuals from maintaining employment include individual's social skills, availability/cost of transportation and individual's skills/job match.
- Organizations felt unable to meet customer's needs for benefits counseling, transportation, training and education support, travel training, case management, and retention supports both on and off site.

CRPs indicated that ORS could assist them with providing services more effectively: 1.) Provide them with more information on ORS services, 2.) Enhance access to/improve communication with counselor(s), 3.) Streamline paperwork and 4.) Increase awareness of other provider resources.

COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

For FFY 2010 the Office of Rehabilitation Services continued to meet or exceed all the Standards, however, did not meet Performance Indicators 1.1 employment rate and 1.2 the rehabilitation rate as dictated by Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. With the goal of maintaining the highest quality of services to customers, the Strategic Planning Supervisor will continue to monitor the agency's compliance with all Standard and Indicators on a monthly basis with findings being reported to administration, supervisory personnel and staff.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

As part of the FFY2009 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, the Strategic Planning Supervisor, with input from the SRC State Plan/Policy/Quality Assurance Sub-committee, designed a customer satisfaction survey to identify customers' experiences with ORS.

The survey, designed as an ongoing tool to be distributed at set intervals, provides longitudinal data regarding customer satisfaction. In FFY2010 there was a 18% response rate to the 561 Customer Satisfaction Surveys sent to customers closed successfully and a 11.03% response rate to 789 surveys sent to customers closed unsuccessfully status post receipt of services.

The following conclusions were formulated based on the results of the surveys.

Successful closures:

- Increase customer understanding of self-sufficiency and financial independence as a benefit to working with ORS
- Educate customers on progressive learning, training resources and on-the-job training to enable job keeping and/or advancement
- Provide benefits counseling about Social Security, Ticket to Work and other work incentives
- Ensure customers' understanding of informed choice in obtaining employment that matches their stated goals and interest

Unsuccessful closures:

- Ensure timely response to receipt of an application, scheduled opportunities to meet and monitor customer movement toward objectives with increased contact at time of plan implementation
- Inform customers about the VR process and services that support making an informed decision about goals and needs prior to IPE development
- Educate customers about assistive technology and options for accessing these assessment and technology resources if applicable
- Analyze findings in order to determine the variables that prevent customers from maintaining engagement and moving toward employment

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The CNA included information from a variety of sources: Agency MIS data, RSA data, RI Department of Labor & Training (DLT) and Department of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Survey, 2009 Information Works: Measuring Rhode Island Schools for Change. The sources indicated the following:

- While ORS' transition outcomes are above the national average, the number of Rhode Islanders who are not obtaining a high school degree/equivalency is above the national average and is the highest in New England. This educational disparity will present a challenge in the coming years as it is projected that 12% of the jobs will require some level of vocational training.
- Individuals living in poverty in RI are more likely to have a disability and to be unemployed/under employed.
- Veterans Employment and Training Services information reflects that RI is third from the bottom in the number of disabled veterans entering employment, maintaining employment and in average earnings.
- Analysis of RSA statistics for average hours worked per week highlights that ORS is below the national average for all disability categories and below its counterparts for average hourly wages in servicing communicative disorders and mental and emotional disorders.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORS 107 MONITORING REPORT

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) conducted an extensive review of ORS between Fall 2006 and Summer 2007. This review process included program performance statistics, on-site and telephone discussions with stakeholders, two on-site visits and multiple discussions with members of the SRC. RSA found several strengths in the program: leadership and dedicated staff; collaboration with key partners; statewide presence at the netWORKri One-Stop Centers; and statewide cooperative partnerships with all school districts and transition services to youth.

For FFY 2012 ORS will continue to focus on the following areas identified in the monitoring report as programmatic goals:

- Continue implementation of a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement Plan
- Decrease homemaker outcomes
- Improve the quality of employment outcomes
- Improve the rehabilitation rate for transitioning youth

RHODE ISLAND GOVERNORS COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES PUBLIC FORUMS

The Office of Rehabilitation Services participates annually in the Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD) Public Forums. In 2010, staff from ORS participated in the six forums held throughout the state. The forums allow individuals with disabilities, family members, advocates and providers to present concerns about any of the services/resources for individuals with disabilities. The forums and subsequent public document by the GCD provides ORS with information on themes relevant to employment services for individuals with disabilities.

Results of the 2010 forums indicated themes in the areas of accessibility, employment, education, health care, housing and transportation. A common concern throughout was the affect of the Rhode Island economy on services to individuals with disabilities.

Specific comments about employment issues indicated the following:

1. Individuals need assistance in maximizing their abilities, movement toward self-sufficiency and awareness of assistive technology
2. An improved awareness of and access to (central location) employment-related resources such as skills training, benefits counseling, Medicaid Buy In, etc. is needed.
3. Increase availability of specific disability-related educational opportunities for providers of employment services.
4. Address employer perception/stigma issues related to disabilities and ability to work.

VR COUNSELOR COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

ORS implemented a VR Counselor survey in the fall of 2010 that sought staff perceptions on the needs of VR customers, barriers to services and suggestions for improvement to VR services. Questions focused on the following areas: needs of the most significantly and significantly disabled, underserved and unserved populations, need for further development of CRP's, as well as use of the DLT netWORKri One-Stop system to assist customers with disabilities to maintain and/or enter employment. Forty-eight surveys distributed resulted in a 54.17% return rate.

Findings reflected the following

Needs of individuals with most significant/significant disabilities:

- Develop services based on regional needs for specific populations throughout the state
- Improve access to vendors and interpreters who have technical competence, as well as awareness of cultural issues and distinctions
- Increase the capacity of CRPs who work with individuals with Development Disabilities to conduct vocational evaluations and situation assessments that focus on meaningful integrated employment
- Enhance placement services for individuals completing short-term training programs
- Educate employers about the use of tax credits, hiring incentives, OJT, internships and services of ORS
- Establish a standard for CRP services that provides consistent quality services through joint training with ORS staff and CRP vendors
- Develop service options that incorporate work place social skills and daily time management

Rehabilitation Needs of Minorities:

- Enrich the cultural competence of ORS staff and CRPs to specific minority populations within the state
- Educate staff on availability of internal and external resources such as agency forms in different languages, the Language Line, bi-lingual co-workers, interpreting resources and Cultural Diversity Committee
- Improve quality of Vocational Evaluation, Situational Assessment and Work Readiness specific to minority needs with the CRP network
- Incorporate interpretation and communication needs into the IPE

Underserved and Unserved Populations:

- Engage Hispanic, Southeast Asian, Cambodian, African American and Portuguese communities through outreach and marketing strategies
- Build capacity to transition age youth with physical, learning and developmental disabilities with a 504-education plan
- Improve outreach to Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, veterans, individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and individuals with disabilities who are employed

Need to further develop established and or establish new CRPs:

- Develop CRPs to address the needs within specific geographic areas, establish new CRPs, as needed, to address unmet needs, and adjust the CRPs network to address the changing needs of the customers and labor market
- Improve quality, consistency and accountability of services provided to customers in Vocational Evaluations, Situational Assessments and Job Development
- Examine the Supported Employment process and outcomes to ensure integration, minimum wage, and increased proficiency
- Utilize and maximize ORS collaboration with netWORKri One-Stop Centers

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED AND COSTS OF SERVICES

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

For FFY2010 there were 2,695 new applicants, and 2,064 individuals were deemed eligible. There were a total number of 1,486 individuals who developed their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and 568 individuals who obtained successful employment outcomes.

For FFY2011, ORS has a goal of 2,490 new applicants, and expects 2,182 individuals to become eligible. ORS anticipates that 1,497 new Individualized Plans for Employment will be developed and 757 successful outcomes achieved.

For FFY2012, ORS projects 2,518 new applicants, with 2,125 individuals to become eligible for ORS services. ORS anticipates that 1,478 individuals will develop Individualized Plans for Employment and projects 600 successful outcomes.

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

In FFY2012, the projected number of clients to be served under an IPE is 4,715. 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 FFY2012, ORS is expected to serve:

Category #1 (most significant): 4,243 (Title I - 90%; Title VI - 10%)

Category #2 (significant): 472 (Title I - 100%; Title VI - 0%)

III. COST OF SERVICES FOR PROJECTED TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS TO BE

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
OOS Category I - Title I	Title I	\$12,999,876	3,819	\$3,404
OOS Category I - Title VI	Title VI	\$1,443,296	424	\$3,404
OOS Category II - Title I	Title I	\$1,910,184	472	\$4,047
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				—
				—
				—
Totals		\$16,353,356	4,715	\$3,468

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

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services' (ORS) goals and priorities, policies, and planning activities are jointly agreed upon by the state agency and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). These goals are generated from the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), compliance with federal Standards and Performance Indicators, monitoring reviews, quality improvement findings and feedback from customers, advocates and other stakeholders. Inherent in these goals is a belief that ORS will assist individuals with significant disabilities to move toward achievement of vocational goals and increased self-sufficiency.

ORS goals for FFY2012 are as follows:

GOAL #1: INCREASE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

In order to increase quality employment outcomes, ORS will address several specific target areas:

- Develop and implement an annual Continuous Quality Improvement Plan that provides timely information for staff, administration and stakeholders about agency accomplishment of State Plan goals, strategic planning and quality improvement efforts
- Collaborate with the employer network , federal employment opportunities and Workforce Investment Boards to further identify labor market trends, employer needs and skills needed in order to develop

internships, on-the-job training opportunities, marketing materials, and training needs that lead to employment outcomes

- Educate customers, adults and youth, to the importance of labor market information, training options, self-advocacy, work experience, references, resume building, training and educational opportunities that increase the likelihood of a quality employment outcome

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (refer to Attachment 4.11(c)(4))

GOAL #1A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE QUALITY OUTCOMES

Meet Standard One of increasing employment successful closures annually, and all indicators, including:

- Increase average competitive wage (Indicator 1.5) in FFY2012 from the baseline FFY2007 wage of \$10.55. In FFY2010, the average competitive wage was \$11.75. This represents an increase from the FFY2009 average competitive wage of \$10.57, and FFY2008 average competitive wage of \$10.70
- Increase rehabilitation rate (Indicator 1.2) in FFY2012 from the baseline FFY2007 rate of 59.89%. In FFY2010, the rehabilitation rate was 40.74 %, FFY 2009 the rate was 62.74% and in FFY2008 the rehabilitation rate was 62.81%
- Increase number of customers in FFY2012 with successful employment outcomes after participation in post-secondary training or education from the baseline FFY2009 rate of 289 or 38%. In FFY2010, 233 or 41% successful employed customers participated in post-secondary training or education
- Decrease homemaker outcomes in FFY2012 from the baseline FFY2007 rate of 6.18%. The number of homemaker outcomes for FFY2010 decreased to 1.90%, which represented a continued decrease from FFY2009 rate of 3.18% and FFY2008 rate of 3.60%
- Develop longitudinal data tool to measure impact of post-secondary training and education on employment outcomes and earnings by FFY2012
- Compare the number of vocational evaluations provided in 2008 to successful employment outcomes of transition students by FFY2012

GOAL #2: INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS IN 2012

- Utilize and monitor outcomes ratio for minority populations, which provide information on current service levels, the need for expanded or new CRP services, and potential emerging minority populations
- Increase the number of customers active with ORS, who obtain an employment outcome and identify themselves as Southeast Asian or African American
- Determine the need and develop agency materials in alternative languages such as Portuguese and Southeast Asian
- Increase the number of individuals with physical disabilities served by ORS who obtain an employment outcome

GOAL #2A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS IN 2011

- Monitor compliance with Standard & Performance Indicator 2.1 on a quarterly basis

- Identify service needs for minority populations through Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Develop additional CRP services to meet those needs identified in Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Increase the number of CRPs that have the capability to provide employment services for minority populations from 14 to 15
- Increase CRPs' agility in responding to changing needs of customers
- Monitor quality and outcomes of minority-oriented CRPs, including those that offer training and/or job development and placement on a quarterly basis

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

Justification for order of selection

ORDER OF SELECTION

The Office of Rehabilitation Services has lost positions due to retirements, budget constraints, and workforce reductions; therefore, the current Order of Selection is expected to continue from FFY2012 through FFY2013, thereby allowing the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) to serve all eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities as designated under OOS Category 1. In order to meet the need for rehabilitation services and to provide high-quality employment outcomes, ORS will continue to monitor the current priority classification within the Order of Selection, and adjust as warranted. All customers 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

The Order of Selection does not discriminate against any person by type of disability, economic status, race, color, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, age, religion, sex or protected class.

Description of Priority categories

The Code of 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."

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

ORS assures that its Order of Selection (OOS) policy gives first priority to individuals in Category 1 with the most significant disabilities. Services are delivered within a comprehensive, coordinated program that is designed to assist these individuals to prepare for and engage in gainful employment in an integrated setting.

ORS notifies all individuals that do not meet the current Order of Selection and provides them with 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.

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved

Projections for numbers to be served in FFY2012 are based on recent performance:

Order of Selection (OOS) Category 1 = 4243

Order of Selection (OOS) Category 2 = 472

The goal for all the customers 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 (IPE) 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 length of time an individual is active with ORS is difficult as the necessary services, duration and outcome is individualized to the needs of each customer.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services	Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1	4,243	475	381	29	\$14,443,172
2	472	125	91	26	\$1,910,184
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

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

Specify 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.

Title VI, Part B continues to provide \$312,984 of federal funding annually. ORS uses these funds to assist the most significantly disabled populations through carefully crafted, individually-planned supported employment services. These services are provided through a partnership between the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) and a number of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) on a fee-for-service basis.

In FFY2010, 228 individuals received multiple types of supported employment services through 35 CRP agencies. This is a decrease of 49 consumers from FFY2009 in which 277 individuals received multiple types of supported employment services.

GOAL #1: INCREASE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Support CRP training opportunities to better prepare providers for the renewed focus on quality integrated competitive employment outcomes, with increased wages and increased number of hours worked per week
- Increase opportunities for community-based, integrated settings for employment at competitive wages, through emphasis being initiated during the assessment phase
- Utilize the Regional TACE center to provide a series of joint ORS and CRP training on topics related to the provision of assessments and vocational services
- Provide on-going training to ORS counselors regarding the supported employment model and process
- Assess training needs of CRPs and facilitate training through a number of resources: a contract with the Sherlock Center's Supported Employment (SE) Training Program, the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (TACE), and sponsorship of trainings at ORS
- Outreach to Administration and Management staff of agencies that are not presently ORS vendor agencies on the benefits of ORS involvement
- Address ORS staff and vendor training needs via the CRP Supervisor and CSPD Training Supervisor
- Utilize the CRP/ORS Supported Employment Developmental Disability Council and the Supported Employment Behavioral Health Council as a resource to examine best practices for supported employment
- Initiate and participate in bi-annual joint ORS, Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Behavioral Health Services meetings
- Increase successful supported employment outcomes
- Participate in training of Division of Behavioral Health and Division of Developmental Disabilities agency staff in case management and job development certification program

GOAL #1A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE QUALITY OUTCOMES FOR CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Meet Standard 1.1 of increasing successful closures annually, and all indicators, including:

- Increase in the number of supported employment successful closures based on FFY2008 data of 88. In FFY2009, the number of supported employment successful closures decreased to 52. During FFY2010, there were 49 supported employment successful closures.
- Evaluate outcome-based Supported Employment model to examine impact on quality outcomes, gaps in service, and implementation/use of this model by CRPs through Behavior Health and Developmental Disabilities supported employment tracking system

GOAL #2: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITIES WHO ARE CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Develop partnerships and increase the number of supported employment providers who have experience with minority populations
- Encourage existing vendors to expand services to minority populations
- Monitor agency performance on Standard 2.1 which is the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities
- Utilize bi-lingual case aides (2) to ensure agency materials are in Spanish and other alternate formats
- Provide in-service training with CRPs on cultural sensitivity and cultural competence, including instruction on the use of interpreters and the Language Line
- Incorporate training for CRPs into monthly DD and BH Supported Employment Council Meetings and Regional TACE Center trainings in response to agencies CNA responses, customer preferences, informed choice, and changing labor market needs

GOAL #2A: EVALUATION OF EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITIES WHO ARE CUSTOMERS OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Increase the number of vendors with the capacity to provide Supported Employment services to minorities who are the most significantly disabled from FFY2009/FFY2010 baselines in which 14 out of 35 vendors (41%) provided Supported Employment services to minorities
- Using FFY2009 as a baseline year, 57 (21%) of the 277 clients receiving Supported Employment services were minorities. In FFY 2010, 78 clients out of 228 (34%) were minorities.
- Efforts will continue to be made by ORS to recognize and meet the needs of the minority population
- Meet or exceed Standard 2.1 service rate of .80, which is the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA.)

- Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process.
- Describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- Identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs, if applicable.
- Describe strategies to improve the performance with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.
- Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:
 - achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
 - support innovation and expansion activities; and
 - 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.

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services' (ORS) strategies to achieve goals for FFY2012 are as follows:

INCREASE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

In order to increase quality employment outcomes, ORS will address several specific target areas:

- Implement and refine a system for monitoring, evaluating and providing timely information for staff and administration about ORS' movement toward accomplishment of goals identified in the State Plan
- Monitor agency's movement toward meeting Standards and Performance Indicators
- Implement new MIS system with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for analysis and use of program data
- Update Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQI) on an annual basis, ensuring inclusion of data from the quarterly reviews of the CQI plan, activities, CNA, and State Plan goals
- Provide staff training to enhance an understanding of the role of Continuous Quality Improvement in relationship to quality outcomes

- Collaborate with the business community, federal employment resources, National Employment Team (NET), Chamber of Commerces, Woman's Business Enterprise, Minority Business Enterprise trade organizations, and Workforce Investment Boards
- Identify labor market trends and business needs
- Develop training, internships, and on-the-job training that address business needs and lead to employment outcomes
- Participate on the two existing Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) covering Providence/Cranston and Greater RI areas
- Develop marketing materials that showcase customer employment successes in order to cultivate business awareness and interest in ORS as a workforce solution for employment needs
- Educate employers on assistive technology resources such as the Assistive Technology Access Partnership Program (ATAP)
- Cultivate development of business partnerships through membership on SRC Employment Sub-Committee and the 35 member Business Advisory Council
- Analyze Supported Employment model(s) of the agency to determine effectiveness in serving increased numbers of customers in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment in integrated settings
- Coordinate with community mental health centers and developmental disability organizations to increase the number of customers obtaining and maintaining competitive employment
- Provide Supported Employment CRP providers with best practice training, professional development through ongoing communication, and the Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Supported Employment Council Meetings
- Promote the viability of self employment through the ORS Self Employment Committee and staff liaisons to agencies working with customers toward self-employment goals
- Educate customers, adult and youth, to the importance of labor market information (LMI), training options, self-advocacy, work experience, references, volunteering, on-the-job training, resume building, training and educational opportunities that increase the likelihood of a quality employment outcome
- Provide access to information about work incentives, Ticket to Work, and other benefits to customers and their families, CRPs and ORS staff in order to support informed choice and employment
- Incorporate access to assistive technology, evaluations, mobility assessment and training, work incentive information, and self-advocacy skills as core services for youth with disabilities
- Provide stipend in individualized summer work experiences for youth across disability areas as exposure to world of work
- Encourage youth participation in statewide Transition activities such as "Dare to Dream", College Forums, Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), annual disability forums, Way to Go Rhode Island and netWORKri Youth Centers
- Ensure that travel competency and transportation issues are addressed early in the rehabilitation process and incorporated into IPE
- Increase staff, CRPs, employers and customers' knowledge about accommodations, ergonomics, best practices and assistive technology resources

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (refer to Attachment 4.11(c)(4))

INCREASE THE SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME RATIOS FOR MINORITY AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS IN 2012

- Utilize and monitor outcome ratios for minority populations which provide information on current service levels, the need for expanded or new CRP services, and potential emerging minority populations
- Outreach to colleges, high schools, Rhode Island's Youth Councils and Shared Youth Vision in order to identify and engage youth with physical disabilities and/or from underserved cultural backgrounds
- Monitor agency performance on Standard 2.1, Minority Ratio to Non-Minority Service Rate Ratio, by Strategic Planning Supervisor and Cultural Diversity Committee
- Review and analyze needs of minority and underserved populations in order to increase capacity and expand CRP network ability to competently provide services that result in increased quality employment outcomes
- Ensure all agency materials, including those found on the ORS website and available for informational sessions, are provided in Spanish or other languages as needed
- Develop a partnership with SRC members as a resource in planning and development of services to minority and underserved populations
- Provide in-service training on cultural sensitivity and competence, including instruction on use of interpreters and the Language Line based on recommendations of the ORS Cultural Diversity Committee

STATE STRATEGIES FOR TITLE 1 FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I & E) FOR FFY2012

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services' (ORS) Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funds and program development strategies will be implemented during FFY2012 in the following areas based on the needs identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, ORS' Goals and Priorities, and ORS' commitment to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities and underserved population, while ensuring equal access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment services:

- Develop an array of marketing materials (in English, Spanish, other languages, and alternate formats): table top displays, brochures, pamphlets, electronic formats and flyers to market ORS employment services to businesses, referral sources, potential customers and their families
- Sponsor an Employer Honor Roll using I&E funds to acknowledge businesses who provided employment and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) of supported employment services, Division of Behavioral Health, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities in FFY2012 to develop a system of services that provides increased options and choices to customers about supported, integrated, competitive employment options
- Maintain annual development of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan that evaluates agency services and outcomes in order to meet the goals and objectives of the State Plan
- Provide technical assistance, proposal review, advocacy and active participation as a member of Rhode Island's two Workforce Investment Boards, Youth Councils and Youth Centers
- Advocate strategies for the inclusion of youth with disabilities in the Governor's Workforce Investment initiatives
- Maintain ORS presence at each of the netWORKri sites and educate counselors about One-Stop Youth Centers as additional customer resource
- Function as an instructor in the Certified Case Management Training Program of the Community Mental Health Centers by educating participants to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program as an employment resource
- Increase linkages between the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) resources, existing rehabilitation technology contractors, and ORS counselors, to ensure that assistive technology is incorporated into customer services on a statewide basis throughout each stage of the rehabilitation process

- Assess and provide rehabilitation services to RI Works and Access to Recovery (ATR) participants within the parameters of the Agency Mission and eligibility criteria
- Provide joint services between Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Social Service Program and the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program to ensure that youth with visual impairments have a smooth transition towards employment
- Assist CRPs in providing quality services to ORS customers, which is critical to ensure customer satisfaction, informed choice, and a successful quality employment outcome
- Cultivate liaison relationships with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP's) who have expertise in serving minority populations to ensure access to services and training programs
- Ensure access to ORS information and services through use of biligual staff, Language Line, interpreters from a variety of resources, as well as producing materials in languages other than English
- Cultivate recruitment of CRPs who have a presence in targeted minority populations such as Progreso Latino, South East Asian Economic Development, Native American communities, Urban League, and Bilingual psychologist and therapists
- Foster minority representation on the SRC with the recruitment of additional representation from the Latino, Native American, and under-represented populations
- Develop presentations about ORS for diverse audiences
- Provide general information sessions about benefits and Social Security benefits (Work Incentives Planning & Advocacy Program) in Spanish and other languages
- Place marketing materials about ORS in community-based locations frequented by large numbers of individuals

OVERCOME BARRIERS RELATED TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

- Address equal access issues by ensuring that the program is responsive to cultural and language diversity issues of current and future customers
- Encourage cultural competence among the CRP network as well as engaging our CRP partners to provide accessible services
- Ensure training programs and CRP services are gender neutral and available to all qualified customers regardless of age, race, and national origin
- Support new and existing CRPs to provide universal access to services
- Recruit additional resources to expand service options for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth
- Address the employment needs of elder-disabled customers through the Department of Elderly Affairs, netWORKri, Senior Community Service Employment Program and Community Action Senior Employment Program, and other applicable programs
- Support employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities within the Developmental Disabilities (DD) community through a series of attitudinal changes, resource shifts, and training strategies that make employment in integrated settings a reality for individuals with significant disabilities
- Develop Continuous Quality Improvement activities that promote quality programming and services
- Utilize I&E funds to support the projects of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to include orienting and training new members on the SRC
- Develop the State Plan by the SRC and ORS, as well as the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, through I&E funds
- Implement usage of new computer system that will integrate case management, MIS, and billing functions

Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

1. Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the FY 2010 Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

GOAL #1 TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

BENEFIT AND WORK INCENTIVES

- Offered ten Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE) general information sessions at netWORKri locations as well as outreached to another 38 locations
- Provided staff training on the Ticket to Work program with emphasis on the July 2008 regulations, Partnership Plus opportunity and the timely progress provisions
- Provided Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) services to 1,474 SSI/SSDI recipients of which 622 individuals received benefits counseling and ongoing support and 852 received information regarding SSA work incentives
- Drafted 2011 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on findings from prior year
- Implemented a system for monitoring, evaluating and providing timely information for staff and administration about the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) movement toward accomplishing goals identified in the State Plan
- Utilized data from the current MIS system to monitor standards and indicators
- Initiated implementation of new MIS system with a goal of full implementation for FFY2012
- Attended through RSA sponsorship the 3rd Annual Summit on VR Program Evaluation “Pathways to Performance: Making a Difference through Program Evaluation”
- Continued integration of monitoring, evaluation and provision of timely information to Administration and staff relevant to agency goals and objectives
- Provided updates on Continuous Quality Improvement activities to SRC and SRC CQI State Plan Subcommittee
- Provided training on the role of Continuous Quality Improvement in relationship to quality outcomes through new Counselor Orientation, Management Meetings and ongoing CQI activities

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

- Co-sponsored three RI Business Leadership Network trainings: Assistive Technological Devices and/or Equipment, Road to Compliance (dos and don'ts of interviewing), and Changes to ADA
- Provided technical assistance to all employers requesting support with ensuring their websites are accessible to individuals who use assistive technology
- Developed new business recruitment and hiring partnerships with three private industries and several federal agencies
- Developed internship opportunities for ORS customers which promoted skill development, work experience as well as current references

- Expanded the Business Advisory Council to 40 employers in FFY2010
- Provided four 3-day, 9-hour interviewing workshops to 37 customers of which 24% have obtained employment
- Used ARRA funds to increase opportunities for job development through fee-for-service arrangements
- Participated on Youth Councils and the Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Boards that focused on training for occupations identified by labor market trends
- Reviewed two grant proposals for Youth and Contextual Learning
- Participated in the RIWorks First Initiative Summits
- Increased ORS' visibility as a workforce resource with solutions through attending the Providence Chamber of Commerce Business Expo and the Central Chamber of Commerce Business Expo
- Attended a three-day National Employment Conference, which enabled development of new contacts and new strategies and techniques that enhanced ORS' marketing to the RI business community as a solution to hiring a qualified diverse workforce

POST-SECONDARY SERVICES

- Maintained relationship with the three state colleges and educational institutions in Rhode Island
- Targeted ORS liaison relationships with secondary institutions were inhibited due to staff vacancies
- Implemented a team approach between Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Vocational Rehabilitation to facilitate referrals and increase services to transition-age youth with visual impairments

TRANSITION SERVICES

- Collaborated with Regional Transition Coordinators about Transition services available at high schools statewide
- Participated in area Transition nights, teacher trainings, local Transition Advisory Committee meetings, and parent information forums statewide
- Collaborated with RI Workforce Development Shared Youth Vision initiative to assist the state's most needy youth in receiving necessary services to transition into school and the workforce
- Established FFY2012 goals and objectives for quality outcomes and increasing transition outcomes based on the results of the RSA monitoring in FFY2007
- Utilized ARRA funds to provide a Summer Work Exploration and Experience Program (SWEET) for 250 transition-age youth
- Promoted career exploration through work experiences, internships, and mentoring opportunities
- Participated in and supported participation of customers in Youth Leadership initiatives
- Funded work prep readiness activities at four (4) area transition academies
- Coordinated across-agency training event between RI Department of Education (RIDE), ORS, Youth Centers and School-to-Career Program

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

- Reinforced the importance of addressing transportation issues early in the rehabilitation process by adding additional travel training vendors and incorporating transportation issues into the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) process
- Incorporated transportation assessment and travel training into the Summer Work Experience and Exploration Program(s) (SWEET)

- Advocated for expansion of statewide public transportation routes and paratransit to increase services and flexible schedules to enhance customer employment
- Explored strategies to overcome transportation barriers in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council Transportation Subcommittee
- Participated in statewide transportation advocacy groups which specifically address the needs of the disability community: RIPTA Accessibility Transportation Advisory Committee and SRC Transportation Sub-Committee

TRAINING

- Provided "Work Try Outs" resulting in employment for our customers
- Developed fact sheet on RI Works and conducted trainings for DHS staff
- Provided Interviewing Skill Workshops to 37 consumers in order to increase their ability to move toward self-sufficiency by being an active participant in their job search
- Provided training on the online application process, now considered the business standard
- Increased training options by adding 8 new training programs that reflect current labor market trends and customer interest
- Developed fact sheets about services and provided 4 trainings to CRPs on Summer Work Experience & Exploration Program, Job Development, Placement & Retention and Work Incentives
- Presented to Department of Corrections Discharge Planners and substance abuse providers on ORS services and relationship to "Access to Recovery" services
- Co-sponsored a New England Regional AT Conference with 300+ attendees and 50+ vendors

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

- Developed and built strong relationships with community-based agencies and training programs including the area Tribal VR Program in order to provide quality employment outcomes for Native Americans
- Ensured equal access by minority communities to ORS services through input from the Cultural Diversity Committee and monitoring of ORS compliance with Standard #2.1
- Increased the percentage of successfully employed minority and/or underserved populations: FFY2007 = 15% of 745, FFY2008 = 23% of 750, FFY2009 = 26.19% of 756 and FFY2010 = 26.63% of 568
- Hired additional staff to increase the agency's capacity to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking consumers and other minority and underserved populations
- Assigned several rehabilitation counselors and 2 bilingual case aides to improve capacity to serve minority population, improve service delivery to Spanish-speaking consumers, and assist ORS staff with translation and interpreting needs
- Supported CRPs development of services to minority populations, which included job development and placement, training and work readiness
- Increased access to and utilization of the Spanish version of the Career Scope
- Contributed to the implementation of the Shared Youth Vision initiative that is intended to develop a coordinated service infrastructure between state, federal and local agencies in providing services to the highest risk youth, minority youth, and youth with disabilities

- Modified ORS application with the assistance of the ORS Cultural Diversity Committee to better capture customer self identification variables

GOAL #3 STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CUSTOMER CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

- Educated CRP vendors on customers' right to informed choice in employment planning consultation
- Developed VR intake packets to enhance consistency in application and orientation information provided to customers
- Improved the linkages between the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) resources, existing rehabilitation technology contractors, and ORS counselors by bringing ATAP resources on site
- Implemented a quarterly Customer Satisfaction Survey with the State Rehabilitation Council & Quality Improvement Sub-committee
- Demonstrated commitment to customers' right to informed choice and satisfaction by continuing to ensure that choice is reflected in policies and practices as they are updated
- Provided an "Informed Choice in Employment Planning" fact sheet to customers in the intake packet
- Ensured the availability of ORS forms in additional language formats
- Participated in six Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD) Public Forums held throughout the state of Rhode Island
- Used clinical supervision and in-service trainings to reinforce informed choice
- Developed new training programs in response to the expressed needs and interests of ORS customers, counselors and labor market trends
- Incorporated information from RSA's 107 Monitoring Report as part of a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on customer choice and satisfaction

2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
- Utilized Supported Employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities as a successful strategy for employment and job retention
- Participated on the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council and Division of Behavioral Health (BH) Council services in order to examine best practices and track outcomes
- Provided training to ORS staff and CRP personnel regarding Supported Employment regulations, policies, core values, and best practices
- Decreased by 49 from FFY2009, the number of customers who received supported employment services; and by 4 from FFY2009, the number of customers closed successfully in supported employment due to changes in the Behavioral Health Care system, CRP and ORS staff turnover
- Increased average hourly wage in FFY2010 to \$9.38 from FFY2008 baseline of \$8.79, which does represent a decline from the FFY2009 SE hourly wage of \$10.49

- FFY2010 saw a decrease in the average hours per week to 17.55, which is a decrease from the FFY2009 average hours per week of 19.04 and the FFY2008 baseline of 18.03 hours per week

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2010.

ORS met or exceeded RSA Standard I - VR's impact on employment and Standard II - minority service rate for FFY2010

Due in part to the economic climate continued double-digit unemployment rate placing RI 4th in the nation for unemployment rates, due to state freeze on hiring, ORS has experienced fluctuation in the Standards and Indicators from FFY2007 to FFY2010.

Evaluation Standard 1 - Employment Outcomes

Performance Indicator 1.1: ORS maintained a focus on increasing quality employment outcomes as per our CNA and 107 monitoring report. Despite ORS recognition in the 2011 State Plan that it needed to amend its 5% annual increase in employment outcomes due to several variables, which included staff vacancies, state fiscal constraints, unemployment rate which placed RI 4th in the nation for UI during this time period, ORS did not meet Standard One of performance and indicator standards. In FFY2007 ORS had a goal of 736 successful closures that was exceeded by 9 with 745 successful closures. The FFY2008 goal of 746 successful outcomes was exceeded by 4 with an outcome of 750. ORS exceeded the FFY2009 goal of 751 successful outcomes by 5 with 756 successful closures. For FFY2010 ORS achieved 568 of the projected 757 successful outcomes.

Performance Indicator 1.2: FFY 2010 saw a decrease in the rehabilitation rate to 40.72%. This was the result of decreased employment closures and increased closures of cases after having received services. ORS had exceeded the Federal Standard of 55.80 in FFY2009 with a rate of 62.79%, and in FFY2008 with a rate of 62.81%, as well as the baseline FFY2007 rate of 59.89%.

Performance Indicator 1.3: Exceeded the Federal Standard earnings ratio of 72.6 in FFY2010 with a rate of 97.89, which represents an increase over FFY2009 rate of 96.30. Additionally it represents an increase over FFY2008 rate of 95.73 and FFY2007 rate of 92.62.

Performance Indicator 1.4: Maintained 100% for FFY2007, FFY2008, FFY2009 and FFY2010 individuals with significant disabilities who are earning at least minimum wage. This exceeded the Federal Standard by 37.6%.

Performance Indicator 1.5: Increased the average hourly rate earned by individuals in FFY2010 with a rate of .54 this represents an increase over the FFY2009 rate of .51. For FFY2008 the rate was .52 and FFY2007 had a baseline rate of .53.

Performance Indicator 1.6: Increased the number of individuals whose own income at time of exit was their largest source of support in FFY2010 to 62.95 from FFY2009 with 54.40 and FFY2008 with 55.43. While FFY2010 is short of the baseline year FFY2007 rate of 64.78, ORS has exceeded the Federal Standard of 53% all four years.

Evaluation Standard 2 - Equal Access to Services

Performance Indicator 2.1: Met the standard for services and employment outcomes for minorities who are disabled for FFY2010 with a rate of .89, which represents an increase over the FFY2009 rate of .85. The rate for FFY2008 was .88 and the FFY2007 baseline rate was .85. In FFY2010 26.63% of the successful employment closures represented minority customers. This represents a slight increase from the FFY2009 rate of 26% and an increase from the 23% in FFY2008 and 15% in FFY2007.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2010.

- Utilized I & E funds to sponsor the Employer Honor Roll that acknowledged 13 employers who provided employment and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Utilized I&E funds for State Rehabilitation Council and State Independent Living Council activities
- Utilized I& E funds for "Shared Youth Vision" activities in collaboration with the Department of Labor & Training (DLT)

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

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services
- Increase the number of successful supported employment outcomes from FFY2010 baseline of 51 individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Increase average hourly wage and average hours worked per week from FFY2010 baseline of \$9.38 per hour and 17.55 hours per week
- Organize and facilitate twice-annual Developmental Disabilities (DD) and Behavioral Health (BH) Supported Employment Advisory Council meetings with an increased emphasis on integrated, competitive employment outcomes
- Utilize the CNA and periodic meetings facilitated by the Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor to identify the training needs of CRP's
- Engage CRPs to provide services to underserved individuals with disabilities by providing training, technical assistance and fee schedule adjustments
- Evaluate the Supported Employment fee schedule model to determine quality of deliverables
- Increase supported employment work experience programs for youth with the most significant disabilities
- Enlist ORS Self-Employment Committee to function as a resource to staff and customers who are interested in self-employment options
- Implement and monitor the deliverables established through the BHDDH and DHS/ORS MOU
- Provide Supported Employment Services to customers and identified long-term support providers to ensure job retention

ORS continues to have a commitment to providing supported employment services. For those customers who meet the supported employment criteria, the IPE becomes the foundation for meeting customers' individualized supported employment needs. The IPE defines the employment goal, the timeline, services, and long-term support/vendor who will continue to provide support services to the individual with disability on a long-term basis. These long-term support providers are identified in the ORS Memorandum of Understanding, which is signed by the vendor agency. This shift in service delivery responsibility is well coordinated by the ORS counselor and vendor agency staff so that there will be a seamless and continuous delivery of needed services to the individual.