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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specific Requirements Division of Rehabilitation Services

Input of State Rehabilitation Council

The State Rehabilitation Council is known in South Dakota as the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR or Board). The Board provides advice to and works in partnership with the general vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division).

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively and remains responsive to the needs of those served. The Board works in partnership with the Division in developing policies, planning activities, evaluating program effectiveness and carrying out other functions related to South Dakota's vocational rehabilitation program.

The working relationship between the Board and the Division is a partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services resulting in successful employment outcomes for those served.

The full Board met on four occasions during this reporting period: January 6, March 26/27, June 29/30, and September 21/22 of 2015. These meetings were open to the public and held in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meeting law, SDCL, 1-25-1. In addition, the Board's Executive Committee met on five separate occasions during this same period.

Input from State Rehabilitation Council

Annual Report to the Governor and RSA Commissioner

The Board directed staff, both BVR and Division, to draft and complete the annual report. The report was finalized by Board consensus and submitted to the Governor and RSA Commissioner prior to the end of December.

Organizational Membership Renewal

The Board approved renewing its organizational membership with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. The Board supports the Coalition, as the only statewide, cross disability, consumer driven advocacy group made up of individuals and organizations, and its mission of advocating for the full inclusion of individuals of all ages with disabilities in all aspects of society.

Administrative Hearing

Information was disseminated to the Board about an applicant's appeal of an eligibility decision. The Fair Hearing Officer ruled in support of the Division's decision that the individual was not eligible for vocational rehabilitation services (disability was not a substantial impediment to employment).

Employment Works Initiative & "Ability for Hire" Campaign

The Division has been working on activities prompted by Governor Daugaard's initiative to have the State of South Dakota become a model employer of people with disabilities. The Board fully supports these activities. An example is the Division contracted with a Sioux Falls marketing firm to conduct an employer outreach program. The Board's Public Awareness Committee participated in presentations at various stages of the development process. Input and recommendations from members concentrated on accessibility features, video captioning and website ease of access.

Governor's Awards Ceremony

The Board annually collaborates with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council on the Governor's Awards Ceremony. During this reporting period, the Board moved forward with the solicitation process and approved funds to support this event.

South Dakota Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative asked the Board for a letter of support for the WIPA program grant proposal. Grant approval would continue to support staff working with individuals to maximize earning potential and self-sufficiency e.g., knowledge of SSA work incentives, Medicaid, Medicare, and other public programs. Board staff drafted a letter of support for the Board's review and it was approved and sent following the March meeting.

Lighting the Way/Solutions for Success – Diagnosis through Adulthood Conference

The Board reviewed and approved a funding request to assist with speaker fees/travel expenses associated with this conference, which provides training to parents, caregivers, professionals and advocates to help them improve the lives of individuals on the autism spectrum.

Name Badges

The Board purchased name badges for members to wear, identifying them as board members, falling under the State of South Dakota, Department of Human Services.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

The Board approved financial support for the 2015 events with the expectation that proposed activities would emphasize employment issues, greater need for employer involvement, increase efforts to obtain the involvement of smaller employers, and improve marketing efforts to reach employers, businesses and HR managers.

Employer Paid Work Experience Program Guide

The Division consulted the Board on a draft program guide to support VR services provided to a person to obtain/maintain an employer paid work experience. Employment related services would be allowable for a job on the individual's employment plan that is not the employment

goal that would allow a person to develop work skills and earn wages. The Board approved a motion in support of the Division moving forward with the program guide and policy implementation.

Disability Services Summit/Public Gathering in Mission

The Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired invited the Board, Statewide Independent Living Council and Division to join them in hosting a gathering in Mission. The Board approved funds to support this gathering and participated in the event. This event supported the Board's and Division's efforts to share information and obtain input from individuals with disabilities, family members and others on the need for employment and independent living services.

Person Centered Thinking Training

The Board fully supported the Division providing Person Centered Thinking training for staff statewide. Training also targeted Community Support Provider staff to further develop their capacity to expand supported employment services. This training went hand in hand with the Division's initiative to encourage providers to become certified, allowing them to earn a higher reimbursement rate for provided services. The Board requested an introduction to the Person Centered Thinking tools and concepts utilized to support an individual in different environments, and it was provided during their March meeting.

South Dakota Advocates for Change – Advocacy Jam

South Dakota Advocates for Change, a statewide group of self-advocates with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) submitted a funding application for financial support of the "Advocacy Jam". This is a biannual conference which offers training for people with ID/DD, family members and professionals on topics such as self-employment, how to work with employers, how to work together to stop bullying, and changes in the Division of Developmental Disabilities system. The Board approved funding to support a speaker for the 2015 conference.

Dialogue with the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities

The Council's Executive Director and Vice Chairperson attended the Board's June meeting to talk about the Council, its' mission, funding, ideas for collaboration and development of its five-year state plan. Board members were invited to attend a July Council meeting; an invitation was also extended to other boards/councils, agencies, organizations, family members and individuals with disabilities. At the Board's September meeting, members who attended the Council meeting reported they felt this was a great opportunity to hear and learn from others. Attendee consensus was there is merit in collaborating on such efforts to obtain feedback and to share or disseminate gathered input between various entities rather than duplicate efforts.

Division's Program Initiatives

The Board fully supports the Division's efforts to increase provider expertise and capacity, as well as increase provider earnings, and employment retention (e.g., establishment grants to advance supported employment efforts, increasing the number of certified providers, providing specialized training sessions). The Board encouraged the Division to continue activities to

increase the number of certified providers, which increases consumer choice for individuals with disabilities seeking employment supports.

State and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Collaborations

The Board recommended hosting its' December meeting to coincide with the Division/Tribal VR staff meeting, and to adjust its' meeting agenda to allow time for them to come together and continue dialogue on shared areas of interest, e.g., independent living services, case services, assistive technology, promoting disability awareness and youth and transition services.

Transition Services Liaison Project (TSLP)

The Board fully endorses activities which interface with the educational and workforce systems, as well as post-secondary education, independent living, and other necessary supports to assist students with disabilities and their families in making meaningful choices. The Board frequently requested updates on various projects or activities and during the June meeting, TSLP staff addressed the projects' purpose, provision of technical assistance and training, and updates on the Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave, transition forums, interagency councils, Project Skills, and Project SEARCH.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey instrument was developed years ago with the assistance of the Board's Consumer Services Committee. The survey is conducted by sending out postcards to consumers at different stages of the VR process asking different questions, depending upon where the individual is within the process (e.g., six months after starting their IPE, case closed as successfully rehabilitated). The Board felt there was no need to change or revisit the instrument during this reporting period. It will revisit it as implementation of WIOA moves forward.

Board Nominations and Appointments

Annually, the Board consults with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council about the need to solicit statewide nominations for their respective board/council membership. Nominations were sought during March/April, forwarded to the Governor for his consideration and action in April, and the Governor made appointments and/or reappointments to each board/council in July.

Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR)

At the request of members, DLR staff attended and spoke at the September meeting to available programs and services. Members learned of services available to individuals, as well as services available to businesses and employers. The Board supports activities to improve working partnerships which will lead to improved outreach to individuals with disabilities, employers and businesses.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Board was provided updates at meetings throughout this reporting period related to the implementation of WIOA. Work has been conducted in the areas of pre-employment, transition from school to adult life, meetings with school personnel, providers and other agency staff. Work also continues in finalizing cooperative agreements, changing performance measures, and working to improve relationships within the workforce systems and employers.

State Plan Goals and Strategies

The work outlined above under WIOA parallels the planning and development involved with the Division's State Plan and related attachments. These documents outline the goals, strategies and actions of the agency. A consultant was brought in to work with the Board and Division to better analyze stakeholder input, data analysis and labor market trends of the state. This information, as well as feedback gathered throughout the year, was utilized by the Board and Division when modifying and recreating the State Plan to best align the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to meet consumer needs. The consultant assisted the Board and Division as they modified the goals and strategies of the agency to ensure that the VR portion of the Unified State Plan continues to deliver and represent the disability community's aspirations and goals.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development Policy

A draft policy was shared with the Board at their June meeting, due to changes being called for as a result of WIOA. The Board's Consumer Services Committee met prior to the September meeting to review the draft policy and provided recommendations. This draft policy was also posted on the Division's website seeking additional feedback. The committee's recommendations were incorporated into the draft policy and presented to the full Board for final review and approval. The Board approved the policy as presented.

Training Initiatives and Fall Conference

Board members participated in a number of activities this reporting period: SSA work incentives, employment specialist training, motivational interviewing, and Person Centered Thinking. The Fall Conference was a collaborative effort, involving a variety of agencies, and it provided presentations on vocational rehabilitation topics, e.g., community employment, independent living, self-employment, marketing to employers, youth services, housing and labor programs. Members attended these events to learn about what was happening statewide to better educate themselves as they provide input and recommendations to the VR agency.

Board Staff Support

The Division of Rehabilitation Services, through an agreement with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, provided staff support to the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This is a vendor agreement for the procurement of goods and services. Staff activities were directed by the Chairs of the Board and SILC, and staff provided reports of their activities at their respective meetings as requested.

DSU's response to Council Input

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided valuable input into the Division's activities and policies. Input was specifically noted and accepted in the "Ability to Hire" campaign, employer paid work experience policy, consumer satisfaction survey, Individualized Plan for Employment policy, and State Plan goals/strategies. All recommendations by the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services were accepted.

DSU's explanation of any rejection of Council's input

No recommendations were rejected.

Request for Waiver of Statewideness

The South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) has implemented a work experience program for students with disabilities called Project Skills. This venture is a cooperative arrangement with the local school districts and the Division. South Dakota has 151 public school districts and 20 Tribal/Bureau of Indian Education Schools statewide. The Division makes this program available to all schools with approximately 143 public/tribal school districts participating in the program. The program is available to the remaining school districts but they have chosen not to enter into a contract with the Division.

Types of Services to be Provided

Many students with significant disabilities don't have an opportunity to gain paid employment experience while in high school. Although willing, most employers cannot afford the supports these students frequently require on their first job. This is an important learning, maturing, and socializing experience. The Division of Rehabilitation Services funds a program entitled "Project Skills" to address this need. This program is a cooperative arrangement between the State VR Agency and the local school systems. The Division funds the wages, workers compensation, and FICA while the schools provide the job development, job coaching, and follow-along services for the student at the job site. By entering into a contractual agreement with the Designated State Unit, the local school districts are assuring that they will provide the non-federal share of the matching funds, including funds contributed to the school by a private agency, organization or individual.

Written Assurances

Each participating school enters into a written agreement with the Division for Project Skills. This agreement requires the school district to provide written assurance that they will use non-Federal funds for their share of the Project Skills program. The Project Skills program is available only for Vocational Rehabilitation clients. School Districts cannot serve non Division clients and the Division approves the Project Skills Program by completing a work agreement and authorization of services. All state plan requirements for the Division will apply to all services approved under the waiver

All services provided under this waiver are provided under an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and authorized by the vocational rehabilitation client's VR Counselor. The Division assures that all State Plan requirements, including the Order of Selection if appropriate, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

Cooperative Agreements with Agencies not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development Systems

The Divisions of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) have an excellent working relationship with the Workforce System in South Dakota. The cooperation between our agencies is done by formal written agreements and informal arrangements.

Formal Memorandum of Understanding with One Stop Partners

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on 7/1/2012 with the South Dakota Department of Labor. This agreement addresses:

- Provide comprehensive services designed to assist the unemployed citizens of the State of South Dakota in obtaining gainful employment;
- Support the underemployed citizens of the state in preparing for a new and more rewarding career;
- Provide the youth of South Dakota with a positive introduction into the world of work and subsequently providing follow-up and guidance to youth once they enter the workforce;
- Provide universal access to all customers, including those with special needs or barriers to employment;
- Provide customer choice in the way they access services, and in the services themselves, based on individual need;
- Allow integrated services through a planning process at the state and local levels, coordinate activities and services for customers, and share information and client data; and
- Be fully aware of the role each Partner has within the system and to understand the services each Partner provides.

Other interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system consist of:

Federal, State and local agencies and programs

Project Skills

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has cooperative agreements with local school districts throughout South Dakota for the provision of transition services. This program provides paid work experiences in student's career areas to help them prepare for adulthood and the world of work.

Project Search

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has cooperative agreements with local the Project Search sites for Aberdeen, Brookings, and Sioux Falls locations. This agreement lays out each party's responsibility for the Project Search activities.

Vocational Counseling Transition Services

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has a cooperative agreement with the Sioux Falls School District to fund half of a vocational rehabilitation counselor's position. This vocational rehabilitation counselor participates in the school's transition services activities.

State programs carrying out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act 1998

The Division of Rehabilitation Services receives funding under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. A contract is developed annually with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative/Dakota Link for the implementation of these services.

Programs carried out under Rural Development of Department of Agriculture

These agreements typically are associated with Agrability Programs and South Dakota does not have an Agrability Program. The State VR Agencies do not have any agreements under the Secretary for Rural Development of the US Department of Agricultural.

Non-educational programs serving out-of -school youth

These Division of Rehabilitation Services currently does not have any formal agreements with non-educational programs serving out-of-school youth.

State use contracting programs

The State of South Dakota does not have a “State Use Law”.

Coordination with Education Officials

DSU’s plans policies and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate Transitions

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has been a leader in innovative transition services for students with disabilities. The focal point of this success in transition services is the partnership between the DRS and the Office of Special Education in co-funding the Transition Services Liaison Project. This project initiates the following successful transition activities:

Transition Services Liaison Project:

TSLP provides technical assistance and training to students with disabilities, families, local education agencies and adult service agencies to promote the movement from school to post-school activities. There are three Transition Liaisons and a Transition Services Liaison Project Coordinator to provide these activities. TSLP manages the transition programs listed below.

- **Project Skills:** Project Skills is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities in South Dakota. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and local school districts which provides students the opportunity to learn different skills in a variety of job placements, with the assistance of a job coach. Project Skills helps to build the student's work history, references and assists them with experiencing different career fields as they mature and take on new challenges.
- **Project Search:** Project Search is a national model partnering with a large employer, local school district and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program. South Dakota currently has 3 Project Search Initiatives in operation in Aberdeen, Brookings and Sioux Falls. A 4th Project Search initiative is being developed in Rapid City to begin with the 2016 Fall School year.

- Youth Leadership Forum: YLF is a unique career and leadership training program for high school juniors and seniors to learn more about self-advocacy skills and disability awareness. Students with disabilities cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills as a result of participating in this annual five-day event. The YLF was implemented at the state level by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and other state and local partners.
- Catch the Wave: A one-day conference designed specifically for high school students who have a disability and are considering post-secondary education (either college or technical institutes). Students learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.
- Regional Transition Forums: These forums are informal and interactive meetings for providers of services, transition-age students with disabilities, as well as consumers and family members.
- Post-Secondary Disability Coordinators Forums: This forum is held annually in Chamberlain inviting all the Disability Coordinators from South Dakota Post-Secondary programs. This has been a very successful initiative helping the transition process for students with disabilities.
- Summer Institute: The Summer Institute is a statewide training opportunity for Special Education teachers who are assisting students in the transition process. It is held for one week in the summer and offers training in areas of IDIEA, introducing self-determination curriculum and other assessment materials, and IEP planning. Teachers receive graduate credit for the class and gain knowledge from Disability Services Coordinators from post-secondary schools, vocational rehabilitation staff, Transition Liaisons, community mental health agencies and independent living services staff.

Augie Access

The Division is co-funding a post-secondary program for individuals with intellectual disabilities attending Augustana University. This program started in the 2015 Fall Semester with 5 students.

ASPIRE:

The Division is a participating agency in a regional consortium with five other states in a grant initiative called the Promise Grant. Utah Vocational Rehabilitation has taken the lead role in this consortium with the other states, North Dakota, Montana, Colorado, South Dakota and Arizona. The Aspire Initiative is a 5 year initiative with South Dakota receiving \$2,260,581 during these 5 years. This Grant is to conduct a study of 200 youth in South Dakota receiving Social Security Insurance between the ages of 13 and 16.

Pre Employment Transition Services

The Division is networking with the Office of Special Education and other transition agencies to assure Pre Employment Transition Services are available throughout the State. A brochure targeting students with disabilities has been developed and distributed across the State. Most of the services listed above qualify for the Pre Employment Transition Services. In addition, the Division is looking at ways to expand the self-determination training component to be available in all the school districts

Development and Approval of an IPE before leaving school

The Division is making great efforts to assure that students with disabilities access the vocational rehabilitation program and develop their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before they complete high school. Following are some of these activities:

- Division VR Counselors contact school counselors and 504 coordinators on a regular basis in an attempt to identify and meet with students.
- Division VR Counselors inform school staff what services are available to students with disabilities and eligibility requirements. VR Counselors then follow up on referral in a timely fashion in order to determine eligibility prior to graduation.
- Division VR Counselors and other Division staff will attend interagency meetings in order to inform other service organizations about Rehabilitation Services and obtain referrals of these students.
- The Division will continue funding Project Skills to include serving students with disabilities who are not receiving special education services.

Information on the formal interagency agreement with State educational agency

The South Dakota Cooperative Agreement Concerning Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities was revised on January 2014. This agreement includes the following South Dakota entities: Office of Special Education, Division of Workforce and Career Preparation, Division of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Department of Labor and Department of Social Services.

The agreement identifies each agency's roles and responsibilities including:

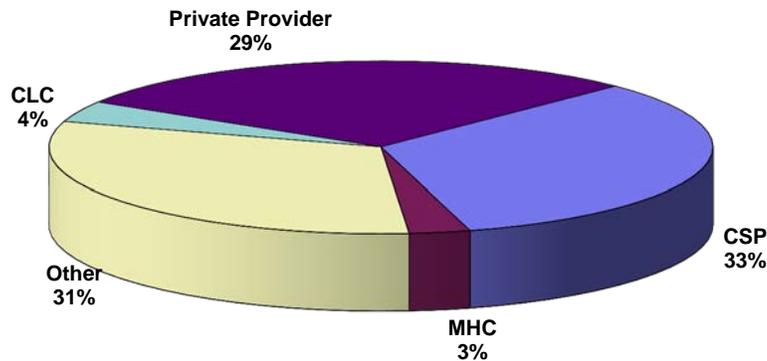
- Consultation and technical assistance to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocation rehabilitation services;
- Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and school district personnel;
- Roles and responsibilities of each agency including State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
- Financial responsibilities; and
- Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Due to the geographic reality which exists within South Dakota, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) recognizes one of the best sources available for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services are Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP). CRPs consist of Community Support Providers, Mental Health Centers, Career Learning Centers, Centers for Independent Living, Communication Services for the Deaf, and the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. These programs are located in local communities throughout the state.

Utilization of CRPs and other Employment Specialists Providers

During Federal Fiscal Year 2015, 28.7% of the Division's client services expenditures (approximately \$1,521,537 was paid to CRP's. Following is a breakdown of the payments for client services made to CRPs and other Employment Specialists Providers during FFY2015.



Manner in which cooperative arrangements are established

The Division utilizes Program Guide DRS/DSBVI-02-04 – Provider Standards to establish approved service providers and procedures to approve service providers. Applicants/eligible individuals are provided choices in available service providers for them to select from. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor then issue authorizations to the provider for services agreed upon in the Individual Plan for Employment. The scope of services purchased depends upon the individual's needs and employment goal.

Improve capacity and quality of services from CRPs

To help expand the capacity and quality of services from community rehabilitation programs, the Division of Rehabilitation Services offers establishment grants to develop or expand their service capacity. The focus of these establishment grants is to expand supported employment services for youth with disabilities and other individuals with significant disabilities.

The Division continually works on improving the quality of services from CRPs. The Division has provided numerous training initiatives and opportunities for CRP personnel to become a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP). Service providers who become certified and complete a two day Person Centered Training will receive a 25% increase in their service rates. Maintaining their CESP certification will require the service provider to complete 36 continuing education hours every 3 years.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

The heart of supported employment is the coordination of the time limited and the on-going support services. The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has been very proactive in working collaboratively with service providers and public agencies to coordinate funding sources and policies. These efforts are categorized into two areas:

- Formal Cooperative Agreements
- Informal Cooperative Efforts with Agencies

Formal Cooperative Arrangements

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has in place a formal cooperative agreement for transition services for youth with disabilities. This agreement is with the Department of Human Services/Divisions of Rehabilitation services, Developmental Disabilities and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired; Department of Social Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services; Department of Education/Office of Special Education, and the Department of Labor.

The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to define:

- services including supported employment,
- eligibility requirements,
- referral process,
- responsibilities of each agency,
- extended support services to be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities,
- extended support services to be provided by the Division of Behavioral Health Services,
- time-limited services to be provided by the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired,
- service plan development,
- requirements for transition to extended services, and
- responsibilities for post-employment services.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities updated the Policy Memorandum on September 11, 2013 with the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. This Policy Memorandum defines how each agency's funding sources are coordinated in regards to the time limited and on-going support services. This policy agreement has had a significant impact in changing how services are provided to individuals with the most significant impediments to obtain and maintain their employment.

In May of 2010, a document was established to help coordinate the services and funding between the Divisions of Behavioral Health Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired. This document serves as a policy directive for the Community Mental Health Centers and the local Vocational Rehabilitation Offices. It provides guidance in three areas relative to providing vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

1. What services can and should be provided by the Community Mental Health Center,
2. What services are available from Vocational Rehabilitation, and
3. Which Division pays for the different services.

Informal Cooperative arrangements with agencies

The Division of Rehabilitation Services continually works collaboratively with other State agencies on a day-to-day basis to better serve individuals with disabilities. Following are some of these collaborative efforts:

- The State Office of the Division of Rehabilitation Services is co-located with the Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. Our agencies can easily communicate to coordinate services between Divisions.
- Eight of the eleven Division's field offices are co-located with the Department of Labor and Regulation offices.
- The public vocational rehabilitation agencies are working closely with all partners identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to collaborate in the implementation of the new law. Division staff serves on implementation workgroups, task forces, the State Workforce Development Council and on local Workforce Committees.

Coordination with Employers

VR services

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has been very proactive in working collaboratively with employers. These initiatives consist of:

- “Ability for Hire” campaign: “Ability for Hire” is an employer outreach campaign emphasizing the promotion of hiring, advancement, and retention of employment for people with disabilities in South Dakota’s workforce. The content materials consist of a website (www.abilityforhire.com), printed materials in the form of brochures, radio advertisement, commercials, and videos of the Governor and other success stories. It officially launched on 08/11/2015, with the release of the website and Facebook page. This is also designed to promote the public’s awareness of the available resources and services that DRS offer to employers and people with disabilities.
- Point of Contact: _The Division has designated a single point of contact (Business Specialist) to disseminate materials, conduct trainings, and serve as a resource to employers, providers, and people with disabilities throughout the state.
- Business-Led Models: There are two non-profit entities available in South Dakota offering supports to the business community which are led by employers (business-led model). They are the Business Resource Network in Sioux Falls and the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills. Each has an Executive Director. Both of them have an approved contract in place with the Division to provide education, consulting, and technical assistance to businesses on the hiring, accommodations, supports and retention when employing people with disabilities.
- Business Organization Involvement: _The Division is working towards increasing memberships and regular involvement of staff within non-disability related organizations in efforts to connect with employers. Some examples of the organizations consist of the local Chamber of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and the South Dakota Retailers Association. These opportunities allow for connecting with businesses to learn more about their workforce needs and identify any disability training needs they may have.

- Employer Resource Guide: The Division has created an Employer Resource Guide consisting of information and resources available to employers regarding various aspects of disability-related topics. This Resource Guide will be utilized during meetings with employers.

Transition services including PET for students and youth with disabilities

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has been very proactive in working collaboratively with employers for transition services. These initiatives consist of:

- Project Skills: Project Skills is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities in South Dakota. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and local school districts which provides students the opportunity to learn different skills in a variety of job placements, with the assistance of a job coach. Project Skills helps to build the student's work history, references and assists them with experiencing different career fields as they mature and take on new challenges. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and school staff identify employment sites, businesses, employers to match the areas which students have expressed an interest in working.
- Project Search: Project Search is a national model partnering with a large employer, local school district and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program. South Dakota currently has 3 Project Search Initiatives in operation at Aberdeen, Brookings and Sioux Falls. A 4th Project Search initiative is being developed in Rapid City to begin with the 2016 Fall school year.

Interagency Cooperation

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has other formal and informal interagency arrangements and levels of cooperation.

State Medicaid Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act

The South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) is the State's Medicaid Agency. The South Dakota Department of Human Services has the following agreements with the DSS Medicaid Agency.

- Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation as well as Guardianship and Conservatorship: This agreement was implemented on August 1, 2013 to assure each agency's response to meet the needs of persons who are at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation or in need of guardianship and or conservatorship services.
- ASPIRE Agreement: This agreement was implemented on September 28, 2014 for the data exchange with Medicaid information for the research project Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment (ASPIRE).
- Interagency Teams: This agreement was implemented on November 20, 2001 to meet the need for continued interagency involvement at the local level and the need to continue these efforts in an efficient as well as effective manner. This agreement will maximize utilization of resources available through the State of South Dakota; fully recognize and utilize the capacity and expertise of each agency; and encourage the continuing efforts and participation of local interagency teams.

- Money Follows the Person: This agreement was implemented on June 10, 2014 for the implementation of the Money Follows the Person initiative involving persons eligible for waiver services.
- Medicaid Fraud Control: This agreement was implemented on July 1, 2015 for the purpose of defining mutual responsibilities in the Medicaid Program to ensure maximum efficiency and benefit to the State and to minimize duplication of effort.
- Title XIX Medicaid Funding Memorandum of Understanding: This agreement was implemented on February 15, 2013 for the purpose of defining administrative and fiscal accountability responsibilities.

State agency responsible for providing services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

The South Dakota Department of Human Services/Division of Developmental Disabilities is the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. This agency is in the same department as the State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs allowing regular communication between programs.

Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities

This agreement was implemented on January 2014 for the purpose of enabling students with disabilities to reach their maximum potential in their transition from high school to the adult world. This agreement included the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, Developmental Disabilities Agency, Department of Social Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services, Department of Education/Special Education and the Department of Labor and Regulations.

Policy Memorandum with Developmental Disabilities

The Division of Developmental Disabilities updated the Policy Memorandum on September 11, 2013 with the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. This Policy Memorandum defines how each agency's funding sources are coordinated in regards to the time limited and on-going support services. This policy agreement has had a significant impact in changing how services are provided to individuals with the most significant impediments to obtain and maintain their employment.

State agency responsible for providing mental health services

The South Dakota Department of Social Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services is the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with mental illness. In May of 2010, a Memorandum was established to help coordinate the services and funding between the Divisions of Behavioral Health Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired. This document serves as a policy directive for the Community Mental Health Centers and the local Vocational Rehabilitation Offices. It provides guidance in three areas relative to providing vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

- What services can and should be provided by the Community Mental Health Center,
- What services are available from Vocational Rehabilitation, and
- Which agency pays for the different services.

Comprehensive System on Personnel and Personnel Development;

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) has implemented a number of strategies to ensure trained staff is delivering quality services to applicants and clients with whom division personnel work. Currently one employee is primarily responsible for activities related to the comprehensive system of personnel development.

Data System of Personnel and Personnel Development

The current system to collect and analyze data related to qualified personnel needs and personnel development consists of two components. The South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) maintains a database of all training activities attended by Division staff including BHR training, seminars, workshops, conferences, and undergraduate and graduate level courses supported by the Division. Individual offices maintain files on educational backgrounds, training activities and goals and plans for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to meet the personnel standards to become a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and receive Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). Supervisors are required to address training needs as a part of the annual employee evaluation. Individual training needs are reported to the Training Officer to be considered in the implementation of results from the annual training needs assessment.

The Division utilizes a web based management information system (VR FACES) for data tracking of the CSPD for staff. The VR FACES tracks all the employees of the Division, their office structure, race, supervisor, disability, job classification, and other relevant information to the position. The system also tracks if VR Counselors are a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) or their development plan to become a CRC. Input of information is required of individual employees and supervisors with access to all information by the Training Officer and other management staff. This system is efficient for addressing individual training needs as well as projecting for future personnel and training priorities and progress of staff toward meeting CSPD requirements. The following table identifies current staffing patterns for the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

| Type of Position | Total Positions FFY 2015 FTE | Current Vacancies | Projected Vacancies Over the next 5 years |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Clerical | 11 | 0 | 3 |
| Counselor Aides | 5.75 | 0 | 1 |
| VR Counselors | 37.5 | 0 | 10 |
| Supervisors | 5 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|----|
| Management | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| Other | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 67.25 | 1 | 20 |

Current staffing patterns include the following: Clerical – Secretaries, Senior Secretaries and Administrative Assistants; Support - Counselor Aides; Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors - entry level VR counselors and senior level VR counselors; Supervisors - District Supervisors, Management – Division Director, Assistant Director, VR Specialist, IL Program Specialist, Rehabilitation Engineer, Business Specialist and Deaf Services Specialist. The “Other” category refers to two Interpreters.

For FFY 2015, the ratio of counselors compared to applicants and eligible individuals served is an average 124 clients per counselor. The remaining active caseload as of 10/01/2015 was an average of 63 active clients per caseload. The changes in the caseload size are typically impacted by the changes in the economy and unemployment rates. It is the goal of the Division of Rehabilitation Services to remain under the ratio of 80 active clients for each counselor. The Division evaluates the need for a position before replacing it. In previous years, vacant positions have been relocated to other parts of the state with more need or change to a different position type as needed.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

The South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources did a Workforce Planning Study with SFY 2005 – SFY 2010 data compiling information for the past 5 years. Following are some results of the Department of Human Services (excluding the institutions). In 5 years, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have a 5.5% turnover rate per year. The State average of turnover rates is 12.2% and the Department of Human Service average turn over rate is 13.8 % per year. Four of the five Division supervisors have retired in the past 6 years

The Division of Rehabilitation Services anticipates the need to recruit at least 10 Qualified VR Counselors in the next five-year period. This includes vacancies for five vocational rehabilitation counselors who are eligible for retirement in the next five years. Only one post-secondary institution offers a master degree in rehabilitation counseling in South Dakota. South Dakota State University, in Brookings, SD began this program in the fall of 2005 with the first graduate in the fall of 2007. Currently 10 students are enrolled in the master program with ten enrolled with RSA funds. Four students graduated in May 2015 and all were sponsored by RSA funds. During FFY 2015, the South Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Programs hired two of their students. The Division has a cooperative agreement with SDSU in providing internship opportunities, participation on their advisory board and recruitment of qualified candidates. The Division has been providing paid internship opportunities for students pursuing their master’s degree in Vocational Rehabilitation. The Division also offers unpaid internship opportunities for students with other degrees when our offices have space available. The Division works cooperatively with the South Dakota State University in providing professional educational

career tracks for individuals with disabilities. Some of these interns are recipients of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program needing the internship as part of their Individual Plan for Employment.

| Institution | Students Enrolled | Employees Sponsored by Agency or RSA | Graduates this year Sponsored by Agency or RSA | Graduates from Previous Year |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| South Dakota State University | 10 | 10 | 4 | 4 |

Recruitment of qualified staff including individuals with minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities is accomplished through promoting vacancies at universities in Region VIII with master level programs. The University of Colorado, Montana State University, South Dakota State University and Utah State University are also sources for recruitment of graduates with master’s level degrees in vocational rehabilitation counseling. In addition, South Dakota has three State public universities with programs offering master degrees in counseling. These three State Universities have expanded their class locations to other universities and distance learning options. Graduates of the following programs are recruited for vocational rehabilitation counselor openings: Doctorate of Education program options, Counselor of Education and Counseling Practice; School Psychology and Educational Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, or Master of Arts in Counseling or Educational Psychology. Graduates are hired and trained to prepare for the CRCC to meet the highest qualifications in the state for rehabilitation counselors. During the next five years, it is projected that up to 6 counselors will be hired who are graduates of these programs.

The announcements for all state positions including the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions are posted on the State web page. The Division forwards the job openings to the South Dakota professional organizations such as the South Dakota RehabACTion Association. The announcement is also sent to client organizations such as the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.

Retention and advancement are accomplished through the opportunity for all entry-level vocational rehabilitation counselors to participate in masters level vocational rehabilitation education programs and, once meeting the requirements for “Senior Counselor”, receive promotion to this level. Leadership and management training and assignments with senior level management teams assist counselors to prepare for supervisory and administrative positions. Senior rehabilitation counselors are encouraged to apply for management and administrative positions when vacancies occur. Opportunities for promotion are available through announcements of supervisory and management positions provided those candidates meet the requirements for the position.

To address the priority of recruiting individuals with disabilities, the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources has in SD Administrative Rule the requirement that individuals with disabilities are automatically certified applicants to be interviewed. In addition, any eligible

applicant for employment who has been certified severely disabled by a rehabilitation counselor will be certified (eligible to interview) regardless of the ranking the applicant receives compared to other applicants. This ensures individuals who have disabilities have the opportunity to interview and compete for openings in the designated state unit.

Personnel Standards

Working in conjunction with the Bureau of Human Resources, the Division has established minimum standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors, senior vocational rehabilitation counselors and district supervisors. These standards are reviewed periodically in light of changing personnel needs, labor market supply and training resources. The Division relies on state standards for secretary, counselor aide and program administrator positions. These are generic job classifications within the state Bureau of Human Resources system. The Division has established specific knowledge, skills and ability requirements in order for individuals to enter these positions.

Newly hired rehabilitation counselors are required to have a degree that will lead towards CRC certification or, if they possess only a bachelor degree, must agree to pursue a master's degree as a condition of employment. Senior rehabilitation counselors are certified through the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor process. The priority in filling counselor vacancies is a master's degree and CRC certification. Eligibility for CRC certification (already possesses a master's degree but no certification) is the next preferred option. Due mostly to lower starting salaries compared to surrounding states, it is necessary to hire individuals with bachelor's degrees for entry-level positions and require they become qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors within eight years. Based on this requirement, a VR Counselor hired in 2015 will meet the qualified VR counselor standards in 2023. It is anticipated that all VR Counselors will have their CRC certification by 10/1/2023.

Standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

Rehabilitation counselors are required to have a master's degree that will lead towards CRC certification or if they possess only a bachelor degree, each new hire must agree to pursue a master's degree as a condition of employment. The Division does support costs associated with pursuit of master's degrees. Funds for support of employees to obtain a master's degree consist of RSA stipends and program 110 funds. Once entry level counselors have accomplished obtaining a master's degree and CRC certification, they can request a promotion to Senior Rehabilitation Counselor.

Standards for Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) and they have demonstrated the ability to work independently in developing Individual Plans for Employment.

Standards for District Supervisors:

Currently all District Supervisors meet the requirements for a Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Meeting this standard is preferred but not required for a District Supervisor. District Supervisors must have experience in working with people with disabilities, knowledge of the vocational rehabilitation program, and must have the ability to manage a budget, personnel and

office operations. If the District Supervisor does not have the credentials of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), then a timeline will be established to obtain the CRC.

The Rehabilitation Act as amended and the Vocational Rehabilitation regulations refer to personnel as "Qualified Personnel" and "Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors". The Division has defined these positions as follows:

Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

All Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, District Supervisors and State Office Personnel

- a. meets the standards for Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor;
- b. meets the standards for Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor except is not CRC certified; or
- c. meets the standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; has been employed by the Division as a VR Counselor for a minimum of six months; and has an approved plan to be eligible to take the CRC certification test by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification in eight years. (This employee does receive oversight and monitoring of the non-delegated functions of the VR process.)

The approved plan must be signed by the Supervisor. The plan will include at a minimum one course each semester unless the individual can present extenuating circumstances that are approved by the State Office. As of 10/1/2015, 10 VR Counselors are in a plan for CRC with 1 of them able to take the CRC examination. 27 VR Counselors are Senior VR Counselors and have their CRC.

Qualified Personnel:

This category of individuals includes 6 Counselor Aides and one VR Counselor who are not "Qualified VR Counselors".

Staff Development

The Division is committed to assist vocational rehabilitation counselors to obtain the necessary academic training and professional experience to meet the standards of a Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. During FFY 2015, 10 Division employees were pursuing their Vocational Rehabilitation master's degree program through Southern University, South Dakota State University or Virginia Commonwealth University. Six individuals graduated during the past year with a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation and received their CRC. Another important strategy is coordination of resources to access the most comprehensive training opportunities.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services approaches personnel development through a number of avenues. Each employee's current level of education and training, as well as short term and long term training needs are tracked by supervisors who evaluate methods for addressing these needs annually through the Accountability & Competency Evaluation (ACE) review system. Individual training needs assessments are conducted to evaluate current levels of education, understanding of fundamentals of vocational rehabilitation, disability-related issues, professional development and related topics. Self evaluation and supervisor input and recommendation sections on the ACE assist in assessing needs for training which may be pursued through a

number of approaches. The results of the assessments are recorded for individuals, groups of related positions (i.e. rehabilitation counselors, supervisors, managers, clerical etc.) and for the agency as a whole.

The state's in-service plan and annual updates outline the strategies that the Division has developed to meet the professional or paraprofessional training needs of staff that includes specific training related to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology. This training is delivered through workshops, conferences, video conferencing, one-on-one mentoring and webinars. The Division also utilizes e-mail and web links to disseminate information on research, studies and other relevant information related to disabilities and vocational rehabilitation.

The ACE system allows for ongoing feedback between employees and supervisors by incorporating a self-audit while addressing professionalism, work quality and areas for development as well as areas of strength. Training needs are addressed utilizing a form that not only identifies needed training, but also includes fields for the date the training is scheduled and the date it is attended. BHR workshops are identified under the following headings: supervisory, job enrichment and technology with "other training" and "job-specific skills" included in the document used to track need and attendance. The training officer works with agency supervisors to identify resources for obtaining training in areas related to vocational rehabilitation (including the Rehabilitation Act Amendments, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and RSA regulations), including serving individuals with the most significant disabilities and those of minority backgrounds. Training needs are also identified through input from clients responding to satisfaction surveys and input from the State Rehabilitation Council.

Cooperation with other entities in state government such as the Department of Labor and Regulation (DOLR), Department of Health and the Department of Education, ensures that training opportunities are available which address topics relevant to the field of rehabilitation. Staff has access to intensive training which applies to serving individuals with disabilities. These conferences and/or seminars are also an opportunity to collaborate with other entities who deliver services to individuals with disabilities. In addition, vocational rehabilitation personnel regularly provide training concerning considerations when working with individuals with disabilities to DOLR employees. Paraprofessional staff (i.e. counselor aides and clerical staff) are offered ongoing training in word processing, other software applications and office related courses such as effective writing, organization skills, etc., through the Bureau of Human Resources. Courses specific to the vocational rehabilitation management information system and requirements specific to vocational rehabilitation staff are offered through in-service training sessions usually provided by agency specialty staff.

Leadership development and capacity building are addressed through distance learning courses as well as agency sponsored training sessions. Assistive technology training is available through DakotaLink (state's assistive technology project), the Division's Rehabilitation Engineer or the State Bureau of Information and Technology (for employees with disabilities who utilize assistive technology on the job). Annual training conferences and monthly video conferences address policy changes or training needs that have been identified in the annual training needs assessment. Cooperative agreements are in place with the state's four Native American

Vocational Rehabilitation Projects and the Native American Center for Independent Living to provide training to staff on cultural diversity.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services implemented a new project in FFY 2008 called “Futures Initiative”. The purpose of the Futures Initiative is to challenge Division employees in becoming positive forces of change in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation by adopting and implementing exemplary leadership practices. Division staff will have the opportunity to become part of the Futures Initiative to expand their knowledge, skills and abilities by participating in quality training and program development to become exemplary leaders. The Futures Initiative is designed for Division staff interested in moving into a new, different or expanded role within the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This may include staff who would be interested in mentoring new staff, moving into management positions and/or expanding their leadership skills and roles. Four of the five current supervisors were past Futures members.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

The Division does employ interpreters who are available for all training sessions to clients who are deaf or deaf/blind. If additional interpreters are needed, the Division contracts for these services. Braille, materials on disk and enlarged print are provided to all staff or clients who request alternative formats. The Division has developed fee schedules and vendors to pay for interpreters of foreign languages and Native American interpreters. The Division also purchases foreign language interpreting services such as Linguistica and Interpretalk service for interpreting services through phone services.

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

Training on IDEA and transition services for students with disabilities is coordinated with the SD Department of Education/Special Education Program and the State Transition Project. The annual Youth Leadership Forum is planned in collaboration with the Special Education Program, Rehabilitation Services, Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Statewide Independent Living Council, and the Transition Project. The annual Fall Conferences were a combined effort with the Special Education Program, Department of Labor and Regulation which offered a series of transition presentations.

The Division has established liaison relationships and cooperative agreements with the other partner agencies that are included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and the State Unified Plan. The training officer is on a work group with other agency's training officers to plan joint training initiatives. The Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services as a member of the state's Workforce Investment Council deals with training issues system wide.

Training needs of the state's Native American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs, Centers for Independent Living, the Client Assistance Program and Community Based Rehabilitation Programs are considered in planning annual training activities. Training needs are addressed through a variety of resources including workshops, conferences and seminars hosted by other organizations such as Special Education, Department of Labor and Regulations, Parent Connection, Bureau of Human Resources training, professional organizations, client organizations (SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, SD Association of the Blind, National

Federation of the Blind of SD, Community Support Providers of South Dakota, SD National Alliance of Mental Illness and the SD Association of the Deaf), and distance learning are examples of sponsors of training activities in which staff participate. Independent study and mentoring by supervisors and senior rehabilitation counselors are other means for meeting individual staff development needs.

Statewide Assessment

An Assessment of rehabilitation needs of individuals residing within the state

The Designated State Units (DSU)'s in South Dakota submit this attachment to the "Needs Assessment" section of the VR Portion of the WIOA South Dakota State Unified Plan. The public vocational rehabilitation agencies in South Dakota are submitting attachment 4.11(a) with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Portion state plan update to reflect that a comprehensive statewide needs assessment has been accomplished with this plan submission. As a core partner in the Work Force Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan, the South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has conducted an assessment of the needs of all individuals with disabilities as per the needs assessment section of the State Unified Plan and the requirements of the revised state plan guidance. Public vocational rehabilitation has collaborated with their WIOA program partners in this assessment and subsequent planning process to assure that the workforce needs of the state to include individuals with disabilities was addressed.

2016 Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

The Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 marked the first year of activity in carrying out a three year set of goals and strategy based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) conducted largely in the year 2014 and 2015. This South Dakota 2016 Comprehensive Needs Assessment is unique in that is shaped both by the original and standing instructions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the new 2015 Work Force Innovation and Opportunity Act. The changes have required VR programs in the nation to adapt existing plans and priorities to the structure, values, and goals of the new legislation. The foundational changes coming from the implementation of WIOA re-defined how VR programs in South Dakota approached the CSNA for the 2016 VR portion of the of new Unified Plan. As a consequence of the Reauthorization the South Dakota VR Programs in consultation and collaboration with their respective Boards (SRCs) and a South Dakota VR/Workforce Board planning group have chosen these goals for the structure of the 2016 CSNA for the Unified Plan.

1. Review of key data and service narrative points generated from latest available federal program year to establish if there exists any need for revisions of the 2015 CSNA findings.
2. Supplement the CSNA to establish a new baseline of need and strategy regarding Transition services and other needs relative to the new and additional requirements of WIOA.
3. Work directly with the South Dakota Workforce Council to identify the service and program needs generated by the enhanced mission, goals, and strategies of WIOA.
4. Revise in collaboration with the South Dakota Boards (SRCs) the VR Portion of the Unified State Plan to reflect both the new WIOA emphasis, the service needs of South

Dakota individuals with disabilities, and finally adjust the goals and strategies as necessary.

Source Reports and Data (Base 2015 CSNA Documentation)

1. DRS: Agency Year End Data FFY 2013 (Board Report)
2. SBVI: Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911 Scott Sabella, Ph.D., CRC South Dakota Services to Blind and Visually Impaired Performance and Fiscal Comparison Report
3. DRS: Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911 Scott Sabella, Ph.D., CRC South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services Performance and Fiscal Comparison Report
4. DDN Public Meeting- SF, 04/25/2013
5. Governor's Task Force On Employing People with Disabilities
6. Lower Brule Disability Services Summit
7. Renewing the CHOICES Medicaid Waiver: Public/Tribal Forum & Questionnaire Results
8. SBVI 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
9. DRS: 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
10. SBVI Public Meeting 4/5/12
11. SBVI Public Meeting Notes Rapid City 4/13/12
12. South Dakota Advocacy Services Public Listening Session Summary
13. South Dakota Department of Human Services Strategic Plan
14. South Dakota DRS Board Meeting Minutes
15. South Dakota Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired Board
16. South Dakota Employment Works Task Force
17. South Dakota VR Service Providers- Training Survey Needs Survey
18. State of South Dakota Department of Transportation Public and Specialized Transportation Fiscal Year 2012
19. Survey of Parents/Caregivers of Children with Hearing Loss Final Report (submitted April 30, 2013)
20. Vocational Rehabilitation Program Federal FY 2014 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide
21. SBVI/DRS Consumer Satisfaction with Vocational Rehabilitation Services
22. South Dakota Indicator 14 2014 Report/South Dakota Department of Education

Source Reports and Data (Key Data and service narrative bridge analysis conducted in 2015/16)

1. DRS: Agency Year End Data 2013 (Board Report), MIS Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911
2. DRS Board Minutes spanning from June 2014, through June 2015

3. Governors Employment Works Annual Report
4. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys
5. Pre-Employment Transitions Services Survey
6. South Dakota Department of Human Services Mission and Strategic Plan
7. South Dakota Office of Special Education Indicator 14 Results
8. Analysis of notes and proceedings of DRS/SBVI, Departmental and Governors service need based public meetings.

1) Findings for the Statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the VR services of those with:

a) The most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment Services.

“Individual with a Most Significant Disability” means an individual with a disability who meets the criteria for having a significant disability and *in addition* has serious limits in two or more functional capacities (such as, but not limited to, mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome. Individuals who meet the criteria for this Priority Level I category are determined to be individuals with the “Most Significant Disability”. The needs identified for this category are as follows:

1. Employer Public Outreach Education

This category is composed of specifically identified needs to educate employers, work environments, and the public regarding the abilities and capacities of persons with the most significant disabilities. This category pointed to a need to change the larger social context in which vocational rehabilitation services were to be received by persons who have the most significant disabilities. This category gathers prominence in the review of key data and narrative points for this 2016 CSNA in large part due to the impact of the WIOA systems change elements that emphasize the productive relationship of the disability service systems and the business communities.

2. Transition Services

Post-secondary transition services in the overall scheme of priority and investment has increased in need prominence, but through legislation and the discussions generated in hearings and needs assessment meetings. Transition services were frequently referenced in public forums and agency sponsored listening sessions. The emphasis has been on the information and referral services required by families and students regarding preparation for the post-secondary life experiences. Transition services are also receiving strong emphasis in the strategic plans of the South Dakota Department of Human Services, and the South Dakota Governor’s office.

3. Benefits Work Incentives

This need often was expressed through participants in the needs assessment process who expressed misconceptions or misinformation regarding work incentives for persons with

the most significant disabilities. The very content of their participation described a need for education and dissemination of corrective information.

4. Transportation

Urban and rural transportation issues such as availability, scheduling, and cost contributed to this category of need which describes an ongoing need for persons with the most significant disabilities in South Dakota. The issues appear significantly acute in rural areas as well as those areas otherwise vulnerable to underservice in the realm of transportation options.

5. Self-Advocacy Skills

This need category references expressions of need to assist persons with the most significant disabilities to represent their personal and service needs effectively and appropriately in social and work settings.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed new strategies in the State Plan to provide outreach/media activities for targeting employers and the general public, provide benefits specialists services for clients, improving transportation services, increase transition services for students with disabilities and increase the self-advocacy skills of individuals with significant disabilities.

b) & c) The Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and/or have been Unserved or Underserved

DRS reviewed data, inquired through the DRS Board and surveyed staff regarding possible underservice for individuals with disabilities with an particular attention on assessing any unmet needs of individuals who are members of minority communities. In addition, as part of the CSNA, DRS submitted its 911 data to for an impartial analysis intended, in part, to determine if the patterns of service suggested underserved or underservice for any individuals, including minorities. The following needs indicate areas of concerns that arose from these assessment inquiries.

1. Services for Native Americans

This category compiles the expressions of service need specifically addressing the needs of Native Americans. In this category are survey responses and public forum commentary expressing a need for collaboration, local education events, information and referral, economic development, more appropriate provider services, and cultural awareness. Data also indicated Native American communities also deal with significantly more challenging conditions for transitions and transition services.

2. Employer Public Outreach/Education

These comments continue to be an interactive blend of cultural/economic and finally service response issues that work together to make services to minorities, Native Americans, and refugees more difficult. Additionally potentially new WIOA configurations of service make this a continuing high priority category of need and response.

3. Transition Services

Disengagement rates for high school exiters remain disproportionately high for high school dropouts, exiters labeled ED, American Indians, and Hispanic persons. The combined impact of both the WIOA systems change and this persistent service challenge moves transitions up in overall weight for the 2017 service plan with respect to minorities, hard to serve and unserved.

4. Rural Transportation

Even though transportation is a challenge in both rural and urban South Dakota, the perception of need is stronger in the rural low population communities where the possibilities of any public transportation options are much reduced. Again in minority communities where poverty and unemployment are present, this issue becomes proportionately more acute.

5. Rural Communities

Some rural communities in South Dakota have built in limitations and opportunities for employment due to low population, higher unemployment rates and higher concentrations of persons reporting disabilities. These factors combine make some rural areas high risk for underservice. When minorities are concentrated in these high risk rural areas, the level of risk is increased.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed strategies in the State Plan to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and have been unserved or underserved. The strategies include working with the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs; conducting listening sessions on Native American Reservations and working with minority service organizations to increase awareness of services that are available.

d) The Needs Of Individuals With Disabilities Who Are Served Through Other Components Of The Statewide Workforce Investment System.

South Dakota enters the WIOA era with an existing comprehensive and coordinated public and private statewide workforce investment system. Throughout the WIA era South Dakota VR programs have had a partnership of agencies and employer resources described in the Unified Plan with the South Dakota Workforce Development Council. Public vocational rehabilitation has been represented on the State Workforce Council. In addition to the methods of identifying needs described elsewhere in this attachment, DRS personnel partner with the state workforce system on local workforce boards, and by attending and presenting at statewide workforce conferences.

Public vocational rehabilitation currently participates on the SD Workforce Development Council's WIOA Implementation and Planning Group to assure the shifts in emphasis in the statewide vision and goals meets the needs persons with disabilities and in alignment with the resources and opportunities of the greater South Dakota economic community.

1. Employer Public Outreach/Education

The major needs inputs in this area again referenced with high frequency the importance of employer education, coworker support systems for persons with disabilities and partnership based on good information regarding the needs and capacities of individuals with disabilities. The Workforce system was a natural reference point for the diverse parties to focus their efforts to meet this need.

2. Work Force Process

The state of South Dakota at the level of Governor and Department are focused in their strategic plans on creating a system in which people with disabilities can better express their abilities in the work force. The attention of the state’s larger administrative systems is committed to enhancing the work force process more effectively respond to people with disabilities. DRS, in turn, will experience the need to develop coordinated responses in its own service delivery relationships with the developments within these partner workforce organizations.

3. Skilled Employment Training

There were requests for the work force system to generate and offer more specialized skill training opportunities for people with disabilities.

4. Services For Native Americans

Frequently the scope of needs for people with disabilities residing in the Native American nations exceeds the scope of the VR program. For some of these needs the response will likely need to be scoped more appropriately to the work force system as a whole. Needs such as economic development, more job opportunities, transportation, supports of daily living were most frequently expressed in a larger service system context of which DRS VR would be one of many partners.

5. Local Economic Development

Again, in the “at risk” rural communities, the foundational economy of jobs is the central issue. For work to be available for persons with disabilities in the home communities where they choose to live, the current economic reality and structure needs to be changed and enhanced. The VR response scope is limited in this in terms of larger scale economic development, and the perception of need implies a broader systemic state workforce response.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed strategies in the State Plan to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who are being served through the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The Division is co-located in 8 of the 11 offices with the Department of Labor and Regulation. The strategies include working with others to develop activities and materials that address employer and workforce outreach and education. Specific activities related to employer and public outreach and education are also included in the Governor’s Employment Works Task Force initiatives.

e) Individuals who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including as appropriate their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services

The South Dakota Agency conducted a statewide survey to establish a baseline of availability of the core pre-employment transition services from which strategies will be developed in response to areas in the state and in school districts where access to some or all services is less than sufficient given the vision of the state. Survey results indicated that between 67% and 74% of the South Dakota school surveyed were estimated to be able to provide all 5 core services to ½ or more of their students with disabilities. Between 26% and 33% could provide these core services to less than half their students with disabilities. Given the goal of meeting the Pre-Employment Transition (PET) needs of all students of transition age, the results of this survey will be integrated into the larger Unified plan to establish a strategy for continuously improving access to the 5 core PET services across the state of South Dakota

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed strategies in the State Plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities in obtaining Pre-Employment Transition Services. The strategies include working closer with local education agencies increasing the availability of PETs, coordination of plans and increasing transition services for students with disabilities.

Need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs

The CSNA surveys and forums gave evidence that the public and DRS staff are looking for additional, enhanced resources to serve their clients through the provider world (Community Rehabilitation Programs). The data indicates that there is a staff perception that some change is needed in the provider service configuration to continue to effectively serve wide and diverse range of needs of clients on the DRS caseload. The need changes expressed tended to revolve around specific training topics for providers and a greater variety of job placement options across South Dakota communities. The primary needs identified that relate to the South Dakota Community Rehabilitation Programs were:

1. Provider Training

Primarily staff contributed to this category citing the need for providers to work more effectively with persons with severe disabilities and minorities and also being more collaborative in terms of resources and working with VR. Due to turnover in the provider community and the changing needs of service, training issues are both systemic as well as more basic continuing education i.e. accessing hidden job market; serving persons with mental illness; job retention.

2. Job Placement Supports

DRS staff identified ongoing needs to have more and better trained job placement supports in their service areas (more prominent in rural communities). This need is also related to supported employment service needs for both specialized VR time-limited services and extended service capacity.

3. Community Rehabilitation Program Options

This category of need refers to those inputs from staff and community forums that expressed a desire for more options for providers and once again particularly in the rural

communities. This need also included expressions of need for more specialized service providers (i.e. mental health service providers).

4. Employer Public Outreach/Education

Often this category was referenced in the context of provider services being more connected to the employer/employment resources in the community and being postured to more efficiently match VR clients needing jobs to employer's needs.

5. Mental Health Services

Issues expressed here were expressed need statements for the expansion of case management, supported employment, placement services are made available to persons with mental illness via the provider system.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has developed strategies in the State Plan to assess and improve the community rehabilitation programs. A variety of training opportunities including conferences, webinars and seminars are provided throughout the state. In addition the Division has established a higher reimbursement rate for service providers who attend training and obtain become a Certified Employment Support Professional through Association of People Supporting Employmentfirst.

An assessment of the needs of individual with disabilities for transition career services and PET to extent coordinated with services provided under IDEA

In FFY 2015 DRS increased the number of students who are individuals who are students and receiving services under an Individual Education Plan (IEP) at application (371 for FFY 2014 to 444 in FFY 2015). The same trend of increase applies to students with a 504 accommodation plan, students with a disability and not covered by Section 504 and not receiving IEP services at application. As noted in a previous section of this CSNA, the burden of the 2017 Unified state plan strategy in improving services to students with disabilities at transition age will concentrate on the need to level access to the core PET services across the state. Counselor's and transition liaisons who participated in the 2015 PET Survey also expressed a the need to work with specific schools in assisting those schools strengthen their focus on services transition and partnering with VR counselors in a timely manner with regards to the coordination of services.

Annual Estimates

During FFY 2017 the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) estimates that the following outcomes will be accomplished based on prior year's data and service projections:

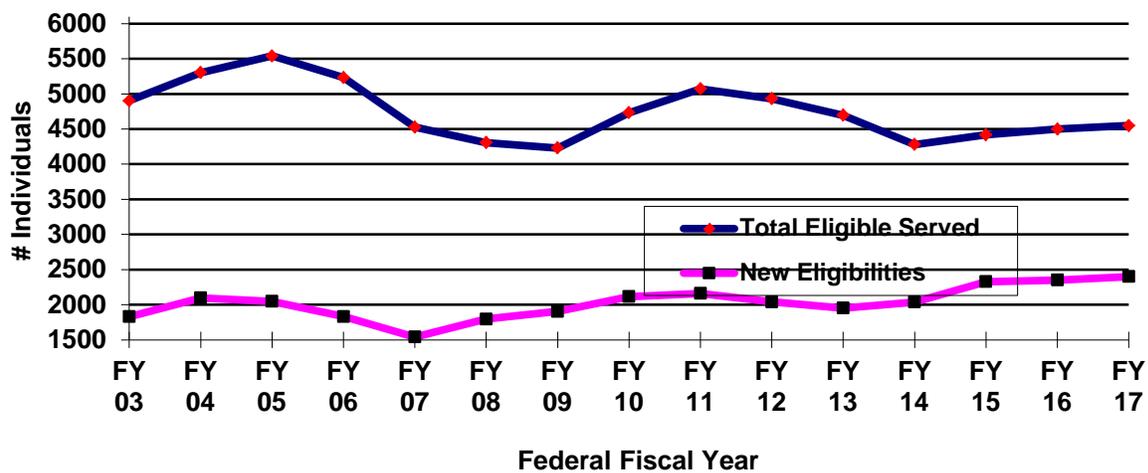
- 1) Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation – A total of 4,550 eligible clients will be served at a case service cost of \$7,034,000.00.
- 2) Title VI Part B Supported Employment – A total of 750 eligible clients will be served at a case service cost of \$300,000.00.

Estimate of the Number of Individuals Eligible for Services

During SFY 2000-2005, the Division of Rehabilitation Services experienced an overall increase in the number of clients receiving vocational rehabilitation services. This was attributed greatly

to the struggles in the economy. As the economy improved in 2006 and 2007, employment was more plentiful, allowing an increase of clients obtaining employment and a decrease in individuals applying for services. The economy again started declining in 2008. In FFY 2009, the Division of Rehabilitation Services had an increase of 13% in people applying for services. In FFY 2010, this increased another 5%. The Division experienced an 18% increase in applications in that two year period. The number of new applicants leveled off in FFY 2011 and started to decrease in FFY 2012 as the economy began to recover. The following graph demonstrates these trends. Based upon historical trends, it is estimated that the Division will have 2350 new eligible individuals in FFY 2016 and 2,400 new eligible individuals in FFY 2017.

Estimate of Eligibilities and Total Served



Estimate of Individuals Receiving Supported Employment Services

Supported employment is when an individual with the most significant disability is working in the community in an integrated setting above minimum wage alongside individuals who do not have disabilities. Supported employment is receiving the training at the job site and having available the necessary ongoing supports to help maintain the employment. The total number of clients for supported employment in FFY2015 was 692, and estimated for FFY 2016 are 700 clients and estimated for FFY 2017 is 750 clients.

Estimate and Cost of Services for Eligible Individuals

Previously, the Division of Rehabilitation Services was able to serve all eligible individuals. However, due to increased clients and increased costs for services, the Division implemented an Order of Selection effective 10/1/2006. The information is provided for management and planning purposes for implementing the Order of Selection. Below is an estimate of the number of individuals to be served and the cost of services for FFY 2017.

Priority Categories and Estimated Number to be Served:

Individuals currently being served under an Individualized Plan for Employment: 2,466

Priority I Eligibility: 1,688

Priority II Eligibility: 375
Priority III Eligibility: 21
Total: 4,550

Order of Selection Priority Categories

- **PRIORITY CATEGORY I** - Are individuals who meet the definition of individuals with the most significant disabilities which seriously limits them in two or more functional capacities.
- **PRIORITY CATEGORY II**- Are individuals who meet the definition of individuals with significant disabilities which seriously limits them in one functional capacity.
- **PRIORITY CATEGORY III**- Individuals with disabilities.

State Goals and Priorities

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division or DRS) mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain good jobs, economic self-sufficiency, personal independence, and full inclusion into the community. To accomplish this mission, the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division have jointly developed the Goals and Priorities listed below. These goals will be developed based on the analysis of the comprehensive statewide assessment; performance of Division's accomplishment in meeting the standards and indicators; and public input.

- Goal 1:** Students will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.
- Goal 2:** A strong statewide community with DRS presence and partnerships with business, service providers, schools, State Government, workforce system and service organizations.
- Goal 3:** DRS clients will have greater access to transportation services needed to obtain and maintain employment.
- Goal 4:** A VR Services delivery system that results in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Goal 5:** DRS clients will have the skills, motivation and supports necessary to make an informed choice for successful daily living, employment, money management, personal and work relationships.

Order of Selection

The Division of Rehabilitation Services is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds

The South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) is committed to ensuring that rehabilitation services are made available on a statewide basis to individuals with the most severe disabilities who have not traditionally been competitively employed or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent. These services are available through the Supported Employment Program.

South Dakota's annual allotment of Title VI-B funds is \$300,000. Over 95% of the Title VI-B funds are spent for consumer services. The state spends less than 5% of its allotment of Title VI-B funds for administrative costs. Supported employment funds are not expended until individuals with disabilities have been determined eligible for the 110 Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Supported Employment services are purchased by the vocational rehabilitation counselors through an authorization system. Expenditures exceeding the Title VI-B allotment are covered with funds from the 110 Program.

The Division will continue to expend over 95% of the Title VI-B funds on direct services for supported employment consumers. Supported employment expenditures exceeding the Federal allotment will continue to be paid from the 110 Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Supported employment funds will be authorized for approved providers of the consumer's choice. The amount of funds authorized will be based upon the individual's needs, type of placement, hours and type of employment.

During the next fiscal year, the Division plans to distribute the Title VI-B funds through the fee for service system as traditionally done in previous years. This allows for consumers who have greater needs to receive the level of services necessary to help them obtain supported employment. The Division will continue outcome-based contracts with mental health centers for supported employment services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. This contract model has encouraged the mental health centers to provide supported employment services and is a more accessible method of supported employment services for these consumers. These initiatives will help promote the employment of individuals with the most severe disabilities.

The total supported employment clients for FFY 2014 was 645 clients, FFY2015 was 692 client, estimated for FFY 2016 is 700 clients and estimated for FFY 2017 is 750 clients. Supported employment clients rehabilitated successfully for FFY 2014 was 230 clients, FFY 2015 was 201 clients, estimated for FFY 2016 is 225 clients and estimated for FFY 2017 is 240 clients.

States Strategies

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services established the strategies to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain good jobs, economic self-sufficiency, personal independence, and full inclusion into the community. The strategies listed below are key steps in accomplishing these goals.

- Strategy 1.1: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for clients who are attending post-secondary programs.
- Strategy 1.2: Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.
- Strategy 1.3: Implement outreach and informed choice strategies to include strategies to enhance effective communication for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Strategy 1.4: Conduct outreach activities for teachers, students with disabilities and their family members to provide information on vocational rehabilitation services.
- Strategy 1.5: Increase and strengthen transition services for students who are Native Americans or other minorities with disabilities exploring employment future.
- Strategy 1.6: Increase the availability of Pre-Employment Transition Services to school districts across the State.
- Strategy 1.7: Develop strategies that will increase transition services for students with disabilities prior to age 16.
- Strategy 2.1: Increase the service capacity and quality of services delivered through the service providers.
- Strategy 2.2: Strengthen partnerships with the business community.
- Strategy 2.3: Strengthen partnerships with organizations serving Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities.
- Strategy 2.4: Strengthen working relationships with entities, agencies, and organizations to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to underserved rural areas.
- Strategy 2.5: Strengthen the extended services for assuring successful employment for supported employment clients.

- Strategy 2.6: State Government will be a model employer in increasing the employment of people with disabilities in State Government.
- Strategy 3.1: Increase knowledge of the current transportation systems and compatibility with the employment systems.
- Strategy 3.2: Promote the participation of disability agencies and local communities to improve transportation services.
- Strategy 3.3: Improve the availability of transportation for Vocational Rehabilitation clients.
- Strategy 4.1: Improve the employment retention of Vocational Rehabilitation clients.
- Strategy 4.2: Provide specialized support services based upon individual's unique needs to keep their employment.
- Strategy 4.3: Strengthen the Benefits Specialists services for VR clients.
- Strategy 4.4: Increase the utilization of the Ticket to Work initiatives for Social Security beneficiaries.
- Strategy 4.5: Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities.
- Strategy 4.6: Promote the development & utilization of vocational skills training for individuals in South Dakota.
- Strategy 5.1: Implement strategies and tools for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in assessing the motivational state of VR clients as to their desire for employment.
- Strategy 5.2: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will utilize strategies and tools for assessing critical strengths and deficits in the client's personal life status and skills.
- Strategy 5.3: Develop potential provider supports for life skills development.
- Strategy 5.4: Increase the utilization of self-employment as an employment outcome for VR clients.

Future Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has reserved a budgeted amount for the utilization of the Innovation and Expansion. These funds will be used for the following activities:

- Support the cost of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation. This includes staff cost, accommodations and other direct costs involved in VR Board activities.
- Support the cost of the State-Wide Independent Living Council (SILC). This includes staff cost, accommodations and other direct costs involved in SILC activities.
- Support initiatives approved by the Board of VR to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State.
- Support the functions of the VR Board as described in Section 105 (c) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Support the establishment, development and improvement of community rehabilitation programs.
- Support improvement in service provision as measured through standards and indicators.
- Support initiatives to assist partners in the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Availability and Utilization of Assistive Technology

The Division of Rehabilitation Services makes assistive technology available to our Vocational Rehabilitation clients during each stage of the rehabilitation process. The primary provider of assistive technology in South Dakota is Dakota Link. This provider has AT resource areas throughout the state and they provide AT assessment for VR applications and clients. Many of the offices in the Department of Labor and Regulation have resource rooms available and have computers with assistive devices for individuals with disabilities.

Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities

South Dakota's racial mix consists of 92.5% white/Caucasian, 7% Native American and .5% all other racial groups. Native Americans represent the only significant minority group in South Dakota. South Dakota has seven separate tribal reservations with autonomous governing bodies. Collectively they represent the Great Sioux Nation and share a common culture and language. Typically these reservations are very rural, isolated, with high poverty, and high unemployment rates. Nearly half of all Native Americans in South Dakota live on reservations.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who serve each of the reservation areas. These VR Counselors meet with local Indian Health Services and tribal government staff to identify potential referrals. Generally staff works out of tribal offices when meeting with applicants/clients on living on the reservation. Native Americans living on reservations face unique challenges. First, they are eligible for a combination of tribal, federal and state programs to meet their vocational and health care needs. This requires extensive coordination and cooperation between agencies. Secondly, they are faced with significant cultural and economic barriers. Unemployment on South Dakota's reservations varies from 70 % to 80%. There is very little private employment. Most individuals are employed by either tribal or federal governments.

South Dakota is fortunate to have four American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs (AIVRS). These programs have greatly improved access to vocational rehabilitation services for those Native Americans served by these AIVRS Programs. The Division has established an on-going working relationship with each of the programs. We have assigned a VR Counselor to work with each Project to assist them in program development. Native American clients living on reservations have the choice of either being served by the AIVRS, the state unit or jointly by both programs. We encourage clients to be served either by the AIVRS Program or jointly by both projects. The AIVRS Programs have a better grasp of the cultural and the service delivery barriers that exist on reservations. The state agency has access to specialized programs and services which are not feasible for a AIVRS Program to maintain. On those reservations where a AIVRS Program exists, the Division does not plan to conduct extensive outreach activities. This function can more effectively be conducted by the AIVRS Programs. Our efforts will be to network with the AIVRS Programs to ensure that Native American clients have access to the full range of vocational rehabilitation services. DRS has a formal cooperative agreement with each AIVRS Programs.

A number of Native American client organizations have developed in the state. The Division works closely with these organizations to identify special needs and strategies to meet these needs. One of these organizations, Native American Advocacy Program, is an Center for Independent Living serving all nine reservations. Working in conjunction with the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Division has expanded its financial support for this organization. This organization has local liaisons on each reservation who refer directly to vocational rehabilitation. Both the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Independent Living Council have Native American representation. These individuals provide guidance and consultation to the Division on policy issues affecting Native Americans.

Overcome Barriers to Equitable Access to and Participation in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs

The Division has been very proactive in overcoming barriers for applicants and clients to access and participate in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs. Follow is a list of key activities implemented to assure equitable access:

- All District Offices are in accessible locations.
- All District Offices have a Z phone available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Three District Offices have purchased Ubduo communication devices for office staff to communicate with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- All DRS public meetings are held in locations that are physically accessible to people with disabilities.
- All applicants and clients are informed that alternative formats for information (Braille, diskette, large print, and auxiliary aids and reasonable accommodations) are available upon request for all Division events.
- The Division makes special efforts to provide interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, individuals who speak foreign languages, and individuals who speak Lakota, Dakota or Nakota.

- The Division participates in a “Loss Control Committee”. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate the accessibility and safety issues of all area offices.
- The Division’s Internet Home Page is accessible for individuals with disabilities who may be using assistive devices to access the information. The home page was evaluated for accessibility utilizing an application called “Bobby Approved”.
- The Division has implemented a policy to coordinate referrals for the provision of state wide assistive technology devices and services to ensure clients can overcome barriers they encounter during the rehabilitation process.
- The Division administers a telecommunication adaptive devices (TAD) program for free distribution of accessible telephone equipment to South Dakota residents with disabilities.
- The Division administers a telecommunication equipment distribution (TED) program for free distribution of accessible telephone equipment to South Dakota residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Division staff are working with all partners in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act offices to assure physical access, program access and services access.

Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Goal 1: Students will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.

Strategy 1.1: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for clients who are attending post-secondary programs.

Division Activities: The Division provides vocational guidance and counseling to assist students with choosing an appropriate post-secondary goal consistent with their interests and abilities. Activities included:

- The Division presented at the TRIO Conference in October, 2015.
- The Division works with all Disability Coordinators at the post-secondary facilities and hosts an annual meeting in Chamberlain, SD in June.
- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Program collaborated with five post-secondary institutes in the state to host five “Catch the Wave” events. These are one day workshops intended for high school students planning to attend post-secondary educational opportunities. Attendance numbers included a total of 480 individuals: Seventy-nine (79) – Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI), one hundred-thirty-six (136) – Black Hills State University (BHSU), Sixty-three (63) – Northern State University (NSU), ninety-five (95) – Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI), one hundred-seven (107) – University of South Dakota (USD).

Strategy 1.2: Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.

Division Activities: The Division provides transition services to 151 public school districts and 20 Tribal/Bureau of Indian Education Schools. The Division promotes early

involvement at Individual Education Plan meetings. Transition services available from the Division include Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attendance at Individual Education Plans, vocational guidance and counseling, Project Skills, Youth Leadership Forum and Catch the Wave. In FFY 2015 the Division had the following service outcomes:

- 384 students with disabilities participated in Project Skills. Project Skills is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities on an IEP to provide them with real world work experiences to develop work skills and determine interest areas.
- 9 students with disabilities on a 504 Plan participated in a paid work opportunity similar to Project Skills.
- The Division implemented a new policy to provide job placement and support services for high school and post-secondary students who participate in employer paid work experiences.
- The Division collaborates with the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to improve the education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of young adults, ages 18-24, with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits.
- The Division has enrolled 111 students with disabilities who are receiving SSI. This initiative called the ASPIRE grant (PROMISE Initiative) is a research grant to provide additional interventions to half of the students.
- The Division funds 3 Project Search initiatives serving 18 students in school year 2015. Division is expanding a new Project Search site in Rapid City.
- The Division is funding 9 establishment grants to expand supported employment services which will provide employment opportunities for 32 youth with disabilities.
- On August 11, 2015, the Division released the “Ability for Hire” campaign, which is an outreach campaign emphasizing the promotion of hiring, advancement, and retention of employment for people with disabilities in South Dakota’s workforce. As a part of this, the Division developed a brochure tailored towards youth with disabilities informing them of various scopes of information in the form of potential services they may receive as they work towards their career goals, information on the Transition Services Liaison Project, and information on post-secondary resources. The brochures will be beneficial for the Division’s personnel, students, parents, and teachers.
- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Project collaborated with over 75 individuals and community organizations to host the seventeenth annual Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). YLF is a five-day event intended for high school students with disabilities to explore personal leadership and career plans. Many individuals and organizations are directly impacted or involved in the leadership, self-advocacy and career awareness training for these students.

Strategy 1.3: Educate teachers, students and parents about Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Division Activities: The Division provides education to teachers, students and parents about Vocational Rehabilitation Services through one on one contact, school meetings, attendance at IEP’s and presentations to educators. The Division also maintains relationships with

WRIL, Parent Connection, DLR, SD Advocacy, and other community agencies to assist with community awareness/referral to VR services. Specific activities include:

- The Division participated in a DEI partnership meeting on October 8, 2015 at Western Dakota Technical Institute.
- The Division maintains a list of the VR Counselor and contact information assigned each school. This information is distributed at meetings with educators.
- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Project hosted 9 Regional Transition Forums in 8 communities across the state with a total of 321 individuals attending. The Forums provided an opportunity for the participants to learn about and meet the various service providers in the area (i.e. Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Benefits Counselors, IL Services, DD Resource Coordinators, Community Support Providers, and Assistive Technology Services).
- Division staff has been conducting meetings with teachers and other school staff who work with students with disabilities. This has expanded into having booths at job fairs, parent/teacher conferences and presenting to students/teachers at post-secondary preparation meetings.
- Division staff have presented twice at the USD Master's Program in Special Education and also the Sinte Gleska University Human Services Master's Degree program.
- The Division has established a Project Skills workgroup to review current practices and policies. This workgroup consists of Transition Services Liaison staff, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Special Education personnel.

Strategy 1.4: Expand transition services that have demonstrated effectiveness through evidence based practices identified in follow-up surveys for Indicator 14, which is the outcome measure one year after high school for students who were on an Individual Education Plan.

Division Activities: Indicator 14 measures outcomes compared to various transition services. The Division is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Special Education to access Indicator 14 information for each school district. Successful transition services which demonstrate effectiveness for Indicator 14 are work experiences and self-advocacy training. Outcomes during FFY 2015 consist of:

- Project SEARCH is a unique business-led transition program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. It provides students a chance to explore careers and develop transferable job skills. It is an internship program that places students in real-world situations where they learn all aspects of gaining and maintaining a job. South Dakota currently has three Project SEARCH sites, Avera St. Lukes Hospital in Aberdeen, SD State University in Brookings and Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls. The Division has expanded the number of Project Search sites from three to four to include Rapid City Regional as the new business site. The initial start-up meeting for the Rapid City site was held on November 16 & 17, 2015.
- The Division has partnered with other agencies in funding Augie Access, a post-secondary program for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- The Division continues to fund Project Skills paid work experience but has expanded to funding paid work experiences for students with disabilities who are not on an IEP.

- The Division has implemented a policy to provide job placement and supports for employer paid work experiences.
- The Division has continued to fund the Transition Services Liaison Program that implements the Youth Leadership Form, Catch the Wave and Regional forums.
- The Division, Office of Special Education and the Transition Services Liaison Project hosted four, one-day Indicator workshops for high school special education teachers in four communities across the state. The workshops were held in Rapid City, Mitchell, Sioux Falls and Aberdeen. The content included Indicator 14 data retrieval, assessing post-school outcomes for individual school districts, best practices in reaching quality post-school outcomes and strategies in enhancing Indicator 13 best practices. A total of 153 participants attended these trainings.
- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Project hosted a two-day Project SEARCH training titled “Reaching the Goal of 100% Employment”. The training event was free to Project SEARCH site staff and was held in Brookings on January 5 & 6, 2015. Twenty-one people participated in the event and played an important role in the function of a current Project SEARCH site or the development of a new program.
- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Project TSLP collaborated with the Center for Disabilities to host a two day teacher workshop (summer institute) which focused on three primary evidence based practice areas (work experience, self-determination and interagency collaboration). Fifty-one people attended the event which included 45 special education teachers, five service providers and one parent. One graduate credit was available for attending the workshop and an additional credit was available for special education teachers that developed an action plan and implemented a new evidence based practice within their school district. Eleven individuals took advantage of this opportunity and are implementing a new strategy to improve post-school outcomes for their students.

Strategy 1.5: Implement outreach and informed choice strategies for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Division Activities: The Division promotes services to youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. Activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division works closely with the Deaf Education Coordinators at the South Dakota School for the Deaf to make referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division had a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor participate in the PEPNET initiative. PEPNET is a federally funded project whose mission is to increase the education, career, and lifetime choices available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The Division assisted in expanding the transition section on the SD School for the Deaf website. The website changes are expected to be completed by February 2016.
- The Division revised the transition handout specifically for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.
- The Division purchased UbiDuo machines that provide communication options in three District Offices. Training was provided to the Division staff in utilization of these machines.

Strategy 1.6: Conduct outreach activities to students with disabilities and their family members to provide information on vocational rehabilitation services.

Division Activities: The Division has expanded its efforts to increase referrals from students with disabilities and their family members. Activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- This past year the Division developed an outreach campaign with a marketing firm to develop marketing materials and promotions.
- The Division sponsored websites such as “Ability to Hire” and Freedom to Work which provide specific information geared for youth with disabilities and their family members.
- A brochure was developed specifically to provide information on Vocational Rehabilitation Services for students with disabilities and their family members.
- The District Offices have developed a directory of Special Education staff and 504 Coordinators to make referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division distributed an introductory letter for students and their parents that was distributed on the Office of Special Education’s list serve.
- The Division presented at the South Dakota Parent Connection MyFILE trainings in Aberdeen on 2/10/2015 and Rapid City 3/28/2015. The MyFILE is a transition to adulthood tool.
- The Division staff participates in Community Fairs and other community activities to provide information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division has been having booths at job fairs, parent/teacher conferences and presenting to students/teachers at post-secondary preparation meetings.

Strategy 1.7: Increase and strengthen transition services for students who are Native Americans or other minorities with disabilities exploring employment future.

Division Activities: South Dakota currently has four American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) Programs. The Division has cooperative agreements with all four AIVR Programs.

Activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Cooperative Agreement with the Standing Rock AIVR was updated to include new language of coordination of services for students with disabilities.
- The Division amended the Cooperative Agreement with the Oglala AIVR Program to work more closely with their program during the lapse of funding to assure continuation of services for Native Americans with disabilities on the Oglala Reservation. The Division will be opening an office in Kyle, South Dakota in addition to a weekly presence in Kyle and Pine Ridge office locations.
- On December 16, 2014, The Division held a meeting with the 4 AIVR Programs with a major part of the agenda focused on transition services for students with disabilities. A similar meeting is being scheduled on December 15, 2015 to include the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division, in partnership with the four AIRV Programs, has a booth each year at the Lakota Nation Invitational (LNI) held in Rapid City.

- The Division and the ASPIRE Grant are working jointly with the Tribal Councils to obtain research approval on their reservations. Research approval has been received from Oglala, Standing Rock, Lake Traverse, Crow Creek, and Rosebud Reservations.
- The Division, in partnership with the Transition Services Liaison Project, conducted transition forums on the Oglala Reservation on December 2014 and March 2015. A total of 74 people attended these two events.
- On October 7, 2015, The Division and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services partnered and participated with the Oun’iyekiyapi Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, in hosting a disability awareness event.
- The Division and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services participated in the Disability Services Summit on April 28th at Sinte Gleska University in Mission, South Dakota.
- The Division provided MyFILEs for the four American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs to utilize with Native American students with disabilities.
- Division staff continues to meet with teachers from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and Tribal Schools. This initiative has expanded to meeting monthly with students with disabilities.

Goal 2: A strong statewide community with DRS presence and partnerships with business, service providers, schools and service organizations.

Strategy 2.1: Increase the service capacity and quality of services delivered through the service providers.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- Beginning in January 1, 2016, the Division awarded 9 establishment grants to Community Support Providers to expand the supported employment services program. This initiative is funding 11.6 FTE new employment specialists/job coaches who will develop community employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities currently residing in a segregated employment setting and/or under the age of 24. These 9 grants are estimated to assist 66 additional individuals in obtaining community employment.
- The Division currently has contracts with 42 private individuals to provide job placement and job coaching services.
- Beginning June 1, 2015 the Division promoted providers to become Certified Employment Support Professionals. The Division has hosted 4 examinations where 75 individuals have taken the examination and 50 individuals have been approved.

Strategy 2.2: Strengthen partnerships with the business community.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division has five District offices and two of them presently have private non-profit entities that are business-led models led by employers providing education, resources, and training to promote the hiring and retention of people with disabilities to the business community. These two business led initiatives funded by the Division are the Business Resource Network in Sioux Falls and the Workforce Diversity

Network of the Black Hills. The Division is providing the opportunity to the three remaining District offices for funding seed grants up to \$10,000 to establish new business-led models. The purpose of these seed grants is to expand employer organizations providing education, consultation, and technical assistance to businesses on hiring individuals with disabilities in the community. Letters of interest have been received from two Chambers of Commerce and a Human Resource Management Association. The contracts with these entities will begin on January 1, 2016.

- Division staff from each District are members of non-disability organizations in efforts to connect with employers. These organizations consist of the Chambers of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and the South Dakota Retailers Association. There is a total of 14 staff who are members of the Chamber of Commerce and SHRM associations. These opportunities allows for connecting with businesses to learn more about their workforce needs and identify any training opportunities and other areas to collaborate.
- The Division and the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation promote and fund initiatives across South Dakota to promote National Disability Employment Awareness Month. In October 2015, there were 12 locations/events that took place where business leaders and employers attended.
- On August 11, 2015, the Division conducted a webinar training to the South Dakota Retailers Association. 26 businesses participated in the training and an additional 43 businesses watched the recording of the training at a later date. The webinar is available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_w6PbqG0dY&feature=youtu.be.

Strategy 2.3: Strengthen partnerships with organizations serving Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division in partnership with the four AIRV Programs have a booth each year at the Lakota Nation Invitational (LNI) held in Rapid City.
- The Division and the ASPIRE Grant are working jointly with the Tribal Councils to obtain research approval on their reservations. Approval has been received from Oglala, Standing Rock, Lake Traverse, Crow Creek, and Rosebud Reservations.
- The Division, in partnership with the Transition Services Liaison Project, conducted transition forums on the Oglala Reservation on December 2014 and March 2015. A total of 74 people attended these two events. On October 7, 2015, The Division and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services partnered and participated with the Oun'iyekiyapi Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, in hosting a disability awareness event.
- The Division and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services participated in the Disability Services Summit on April 28th at Sinte Gleska University in Mission, South Dakota.
- The Huron Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor presented to the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation about the provision of services to minority population in the Huron, South Dakota area.

- There is an AIVR Director representation on the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Statewide Independent Living Council.
- The Division amended the Cooperative Agreement with the Oglala AIVR Program to work more closely with their program during the lapse of funding to assure continued services for Native Americans with disabilities on the Oglala Reservation. The Division will be opening an office in Kyle, South Dakota in addition to provide a weekly staff presence in Kyle and Pine Ridge office locations.
- On December 16, 2014, The Division held a meeting with the four AIVR Programs with a major part of the agenda focused on transition services for Native American students with disabilities. A similar meeting is being scheduled on December 15, 2015 to include the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Strategy 2.4: Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services with the elementary and secondary school systems.

Division Activities: The Division has expanded efforts to increase referrals from elementary and secondary school districts. Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division has presented several times to special educators at events hosted by the Transition Services Liaison Project (TSLP) to increase knowledge and awareness of Vocational Rehabilitation Services available.
- The Division meets with school personnel/teachers to explain VR services and increase referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division works with the TSLP Specialists seeking assistance and direction with increasing referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The Division participates in Transition Forums, Catch the Wave, Career Days and Youth Leadership Forum activities.
- Division staff have been meeting with the Middle School staff (guidance counselor and Special Education staff) where presentations and discussions have begun about Vocational Rehabilitation staff being present during parent teacher conferences to help with beginning the transition discussion for students with disabilities before the age of 14 and preparing for high school.

Strategy 2.5: Strengthen working relationships with entities, agencies, and organizations to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to underserved rural areas.

Division Activities: A significant portion of South Dakota is considered rural and remote.

Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division has expanded private providers to Belle Fourche, Mission, Sisseton, Huron, Mobridge, Webster, White River and Wentworth to help provide services in rural areas of the State.
- The Division provides services to rural areas by being physically present in those areas. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors travel to these areas and meet with local businesses, agencies, clinics, etc., to promote VR services for citizens.
- The Division utilizes social media (Facebook, Twitter), websites, and TV commercials to inform South Dakota residents about Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Strategy 2.6: Strengthen the extended services for assuring successful employment for supported employment clients.

Division Activities: South Dakota has 19 nonprofit community agencies serving people with developmental disabilities referred to as Community Support Providers who provide extended services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The State also has 11 community mental health centers that provide extended services for individuals with mental illness. Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- Beginning in January 1, 2016, the Division awarded 9 establishment grants to Community Support Providers to expand the supported employment services program. This initiative is funding 11.6 FTE new employment specialists/job coaches who will develop community employment options for individuals with intellectual disabilities currently working in a segregated employment setting and/or under the age of 24. These 9 grants are estimated to assist 66 additional individuals in obtaining community employment.
- The Division partners with 42 provider agencies with the Ticket to Work initiative to promote choice of services and extended services for individuals who receive Social Security Administration benefits.

Strategy 2.7: State Government will be a model employer in increasing the employment of people with disabilities in State Government.

Division Activities: South Dakota became a model state for disability employment in part because Governor Dennis Daugaard has a personal interest in the subject as a son of two deaf parents. As a member of the National Governors Association, Gov. Daugaard supported Gov. Markell's Better Bottom Line Initiative and he helped organize hearings on finding employment solutions for people with disabilities. Furthermore, South Dakota created the Employment Works Task Force, which develops hiring solutions for people with disabilities. In addition the Division recently launched its new Ability for Hire program, which alters public perceptions and touts the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Ability for Hire's approach to achieving this ambitious goal is through networking, educating, and informing supervisors, businesses, and the general public about what individuals with disabilities have to offer.

Respect Ability published an article on September 29, 2015 titled "The Best-and Worst-States for Workers with Disabilities". In this article, South Dakota was identified as the 3rd best state leading the nation in creating more job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The State of South Dakota has promoted Project Skills within State Government. In FFY 2015 10 students with disabilities participated in the Project Skills Program, a paid work experiences within State agencies.

The Division has been proactive in providing training to State Government personnel managers. The Division conducted the following initiatives:

- Presented about Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the Manager's Conference in October 2014.

- Promoted Project Skills in State agencies where 10 students with disabilities gained work experiences.
- Conducted ADA assessments to assure accessibility of state agencies to include physical and programmatic access for individuals with disabilities.
- All state positions are now listed with on-line Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).
- Assisted with the Job Accommodation Network to provide training to Bureau of Human Resources Personnel Managers.

Goal 3: DRS clients will have greater access to transportation services needed to obtain and maintain employment.

Strategy 3.1: Increase knowledge of the current transportation systems and compatibility with the employment systems.

Division Activities: The Division participates in local Mayor’s Advisory Committees for People with Disabilities to promote ways to increase the transportation capacity at the local level. The Aberdeen Mayor’s Advisory Committee has a transportation committee and recently they were able to increase their fleet by another two vehicles. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors remain familiar with transportation options in the communities they are serving, and work to offer clients informed choices on transportation options.

Strategy 3.2: Promote the participation of disability agencies and local communities to improve transportation services.

Division Activities: The Division works closely with local workgroups with the intention of improving transportation in communities across the State. The most common community workgroup model is the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities. Through the Division’s involvement, accessible city buses are now available to citizens and clearing of sidewalks is being promoted in communities. Other communities have promoted increasing Dial-A-Ride services for citizens with more significant impairments.

Strategy 3.3: Improve the availability of transportation for Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

Division Activities: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in each community work to identify needs or gaps in transportation for their clients. Recently Aberdeen Ride Line reinstated their transportation service, allowing people from Aberdeen to reach the Jefferson Bus lines which allows travel for other employment opportunities. During FFY 2015, the Division funded transportation services for 423 clients for a total of \$125,607.

Goal 4: A VR Services delivery system that results in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Strategy 4.1: Improve the employment retention of Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

Division Activities: On-going supports and training to providers are key elements to improve employment retention for individuals with disabilities. Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division continues providing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors motivational interviewing training. This training allows VR counselors to better understand the stages of change and work with clients in moving towards the action of employment.
- Providers are entering into agreements to assure plans for sustaining employment allow for employment supports to continue.
- The Division has agreements with 42 service providers to continue the on-going supports for Social Security beneficiaries.
- The Division has provided free job development webinar trainings from Kenfield Consulting Services. Thirty-one agencies took part in these webinars during the past year.
- The Division is piloting a project with a post closure survey for clients who do not qualify for supported employment or Plans for Sustaining Employment. At this time there are approximately 4 clients and employers who are contacted by job placement providers quarterly for a year after successful closure. The survey indicates all four individuals have maintained their employment and one individual increased their work hours from part time to full time employment.

Strategy 4.2: Track the earnings for SSA beneficiaries and implement actions to increase the earnings and employment rate of clients who are SSA beneficiaries.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- During FFY 2015, 364 SSA recipients were closed successfully. At the time of application, 92% of those individuals were unemployed or had wages less than Trial Work. At the time of closure, 27% had wages between Trial Work and Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA), and 21% had wages above SGA.
- The Division provided Benefits Counseling to 251 SSA recipients who were closed in FFY 2015. The Division created 445 Individual Plans for Employment that included Benefits Counseling Services.

Strategy 4.3: Provide specialized support services based upon individual's unique needs to keep their employment.

Division Activities: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with the applicant/client in identifying their unique needs and abilities to maintain their employment. Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- Vocational Rehabilitation clients are offered the informed choice of working with benefits specialists and independent living specialists in their area.
- The Division has implemented a Person Centered Thinking (PCT) approach which focuses on the individual's health and safety while looking at employment goals.
- The Division, Service Provider and Individual with a disability enter into an agreement at the time of employment on roles/responsibilities to assist the individual to sustain their employment. The Division implemented 245 Plans for Sustaining Employment in FFY 15.
- The Division provided Interpreting services to 55 individuals, Personal Attendant services to 7 individuals, and Disability Related Skills Training to 56 individuals during FFY 2015.

Strategy 4.4: Strengthen the Benefits Specialists services for VR clients.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division has increased the number of Benefits Specialists from 4 to 6 positions. These positions are located in each Division District and available to provide benefits specialist services for Social Security Recipients. These staff have received their certification from Virginia Commonwealth University.
- Two staff from the ASPIRE project have been certified as Benefits Specialists and will be available to deliver services to all individuals when their grant is completed.

Strategy 4.5: Strengthen the Ticket to Work initiatives for Social Security beneficiaries.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division and the Transition Services Liaison Project hosted an “Employment & SSA Benefits” workshop for youth in transition in Aberdeen on March 16, 2015. This was a two and a half hour presentation on SSA benefits, resources available and work-incentives available to youth while gaining work experiences. Sixteen people attended this training.
- The Division and South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network hosted four “Work Incentives for People with Disabilities” workshops for service providers, state agency staff and VR counselors. Seventy individuals attended these workshops.
- In April 2014, the Division funded SSA Work Incentive trainings for SSA beneficiaries in Aberdeen, Yankton, Watertown, Rapid City, Mobridge and Sioux Falls. Approximately 50 individuals attended these trainings.

Strategy 4.6: Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- During FFY 2015, 22 individuals participated in a paid work experience program.
- During FFY 2015, The Division assisted 608 individuals and paid \$46,678 for On the Job Training reimbursements to employers. During FFY 2015, The Division paid \$104,738 to service providers to conduct Situational Assessments at various job sites.
- During FFY 2015, The Division assisted 863 individuals and paid \$228,615 to service providers to provide job coaching support services at the job sites.

Strategy 4.7: Promote the development & utilization of vocational skills training for individuals in South Dakota.

Division Activities: Outcomes and activities promoting this strategy consist of:

- The Division is co-funding Augie Access, a new post-secondary program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Augie Access started with four students in August of 2015 and is working on efforts to recruit additional students for the next school year.
- During FFY 2015, the Division assisted 13 individuals attending graduate level college; 172 individuals attending a four year college; 28 individuals attending a junior college; and 92 individuals attending a vocational training program.

Strategy 4.8: Meet or exceed performance levels established for the Performance Indicators under Evaluation Standard 1- Employment Outcomes & Standard 2 – Equal Access to Services (established in 34 CFR Sec. 361.84(c)(1) of the Federal Regulations).

Division Activities: The Division monitors these indicators during the year and at each District Level. The Division has met these performance standards for FFY 2015.

Goal 5: DRS clients will have the skills, motivation and supports necessary to make an informed choice for successful daily living, money management, personal and work relationships.

Strategy 5.1: Implement strategies and tools for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in assessing the motivational state of VR clients as to their desire for employment.

Division Activities: In April and May 2015 all Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors were able to attend the motivational interviewing training. This expanded on previous trainings to allow VR Counselors a more thorough understanding of motivational interviewing techniques to use with clients. Through this training counselors continue to work with clients in determining their stage of change and develop internal motivation for employment goals. August 5 & 6, 2015 Division management staff attended additional training on Motivational Interviewing techniques to be incorporated into supervisory styles and ensure that supervisors are aware of the information that counselors are working with clients on. Motivational Interviewing has also been incorporated as an area that will be reviewed in Counselor's annual review process.

Strategy 5.2: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will utilize strategies and tools for assessing critical strengths and deficits in the client's personal life status and skills.

Division Activities: Through motivational interviewing and person centered thinking training, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have established further tools and strategies to utilize in assessing clients readiness to change. This includes reviewing the client's health, safety, and vocational goals to ensure that all services are in place for them to be successful. These tools have been made available electronically for VR Counselors to access. The Division has also implemented Person Centered Thinking (PCT) coaches in each district. These coaches allow mentor other staff in the PCT practices within the district offices.

Strategy 5.3: Develop potential provider supports for life skills development.

Division Activities: The Division utilizes service providers to deliver various social and life skills development areas including advocacy Skills to Pay the Bills curriculum and the Top 20 for Teens training material. In addition the Centers for Independent Living have established summer transition training programs providing transition age youth learning opportunities in life skills areas. The Aberdeen District Office has implemented weekly trainings for transition students ages 16 to 21. This training allows students to gain further life/social skills and information as they transition out of high school.

Strategy 5.4: Increase the utilization of self-employment as an employment outcome for VR clients.

Division Activities: In April 2015 self-employment training was provided to VR counselors across the state. Self-employment is an area that is emphasized as a viable employment option for individuals with disabilities. With South Dakota having many rural areas this can be a possibility where community-based employment may not be available in certain employment interest areas. During FFY 2015 six individuals were closed successfully in self-employment.

The VR Program's goals performance under section 116 of WIOA

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been monitoring the development of the performance standards and indicators. Utilizing the FFY 2015 data, the Division's performance was evaluated in meeting the minimum requirements for Standards 1 and 2. The following chart displays the outcome of this assessment.

| Standard/Indicator | Minimum Requirement | Division's Outcome | Indicator Met |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Standard 1: Employment Outcomes | 4 of the 6 Indicators and 2 of the 3 Primary Indicators | 6 of the 6 Indicators and 3 Primary Indicators were met | |
| Indicator 1.1 | 862 | 769 | No |
| Indicator 1.2 | 55.8% | 68.54% | Yes |
| Indicator 1.3 * | 72.6% | 100% | Yes |
| Indicator 1.4 * | 62.4% | 99.3% | Yes |
| Indicator 1.5 * | \$9.57 (estimated) | \$10.27 | Yes |
| Indicator 1.6 | 53% | 59.61% | Yes |
| | | | |
| Standard 2: Equal Access to Services | The Indicator must be met | The Indicator was met | |
| Indicator 2.1 | 80% | 82.26% | Yes |

* Designates Primary Indicators

Past Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds

Section 101 (a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Amended requires the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to reserve and use a portion of the funds for:

- (i) The development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State; and
- (ii) To support the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Prior to the 1998 Amendments of the Rehabilitation Act, the Division of Rehabilitation Services was required to utilize 1.5% of the Federal 110 funds for Innovation and Expansion (I&E) activities. The Division continues to use these funds at an increased percentage. During the 2015 State Fiscal year, \$147,626.74 was spent for I&E activities through a contract with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to provide staff support for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Independent Living Council. The contract provides for the following:

- Support staff for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council contracted through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. This includes wages and benefits for .9 FTE Board support staff.
- Operational costs, equipment and travel for support staff and office supplies paid through the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.
- Costs involved in having members of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation or the Statewide Independent Living Council attend meetings/training.
- Strategic Planning Initiatives approved by the Board of VR to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services budgets approximately \$183,346 annually for support services and strategic planning activities for both the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council. Expenditures for the strategic planning activities for FY 2015 consist of the following:

| Amount | Expense |
|--------------------------|---|
| \$1,574.33 | Support of 2014 Governors Awards Ceremony |
| \$100 | Board's Organizational membership dues and donation for Coalition |
| \$474.81 | Rapid City BW Ramkota Joint meeting with Division/Tribal VR staff (Dec 2014) |
| \$2,000 | Support of Lighting the Way/Solutions for Success: Diagnosis Through Adulthood Conference |
| \$222.48 | Support of Public meeting held in Mission April 28 2015 (supplies) |
| \$200 | Support of Mission Public Meeting |
| \$400 | Presentation on Person Centered Training Thinking Tools |
| \$118.25 | Sioux Falls Rubber Stamp - Name Badges for Board members |
| <u>\$12,000.0</u> | Financial support of NDEAM activities held across the state |
| <u>0</u> | |
| \$17,089.8 | Total Expenditures |
| 7 | |

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Quality scope and extent of services provided

Ensuring that quality supported employment (SE) services are being provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities in South Dakota is a priority for the Division. Quality is measured by more than just the number of individuals who receive supported employment

services. Quality also incorporates key values such as self-determinism; choice; person-centered supports; quality of life; and full inclusion.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) is committed to providing quality supported employment services to individuals with disabilities. Providing training to VR counselors and supported employment service providers is essential to improving services. The Division currently contracts with the South Dakota Center for Disabilities to provide comprehensive training for supported employment service providers in South Dakota.

In June 2015, the Division implemented a 25% higher reimbursement rate to supported employment service providers who obtain a Certified Employment Support Professional credentials. In addition, the Division has been sponsoring trainings to help service providers improve their service ability and maintain their continued education credits.

The timing of transition to extended services

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency provides time-limited services needed to support an individual in employment. Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 24 months of job coaching and follow-along services unless the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) indicates that more than 24 months of services are necessary for the individual to achieve job stability prior to transitioning to extended services. For individuals who are youth with intellectual disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 48 months of job coaching and follow-along services.

Prior to the purchase of supported employment services, the need for the services, the appropriate extended services and funding, and the appropriate agency agreeing to provide the services are established and identified on the IPE. The transition to the extended services (long term funding source) occurs when 18 months of job coaching and follow along services have been provided or earlier if the following three requirements are met:

1. The individual's employment is stable;
2. The individual has met the hourly goal of employment established in the IPE; and
3. The extended services are immediate without any interruption in the provision of the ongoing services to maintain employment.

If the IPE indicates that more than 24 months of services are necessary in order for the individual to achieve job stability, the time-limited services of job coaching and follow along can exceed 24 months. After the individual has transitioned to extended employment, the individual must maintain employment for at least 90 days before the consumer's case is a successful closure.

Assurances and Certifications - Division of Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation General)

Assurances

| | | |
|--|------|------------------------|
| | X or | Statement of Assurance |
|--|------|------------------------|

| | | |
|----|-----|--|
| | NA | |
| 1. | X | Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 2. | X | Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140. |
| 3. | | Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: |
| | X | (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.. |
| | X | (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): |
| | X | (A) is an independent State commission. |
| | X | <u>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council</u> |
| | X | (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60. |
| | X | (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR Program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). |
| | No | (e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/ No) |
| | No | (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/ No) |
| | Yes | (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes /No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. |

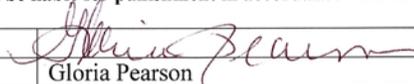
| | |
|----|--|
| | <p>X (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>X (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.</p> <p>X (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <p>X (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>Yes (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)</p> <p>X (d) comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.</p> <p>X (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act .</p> <p>X (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>X (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | X | <p>101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.</p> <p>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State,</p> <p>(A) has developed and will implement,</p> <p>(i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and</p> <p>(ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and</p> <p>(B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).</p> |
| 5. | X | <p>(a) Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
| | X | <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
| 6. | X | <p>(a) Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
| | X | <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that:</p> <p>i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act</p> |
| | X | <p>ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |

Certifications



**WIOA Statement of Certification
Vocational Rehabilitation**

| STATEMENTS OF CERTIFICATION | |
|--|--|
| 1. | I certify that the South Dakota Department of Human Services (hereinafter referred as SDDHS) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 2. | I certify that as a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the SDDHS agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. |
| 3. | I certify that the As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the SDDHS agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. |
| 4. | I certify that SDDHS and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. |
| 5. | I certify that the State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. |
| 6. | I certify that all provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. |
| 7. | I certify that the Cabinet Secretary of SDDHS has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. |
| 8. | I certify that the Cabinet Secretary of SDDHS has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services. |
| 9. | I certify that SDDHS , the agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. |
| I do hereby certify that all statements made by me are true and correct, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, further, I understand that in the event that I have knowingly and willfully made any false statements, I will be liable for punishment in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and statutes. | |
| Signature: |  |
| Printed Name: | Gloria Pearson |
| Title of Signature: | Cabinet Secretary |
| Date Signed: | 1-11-16 |