

# **Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports - Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds of Innovation and Expansion Activities**

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## **State Unified Plan**

The State Unified Plan requires partner agencies to describe actions that will be taken if performance falls short of expectations. The Rehabilitation Act provides remedies and plans for state agencies that do not achieve required performance standards. State Plan Attachment 4.11(e)(2) addresses Unified Plan requirements in their entirety. This attachment clearly demonstrates:

- 1) The public vocational rehabilitation program's descriptions as to achievement of all goals and strategies established in the FFY 2009 State Plan attachments 4.11 (c)(1) and 4.11 (d).
- 2) All goals are being achieved.
- 3) The Division of Rehabilitation Services in South Dakota exceeds all standards and indicators pursuant to performance standards in the Rehabilitation Act.
- 4) As evidenced in the Attachment 4.2c and in the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) report to the Governor, there is an evaluation of progress made in improving the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program from the prior year.

Performance outcomes of the vocational rehabilitation program are summarized for and addressed to the Workforce Development Council as well as the state rehabilitation councils.

## **Progress in Accomplishing Strategies and Goals**

This section of the State Plan is a summary of the progress in accomplishing the Strategies and Goals as identified in FFY 2011 State Plan Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and 4.11(d).

**Goal 1:** Improve and expand services that will enhance earnings, employee benefits and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities (including individuals served through Supported Employment).

Strategy 1.1:            Develop and implement strategies to identify higher paying positions for individuals with disabilities;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Staff have become members of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) Chapters in their communities; attendance of weekly Career Center staffing meetings; periodic meetings with area providers; information exchange with business, federal (The NET), local and state government entities for job postings (i.e., universities, county extension office)
- ❑ Provided training and encouraged utilization of various resources: Department of Labor website (South Dakota Works Job Search), ONet website, Chamber of Commerce economic statements on salaries;
- ❑ Promoted at transition activities and the development of Individuals Plans for Employment (IPE) the utilization of post-secondary education to increase consumer earning potential; and
- ❑ Provided financial assistance to consumers in given situations (i.e., travel assistance for interviews out of town, relocation expenses) when considering employment options with higher wages.

Strategy 1.2: Identify barriers which people with disabilities experience in gaining or maintaining employment and then develop and implement methods or strategies to address, challenge or change these barriers (i.e., attitudes, physical barriers);

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Developed a ‘ten week group plan’ which addresses specific areas of employment on weekly basis (interests, abilities, work skills, goal setting, employment search) in the Brookings office;
- ❑ Utilized meetings as vocational rehabilitation informational avenues (local mental health centers, care programs, SHRM meetings, Experience Works) and collectively brainstormed ideas to identify and reduce barriers which individuals with disabilities face;
- ❑ Conducted barrier awareness activities across the state (monthly diversity information and client profiles shared with SHRMs, Employer Resource Networks being developed and modeled in other communities, offering assistance with conducting building inspections for ADA compliance, and coordinating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) activities which involves employers and providers); and
- ❑ Recruited and provided training for new employment providers.

Strategy 1.3: Increase average earnings over the next three years to increase 5% annually above performance indicator 1.5;

The average annual wage for individuals rehabilitated in competitive employment during FFY 2011 was \$14,696. This was an increase of 4.3% from FFY 2009. The increase in wages has been lower in recent years due to the high percent of consumers who are Supported Employment consumers, Social Security recipients, and categorized as individuals with Most Significant Disabilities. Of the successful closures during FFY 2011, only 27 individuals had medical insurance from the employer at the time of application. At closure, 109 individuals had medical insurance from their employer. This was an increase of 303%.

In FFY 2011, it was estimated that Indicator 1.5 would be met and exceeded by 10.4%. The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Monitored the average wage earnings by priority categories consistent with Order of Selection;
- ❑ Incorporated into the case management system a component when conducting job referrals which ensures necessary information was being provided;
- ❑ Recognized counselors who place consumers in employment with higher earnings;
- ❑ Implemented the Future’s Initiative which consists of reviewing the provider fee schedule to identify incentives for placement (e.g., higher wages, continued employment);
- ❑ Conducted meetings with providers/employment consultants to discuss wages, service contracts, and incentives;
- ❑ Approximately 17% (126) of the Division’s successful employment closures were Supported Employment.
- ❑ Implemented the Ticket to Work initiative that shares payments with providers when a consumer’s earnings reached various milestones.

Strategy 1.4: Evaluate contracts and/or services for improvement, which provide short-term and long-term vocational supports for consumers with disabilities who have co-occurring diseases/disabilities;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Worked collaboratively with providers (e.g., mental health centers, community support providers) to identify better outcomes for consumers to include short and long-term supports, and to improve and increase successful outcomes. One example was a mental health center assigning a full time employment specialist to work with consumers served by both entities.
- ❑ The Division continues work on a co-occurring grant with other divisions in the Department of Human Services.
- ❑ Provided intensive advanced job development training to employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.

Strategy 1.5:            Develop and implement strategies to improve consumer’s retention of employment status;

For FFY 2011, the Division had 127 individuals’ successful closure cases as Supported Employment. This is 17% of the Division’s closures and it should be noted that the national average for FFY 2010 is 10%. The Division serves a significantly high percentage of individuals receiving Supported Employment services. The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Identified and implemented different techniques for crisis intervention with consumers or employers; employment guidance and counseling; on the job training; employer awareness training; self-advocacy training; independent living skills training; and follow along services;
- ❑ Promoted and utilized job readiness and retention classes with career learning centers, mental health centers and other providers;
- ❑ Provided financial assistance for award recognition programs for consumers who maintained employment;
- ❑ Re-examined array of services for consumers to achieve more successful outcomes (i.e., trial work periods, pre-employment training, independent living skills) for consumers who return to vocational rehabilitation services;
- ❑ Encouraged youth with disabilities and others to participate in leadership development activities;
- ❑ Recognized individuals with disabilities who are employed (e.g., National Disability Employment Awareness Month events, Pat Smith awards) and obtained media coverage/publicity;
- ❑ Promoted the Ticket to Work initiative that promotes partnership between VR and providers. The Division entered into agreements with 45 providers to help provide a funding stream and promote higher employment and continued employment. This initiative includes developing a Plan for Sustaining Employment that is signed by the consumer; and
- ❑ As of 9/30/2011, the Division paid \$94,989 to providers as their share of the Ticket to Work reimbursements for providing employment supports to help individuals with disabilities maintain their employment.

Strategy 1.6:            Develop and implement strategies to increase the earnings and employment rate of consumers who are SSA recipients;

The weekly earnings for SSA recipients closed successfully rehabilitated in FFY 2011 increased to \$187.88 per week. This amount in FFY 2007 was \$152.51. It was also determined that SSA recipients who received benefits specialists services had a 13% increase in success rate and a 30% increase in wages as compared to SSA recipients who did not receive benefits specialists services. The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Encouraged counselors, consumer and family members to attend various workshops and training events (e.g., benefits and employment trainings, Social Security trainings on PASS and IRWE, and job search training assistance programs);
- ❑ Education and training offered to consumers, providers and staff regarding the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities program;
- ❑ Held monthly meetings with various providers to discuss strategies to improve earning potential (wages and hours) for consumers;
- ❑ Implemented a referral process for consumers who are Social Security recipients to meet with a benefit specialist; and
- ❑ Implemented the Ticket to Work initiative with SSA consumers where payments are shared with providers when consumers reach higher earnings.

**Goal 2:** Expand and strengthen partnerships with business (or employers), service providers and service organizations in communities across the state.

Strategy 2.1: Create partnerships with business community;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ District offices have membership with the local State Human Resource Management (SHRM), Chamber of Commerce and economic development committees;
- ❑ Utilized the Employer Resource Network as a model to enhance partnerships with employers which also provided employer education (i.e., employee assistance programs, job accommodations, assistive technology);
- ❑ Two Futures Initiative members assumed projects in their communities to promote business partnerships;
- ❑ Worked with the Business Resource Network in Sioux Falls in creating a new partnership to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain employment;
- ❑ The Division helped establish Project Search in Aberdeen, Watertown and Sioux Falls. This is a partnership that includes the school districts, Department of Labor, local providers and the local hospital; and
- ❑ The Division and Medicaid Infrastructure Grant have been working with New Tec in Aberdeen to develop additional technical training programs for individuals with disabilities.

Action 2.1.b: Identify and support employer initiative activities (i.e., job fairs, Employer Resource Network(s), Society of Human Resource Manager’s Chapters);

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Several offices participated in activities in their communities (e.g., job fairs, Career Center’s sponsored resource day for businesses, on-site visits with local businesses for better understanding of their needs);
- ❑ Offices worked with local high schools with job shadowing projects; and
- ❑ Raised SHRM’s awareness and understanding of available training dollars from the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and Statewide Independent Living Council;

Strategy 2.2: Support employer activities of hiring individuals with disabilities (i.e., promote diversity training with employers);

The success of this strategy is a result of the Division's continued participation with SHRM, Job Fair Committee and Career Center staff with training/presentations (e.g., disability/diversity programs, job accommodations, WOTC, WIA).

Strategy 2.3: Implement and/or improve strategies to provide vocational rehabilitation services to Native Americans and others with minority backgrounds with disabilities;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Reviewed and updated Cooperative agreements with the four American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs (AIVRS);
- ❑ Ensured a Division liaison was identified to meet with the AIVRS program staff on a regular basis (to offer technical assistance; reviewed cases which both agencies could provide assistance; to explore other collaborative opportunities, provide training on transition and Project Skills, participate in IEP meetings);
- ❑ Extended invitation to staff of the AIVRS programs to attend Division sponsored training events;
- ❑ Attended the Drug and Alcohol Health and Wellness training sponsored by Indian Health Services;
- ❑ Invited Bureau of Indian Affairs and other tribal schools to participate in events such as career fairs to provide information on Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), Catch the Wave and Project Skills;
- ❑ In December 2011, held a joint meeting with the Directors of the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The Division has been following up and having quarterly meetings with the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs; and
- ❑ The 2012 Fall Conference is being planned and held in coordination with the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

Strategy 2.4: Implement and/or improve strategies to coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for VR consumers who are attending post secondary programs;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Annually hosts activities with post secondary disability services coordinators (i.e., monthly meetings, provided training on psychological testing for staff of both entities, hosted an annual meeting for the disability coordinators, extended invitation for them to attend district office staff meetings);
- ❑ Worked in conjunction with the Transition Services Liaison Project on activities (e.g., drafted manual for disability service coordinators to utilize, promoted consumer attendance at Catch the Wave); and
- ❑ District Supervisors and VR Counselors are meeting at least annually with disability service coordinators of South Dakota post secondary programs.

Strategy 2.5: Implement and/or improve strategies to coordinate vocational rehabilitation services with the Special Education system;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Encouraged staff to participate on various council /committees/meetings: Special Education Advisory Council, Interagency Transition Steering Committees, teacher in-service meetings, transition forums, special education directors meetings;

- ❑ Co-location of Division district offices with transition services liaison coordinators;
- ❑ Transition Services Liaison Coordinators attended staff meetings at the district offices; they have offered presentations on IDEA, IEP requirements, signed diplomas, additional assessments, guardianship and SSA status;
- ❑ Developed a Project Skills handbook for special education teachers and providers;
- ❑ Implemented Project Search initiative in three communities with the local schools and hospitals; and
- ❑ Worked with South Dakota Parent Connection to inform parents and families of available options.

Strategy 2.6: Identify and strengthen working relationships with entities, agencies, and organizations to enhance the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Weekly and monthly meetings scheduled with various entities across the state: private providers; homeless coalitions, Departments of Social Services and Labor; community and county health organizations, community action programs, career learning centers, veterans organizations, drug and alcohol treatment centers, Salvation Army and other missions, church groups, independent living centers, Department of Corrections and parole officers, alternative sentencing programs, PLANS, and other Division of Developmental Disabilities outreach program staff;
- ❑ Updated referral procedures for DakotaLink (South Dakota’s Assistive Technology Project);
- ❑ Provided Benefit Specialists to serve each district office;
- ❑ Supported activities of the Freedom to Work Leadership Council in Aberdeen, Brookings, Rapid City, Yankton and Sioux Falls;
- ❑ Provided two day training for the Department of Labor’s newly hired “navigators” in addition to extending invitation for them to attend the Fall conference and staff meetings; and
- ❑ Provided training to all VR staff on the National Career Readiness Certification.

Strategy 2.7: Identify, utilize or refer individuals with disabilities to alternative funding resources;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Provided referral information to consumers (e.g., food, clothing, housing, transportation);
- ❑ Shared post-secondary information with consumers when appropriate (e.g., PELL/SEOG grants, post secondary schools);
- ❑ VR Counselors have received training in alternative funding sources so they can share these resources with consumers when appropriate; and
- ❑ Provided Work Incentive manuals to each Vocational Rehabilitation office.

Strategy 2.8: Update contacts and improve working relationship with the Small Business Administration to improve the coordination of services for individuals seeking self-employment.

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Continue contacts with the Small Business Administration and the South Dakota Development Center (SDDC) to improve coordination of services for individuals seeking self-employment;
- ❑ SDDC staff presented at the Division’s conference and resources were shared with attendees (i.e., assessment forms);

- ❑ Most business plans for self-employment are coordinated with SDDC; and
- ❑ Established a cooperative agreement with SDDC for coordination of services for self-employment.

Strategy 2.9: Expand the use of private providers to serve consumers in rural communities.

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Encouraged providers to serve consumers in rural areas through reimbursement for travel time and mileage;
- ❑ Assistance provided with development of marketing tools as a result of monthly provider meetings;
- ❑ Encouraged providers to attend the NDEAM events, job fairs and SHRM meetings to assist with marketing;
- ❑ Offered employment option to consumers to become a private provider (i.e., the four benefit specialists are former consumers of vocational rehabilitation services); and
- ❑ Had agreements with 40 private providers as of the end of FFY 2011.

**Goal 3:** Strengthen partnerships with DRS consumers to ensure informed choice, responsibility and involvement throughout the rehabilitation process.

Strategy 3.1: Review and implement strategies to provide information to applicants or consumers determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services regarding their rights and responsibilities;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Provided all applicants with ‘Portfolio to Employment’ which includes an outline of the VR process and Client Assistance Program brochure in addition to the financial needs, comparable benefits requirements and plan development information;
- ❑ Developed additional strategies to address independent living skills (i.e., accessed services through PLANS, community support providers and mental health centers);
- ❑ Utilized Project Skills to assist high school students to better understand their skills, interests, disability and functional limitations when exploring career options; and
- ❑ Implemented Project Search which will provide approximately 25 students a variety of internships in the hospital or other business setting.

Strategy 3.2: Identify and implement strategies to promote successful employment outcomes for consumers who choose self-employment as their employment goal;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Staff attended training sessions focused on better utilizing and understanding self-employment; (Small Business Development Center assisted with this training.)
- ❑ Utilize SCORE personnel to assist in helping the person start a business plan, where available; and
- ❑ Provided training to counselors on the Business Assessment Scale and providing self-employment resources from Small Business Administration (SBA) and SDDC.

Strategy 3.3: Promote and strengthen efforts to encourage the representation and participation of consumers in leadership activities (i.e., attend Boys/Girls State, Youth Leadership Forum, serve on councils/boards/committees);

The Division was successful with this strategy by developing a promotional video of the Youth Leadership Forum which is utilizing the Transition Services Liaison Project, VR Staff, and teachers to encourage students to apply to attend the Youth Leadership Forum. The YLF has provided approximately 40 participants with this opportunity annually. A number of youth who have attended YLF continued their growth and experience and serve on a variety of boards/councils (i.e., Statewide Independent Living Council, Council on DD; Freedom to Work Leadership Council).

Strategy 3.4: Increase and strengthen transition services for students with disabilities who are exploring their employment future;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Informed high school students of Project Skills, Catch the Wave and YLF;
- ❑ Informed students of services offered at the Career Centers (e.g., resource room, job seekers assistance program);
- ❑ Exploring additional mentoring activities and opportunities for youth through YLF;
- ❑ Encouraged youth to explore participation in community activities; and
- ❑ Established three Project Search initiatives that will provide approximately 25 students an opportunity to obtain internships in the hospital or other business environment.

**GOAL 4:** Improve and expand outreach and training efforts regarding vocational rehabilitation services to the general public.

Strategy 4.1: Develop and disseminate materials and information to public;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Distributed Disability 101 Booklets and brochures to SHRM members, employers, and businesses;
- ❑ Hosted an exhibit at the SD Safety and Health Conference which had over 400 employer attendees;
- ❑ Developed a new brochure for businesses;
- ❑ Purchased marketing supplies such as pens and table covers to use at conferences or other events;
- ❑ Hosted booths at a variety of conferences; and
- ❑ Attended Chamber meetings/events and provided brochures when possible.

Strategy 4.2: Identify outlets or training avenues to provide and/or disseminate information about vocational rehabilitation services;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Developed posters and brochure holders which were distributed/displayed at county court houses, schools, colleges and other state agencies; and
- ❑ Co-hosted several ADA Anniversary celebrations around the state which had press coverage.

Strategy 4.3: Develop techniques to directly market individuals with disabilities to employers (i.e., ERN, Chamber,);

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Marketed consumers to employers through the Chambers, SHRMs, job fairs and tours;
- ❑ Worked with Sioux Falls employers to establish the Business Resource Network;
- ❑ Sioux Falls and Aberdeen Project Search programs have established Business Advisory Councils to assist with the placement of Project Search participants;
- ❑ Worked with the Statewide Diversity SHRM director to make it possible to disseminate consumers' resumes, in addition to posting them on their website; and
- ❑ Continued working with the Employer Resource Networks in posting monthly consumers profiles/resumes.

Strategy 4.4: Identify, promote and work in partnership with other entities to conduct/sponsor trainings (i.e., diversity training, debunking myths/stereotypes/perceptions of people with disabilities).

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Hosted NDEAM activities with community partners (e.g., employer and human resource manager training sessions, recognition of employees and employers, disability etiquette trainings, success stories featured in area newspapers, interviews on radio stations);
- ❑ Regular attendance and presentations made at various service club meetings;
- ❑ Division staff served on variety of boards/committees to broaden perspective (e.g., homeless coalitions, mayor's committees, transportation); and
- ❑ Yankton Office assisted the Mayor in establishing a Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

### **Goal 5: Monitor and evaluate the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services:**

Strategy 5.1: Monitor and evaluate the implementation of Order of Selection and share this information with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Monitored the Order of Selection and provided status reports to the Department Secretary and to the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- ❑ Moved all individuals off the Order of Selection waiting list as of 1/01/08;
- ❑ Continued to monitor the case services budget and expenditures to ensure all eligible individuals could be served; and
- ❑ Utilized the majority of the Stimulus funds for case services.

Strategy 5.2: Evaluate the agency's past and current performance in meeting the established Standards and Performance Indicators;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Performance Standards and Indicators monitored on a quarterly basis and published in an annual report which is shared with the Board and the public; and
- ❑ Performance Standards and Indicators are calculated at the district office level and utilized to determine potential improvement for a counselor or office;

Strategy 5.3: Evaluate and monitor caseload sizes to ensure counselors are accessible and available to consumers;

Division's successful activities included the Division evaluating caseload sizes on a quarterly basis to determine and prioritize staffing levels across the state. During FFY 2008, the Division converted a clerical position into a counselor position for the Yankton District. The Yankton District assumed some of the territory from the Sioux Falls District. Caseload sizes are evaluated on-going at the District Office levels and statewide level.

Strategy 5.4: Assess and identify vocational rehabilitation staff training needs;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Identified training needs assessment on an annual basis of all staff; feedback was obtained through the staff, consumer satisfaction surveys, Board members, and public input;
- ❑ Encouraged attendance at training events offered at the local level;
- ❑ Continued to sponsor and participate in an annual conference, typically the Fall Conference.
- ❑ Continued to promote and fund staff in attending various training sessions in their community; and
- ❑ Solicited staff for training needs to be conducted on monthly video conference training sessions.

Strategy 5.5: Obtain, evaluate and utilize recommendations or public comment to improve the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services (i.e., Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Statewide Independent Living Council, Freedom to Work Leadership Council, general public);

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Encouraged public input through public meetings, hosting events in conjunction with other groups or entities to draw attendance; and having staff or Board members attend other planned events (i.e., Youth Leadership Forum, PLANS);
- ❑ Provided draft policies and attachments accessible to the public through the Division's website for further review and comment; and
- ❑ Offered public comment period through the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation quarterly meetings; minutes were shared with the above listed entities as well as having updates from each council or project at each meeting;

Strategy 5.6: Evaluate other needs assessments, surveys to identify areas of need in regard to delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation Services;

The Division and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation received copies of various needs assessments and other data to assist with the comprehensive assessment needs of our state (e.g., consumer satisfaction survey results, Freedom to Work surveys, case file reviews, Department of Transportation fiscal year end data, input gathered at conferences).

Strategy 5.7: Review, monitor and improve the Division's processes and policies to improve efficiencies in the delivery of services for consumers;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Annually conducts case file review to assess and monitor delivery of VR services;

- ❑ Evaluated caseload sizes on a quarterly basis to ensure statewide distribution proportioned to staffing levels. (District office local reviews to ensure equal distribution of staffing patterns or other issues that may arise);
- ❑ Implemented the Futures Initiative in the Fall of 2007 which entailed senior counseling staff assuming more responsibility of reviewing, monitoring, and improving various processes;
- ❑ Reviewed the Office of Special Education survey results of Indicator 14. The results reflected that South Dakota VR has done well in assisting students with disabilities transition from high school to the adult system;
- ❑ Provided training on the World of Work Interest Inventory to Division staff in assessing consumers on aptitude and employment interests; and
- ❑ Revisions have been made to the VR Counselor manual on case file organization, comprehensive assessment and goal justification.

Strategy 5.8: Identify, evaluate and address any safety, health and welfare issues of vocational rehabilitation counselors and consumers;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Installed automatic locking doors in the larger district offices for security measures;
- ❑ Conducted a safety assessment on VR Counselors and the results were shared with staff and the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and follow-up training was provided at the Fall Conference;
- ❑ Included office safety as a regular topic at staff meetings; and
- ❑ Continual monitoring of staff following the policy on Personal Safety.

Strategy 5.9: Promote and utilize advanced training to increase counselors awareness and understanding of different disabilities and related functional limitations;

The Division attributes the success of this strategy to the following activities:

- ❑ Offered trainings at conferences on various disability categories, functional limitations and assessments;
- ❑ Invited consultants to present to staff on various topics: mental illness, learning disabilities and interpretation of psychological testing results;
- ❑ Attended training sessions offered by other agencies/entities (i.e., Yankton Area Mental Wellness Conference); and
- ❑ Utilized video conference for monthly training seminars.

Strategy 5.10: Promote and utilize performance based contracts;

As an initiative of the Future's members, the service rates and guidelines were revised to promote outcome based measures for reimbursement to providers. The Division has also implemented the Ticket to Work initiative where milestones are shared with providers when consumers obtain higher earnings and maintain employment.

Strategy 5.11: Continue to evaluate cases of consumers which have less than minimum wage, and work less than 10 hours per week;

All successful closures with less than minimum wage or less than 10 hours per week were submitted to the Division for review for appropriateness. During FFY 11, only 3 cases were less than 10 hours a week as compared to 19 cases for FFY 2007.

Strategy 5.12: Continue to monitor satisfaction of services of eligible consumers;

The consumer satisfaction survey was disseminated quarterly to random consumers at different stages of the vocational rehabilitation process. The results were shared with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and utilized when considering the goals/objectives/actions of the agency. As part of the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, unsuccessful consumers will be surveyed to help identify strategies to increase the Division's success.

### **Federal Program Evaluation Standards**

In accordance with the provisions of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education proposed the following evaluation standards (see Federal Register Vol.63, No. 198 issued on October 14, 1998 on Proposed Rules, pages 55292- 55305). The proposed standards 1 and 4 are based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The proposed standards 2, 3, and 5 are not based on the Workforce Investment Act, but the Secretary believes that they are important factors in successful rehabilitation programs. Standards 1 and 2 have been finalized as published in the Federal Register Vol.65, No. 108 issued on June 5, 2000, pages 35792 - 35801. The remaining standards have not yet been finalized.

### **Standard 1: Employment Outcomes**

Standard 1 is based on section 106 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-220 of August 7, 1998), which contains the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. This standard requires an agency to assist eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, to obtain, maintain, or regain high quality employment outcomes. The quality of an employment outcome is based on whether the outcome is consistent with the individual's vocational choices; is in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment; maintains or increases the individual's earnings; and allows medical insurance plans covering hospitalization. The following six performance indicators measure minimum compliance with this standard.

- 1.1. Compare the total numbers of individuals obtaining an employment outcome during the current and previous performance periods.
- 1.2. Measure the number of persons obtaining an employment outcome as a percentage of all persons exiting the program after receiving VR services.
- 1.3. Measure the number of persons obtaining a competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment outcome as a percentage of all persons obtaining any type of employment outcome. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.4. Measure the percentage of competitively employed individuals who have significant disabilities. **Primary Indicator**
- 1.5. Measure the average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed. **Primary Indicator**

- 1.6. Measure the difference between the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage who report their own income as their largest single source of economic support and the percentage of individuals in that employment who reported their own income as their largest single source of support at the time they applied for VR services.

**Standard 2: Equal Access to Services**

Standard 2 requires compliance with one performance indicator which measures equality of access to rehabilitation services.

- 2.1. Measure whether individuals from minority backgrounds have been provided services at the same rate as non-minority individuals.

**Assessment of the State VR Agency in meeting the Performance Standards and Indicators**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been monitoring the development of the performance standards and indicators. Utilizing the FFY 2011 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.

<b>Standard/Indicator</b>	<b>Minimum Requirement</b>	<b>Division’s Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator Met</b>
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	690	719	Yes
Indicator 1.2	55.8%	65.09%	Yes
Indicator 1.3 *	72.6%	100%	Yes
Indicator 1.4 *	62.4%	98.33%	Yes
Indicator 1.5 *	\$8.48 (estimated)	\$9.36	Yes
Indicator 1.6	53%	61.10%	Yes
Standard 2: Equal Access to Services	The Indicator must be met	The Indicator was met	
Indicator 2.1	80%	81.58%	Yes

**Past Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds - DRS**

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 2011 State Fiscal year, \$122,758 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, 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 \$130,000 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 2011 consist of the following:

\$ 8,648.57	NDEAM (2010 events)
\$ 100.00	BVR organizational dues for SD Coalition (\$35 for dues and \$65 for donation)
\$11,000.00	NDEAM (2011 events)
<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>	Governor's Awards Ceremony
<b><u>\$22,748.57</u></b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>