Vocational Rehabilitation – Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

Input from the State Rehabilitation Council
The Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (Board), the state rehabilitation council for the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI or Division), is in place to advise the Division in accordance with Title IV, Section 105 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. The Board advises the Division in the development of the state plan, the Board annual report, review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other activities including review of policies that impact the expenditure of federal and state funds and the coordination and planning for service delivery to individuals involved in the SBVI vocational rehabilitation program.

The Board represents South Dakota citizens who are blind or visually impaired who can benefit from vocational rehabilitation and independent living services within the state. The Board's mission statement reflects these priorities: "The mission of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote independence, employment and full inclusion for all citizens who are blind or visually impaired." All Board agendas are developed by the Board’s Executive Committee with the Division Director. Policies are provided to Board members in draft format to offer the opportunity for input prior to finalization. No recommendations by the Board of SBVI were rejected by the Division during the plan period.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Due to reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act through implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), South Dakota Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) and the Board of SBVI addressed priorities contained in the WIOA and obtained input for the state plan through public forums. Implementation of Title IV of the WIOA was discussed at all meetings including pre-employment transition services, coordination and strategic planning with the Department of Labor and Regulation, subminimum wage, services and collaboration with employers and how the changes will impact services. The impacts of WIOA were discussed at all quarterly Board meetings in 2015.

Review of State Plan Goals and Strategies
State Plan attachments were prepared based on input from members of the Board of SBVI including the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Regulation, the gubernatorial appointed cabinet member representing South Dakota’s labor and employment programs. Attachments were drafted based on Board and stakeholder input and data analysis including labor market trends in the state. Drafts were presented to the Board and suggested changes were made based on their input. The full Board reviewed and provided input prior to submittal to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Department of Labor.

The Board Strategic Plan and Policy Committee met to make recommendations to the goals and strategies based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, input from public meetings and other sources of information pertinent to the quality of vocational rehabilitation services. All attachments were distributed to all board members for further review and comments.
Public Meetings
Public forums and disability summits are planned to share information and obtain input on services and needs of citizens with vision loss. Information obtained through public input, coordination with other entities including labor, education and consumer organizations is used to re-evaluate goals and strategies in the state plan. The Board of SBVI recommended sites and formats for the meetings as well as topics to be prioritized for discussion including priorities identified in Title IV of WIOA. Board members facilitated each of the meetings. Based on advice from the Board, consumer organizations host the meetings by circulating meeting announcements to constituents and providing local transportation for the meetings.

The Division agreed with the Board’s recommendations related to public meetings including that meetings be held in Rapid City (in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind State Convention), on a reservation which resulted in a meeting in Mission on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, and a videoconference with sites in Aberdeen, Pierre, and Sioux Falls. SBVI invited the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Department of Human Service’s representatives and other disability related organizations, including tribal organizations to participate in the gathering at Sinte Gleska University in Mission, SD. The practice of conducting public meetings in conjunction with other events that bring together people who are blind or visually impaired has worked well; the Division will continue to seek opportunities for this collaboration in the future. Board members served as facilitators at the public meetings. Over 100 people attended the public gatherings in 2015.

Individualized Plan for Employment Timelines Program Guide
The Division sought Board input and approval for the revised program guide addressing timelines for Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) was emailed to Board members prior to the quarterly Board meeting. Due to changes in the Rehabilitation Act, the IPE must be completed within 90 days after eligibility determination or an extension must be agreed upon by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and eligible individual. A general employment goal may be used for job exploration if an individual is not sure of a specific employment goal. If an extension is needed, it must be documented in the case management system.

The Board of SBVI unanimously approved the revised policy addressing timelines for developing Individual Plans for Employment.

SBVI Supported Employment Allotment
In the past Supported Employment funds were 100% federal funds. WIOA requires that 50% of the Supported Employment allotment be used on transition services and a general fund match is required. Since the SBVI allotment is only $6,000, the SBVI Director and DHS Budget and Finance staff decided to relinquish the allotment to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to avoid the burden of reporting and tracking. This will not impact services as SBVI has adequate Vocational Rehabilitation funds to provide services including supported employment services. The Board of SBVI supported the transfer of supported employment funds to DRS.

Board Support for Individuals/Organizations
The Board of SBVI sponsors events that promote employment of citizens with disabilities in conjunction with organizations of the blind and other organizations. Procedures for Board support were revised in 2015 with input and unanimous support from Board members. The Division of SBVI developed procedures for Board sponsorship based on input from the Board of SBVI.
Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities
The annual Governor's Awards event is held to recognize individuals, employers and organizations for their contributions to the employment of persons with disabilities. This annual event is a joint effort of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Department of Human Services.

The Division supported the Board’s recommendation to assist with the Governor’s Awards, and supported attendance by Board members. The Board has a representative who assists in making the award selections along with a committee of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities
National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) activities are planned in communities across South Dakota every year by the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and SBVI staff for the month of October to raise awareness of the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In addition to a financial contribution towards the budget for the events, the Board of SBVI partners with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation in reviewing proposals for local NDEAM events.

The Division endorses the Board’s involvement in planning and supporting NDEAM activities.

White Cane Awareness Day
The Board voted unanimously to support a white cane education activity in Sioux Falls. A march and presentations by law enforcement and citizens who were blind resulted in public awareness for those in attendance as well as those who experienced the event through extensive news coverage on local television stations.

The Division supported the Board’s sponsorship of the White Cane Day activities by assisting with costs for sign language interpreters.

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)
YLF was held June 7-11 in Aberdeen with 40+ students in attendance. Several participants were blind. YLF makes a huge impact in the students’ lives. It is life changing, not only for the students but for the staff as well. SBVI Board Member, Julie Briggs was there with her son for one day and attended the luncheon. There were 90 applicants this year, but only forty could be selected.

The Division agreed to continue to support the annual Youth Leadership Forum and support participation of transition age students with vision loss.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Event Sponsorship
The Board agreed to help sponsor the ADA event in Sioux Falls.

The Division supported the Board’s support of the ADA event.

VR Program- Consumer Satisfaction
FFY 2015 marks the seventh year that SBVI has partnered with the Board of SBVI to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey using the SBVI Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 (CSQ-8) survey. The survey consists of eight core questions and an additional seven questions that were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI.
The survey was sent to 168 people who received services and were closed from the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program during the past year. Seventy-one surveys were returned for a response rate of 42% which represents a decrease from last year. As with previous years, the overall consumer satisfaction mean was very high at 29.77 out of a possible 32, with a standard deviation of 3.3. Survey participants were asked directly “In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?” 96% of survey participants indicated that they were very satisfied with the service they received from SBVI. Responses from the survey illustrate that SBVI improved substantially from past years, in providing services to people that were perceived as positive, effective and satisfying.

Input from the Board regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey centered on increasing the response rate. The Division conducts follow up phone calls to increase the response rate of program participants. Other approaches will be explored with the Board of SBVI to address the decrease in the response rate.

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee
The Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) advises the board and the Division on assistive technology (AT) and related topics. The ATAC has played an important role in keeping the Board and Division updated on recent developments in the AT realm while developing resources for citizens with vision loss.

With guidance from the ATAC, the Division has developed multiple resources to provide information to citizens with vision loss on low-cost AT solutions and accessible cell phones. This information is updated on an annual basis. Other options for technical assistance include seminars, training in conjunction with conventions sponsored by consumer organizations of the blind and designated times for walk-in or call-in technical assistance to the Division of SBVI assistive technology instructor.

Public Relations Committee
The Board Public Relations Committee meets as needed to discuss strategies for outreach and public awareness.

The Division seeks input from the Public Relations Committee for all public relations activities. No recommendations were made during the report period.

Nominations for Board Vacancies
The Board of SBVI is asked for recommendations for individual’s names to be submitted to the Governor’s office for consideration of appointment for Board vacancies.

The Division submits names recommended by the members of the Board for consideration by the Governor.

Board Representation at Consumer Organization Conventions
The Board of SBVI has made the commitment to support the attendance of consumers and a representative of the Board each year at state conventions of consumer organizations including National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota and South Dakota Association of the Blind.
The Division supported the Board's recommendation for Board member representation at consumer organization conventions. Board and public meetings are held in conjunction with consumer organization conventions when possible.

Transition Services for Youth who are Blind or Visually Impaired
The Board of SBVI recommended that the Division sponsor activities to address leadership, career planning, and skills of blindness needs of transition age students who are blind or visually impaired. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with students to plan their participation.

Transition Week at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) is an annual summer youth program for high school students with vision loss from around South Dakota. The objective is to build skills and confidence through work and community involvement. During the summer of 2015 seven high school students attended to learn about employment and post-secondary options. Board members are invited to serve as mentors to the students by participating in activities and presenting. Transition Week concluded with students participating in a Person Centered Thinking activity to develop their one page profiles, which they then shared at the end of the week with a breakfast with SBVI board members, staff, and SDRC students.

The Board of SBVI Annual Report
SBVI staff teamed with the Board of SBVI to complete and submit the Board’s annual report on the status of SBVI programs. The board has been instrumental in designing an annual report that is accessible and that provides valuable information to readers concerning SBVI programs and Board activities.

The Board annual report was completed and submitted within timelines mandated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Division incorporated all of the Board’s recommendations into the final report.

Board Participation in Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
Results from annual training needs assessments are shared with member of the Board and their input is sought on activities to address the needs identified. Board members are invited to participate in conferences and training activities sponsored by the Division.

Public Access to Meetings and Materials
The State of South Dakota has codified law to address public meeting requirements including that the meetings be open to the public and materials be available to the public. All SBVI Board meetings are held in locations accessible to individuals with disabilities and sign language interpreters or other accommodations are available upon request. Meetings are announced through the State of South Dakota news system for state government. In addition meeting dates and locations are announced in newsletters, on the SBVI web site and agendas are posted at SBVI offices. Agendas, minutes and Board membership, the Board annual report and other information are available through the SBVI website and on the State of South Dakota Board and Commission Portal. The goal of the portal is to make the boards and commissions that the Governor has the responsibility to appoint members to both more open and transparent. All information is available in the preferred format of the individual requesting information.
Request for Waiver of Statewideness
The South Dakota Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) provides work experiences for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) transition age students through a program called Project Skills in conjunction with the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Project Skills is a cooperative arrangement with the local school districts and the state VR agencies. SBVI makes this program available to all schools including 20 Tribal/Bureau of Indian Education and 151 public school districts. Approximately 143 South Dakota’s public and Tribal/Bureau of Indian Education schools are currently participating in the program. The program is available to the remaining school districts but they have chosen not to complete a contract with the South Dakota VR agencies. The Rehabilitation Services Administration suggested that SBVI submit a waiver of statewideness for the Project Skills Program because all school districts do not participate.

Services Provided
Many students with significant disabilities don’t have an opportunity to participate in gainful employment while in high school. Although willing, most employers cannot afford to provide the training and supports students frequently require on their first job. Project Skills assists students to build their work history while helping them to move into different and better jobs as they mature and are ready to take on new challenges. This program is a cooperative arrangement between the State VR Agencies and the local school systems. SBVI pays the wages, workers compensation, and FICA; the schools provide the job development, job coaching, and follow-along services for students at the job site.

Written Assurances
Each school enters into an agreement with SBVI 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 to be used as match for the federal funds allocated by SBVI, including funds contributed to the school by a private agency, organization, or individual. The Project Skills program is only available for students who are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation. The SBVI counselor approves each Project Skills work experience by completing a work agreement and authorizing services. All services provided under this waiver are provided under an approved Individualized Plan for Employment and authorized by the VR Counselor. SBVI assures that all State Plan requirements, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

Cooperative Agreements with Agencies not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System
The Divisions of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) and Rehabilitation Services (DRS) 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 Divisions of SBVI and DRS have a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Dakota Department of Labor. This agreement addresses:
  o Provide comprehensive services designed to assist the unemployed citizens of the State of South Dakota to obtain gainful employment;
  o Support the underemployed citizens of the state to prepare for a new and more rewarding career;
o Provide the youth of South Dakota with a positive introduction into the world of work and subsequent follow-up and guidance to youth once they enter the workforce;

o Provide universal access to all customers, including those with special needs or barriers to employment;

o Provide customer choice in the way services are accessed, and in choosing services, based on individual interests and need;

o 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

o Be fully aware of the role each partner has within the system and to understand the services each partner provides.

Federal, State and Local Agencies and Programs
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:

Project Skills
SBVI, in conjunction with DRS has cooperative agreements with local school districts throughout South Dakota for the provision of transition services. The Project Skills program provides paid work experiences in student’s career areas to help them prepare for adulthood and the world of work.

Project Search
Project Search provides real-life work experience to help youth with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. Project SEARCH is an international trademarked and copyrighted program model, which focuses solely on employment for Project SEARCH interns. In conjunction with DRS, SBVI has cooperative agreements with local Project Search sites for Aberdeen, Brookings, and Sioux Falls locations. These agreements lay out each party’s responsibility for the Project Search activities which provide students with disabilities, including students who are blind or visually impaired.

School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
SBVI has an agreement in place with the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for a Transition Specialist. This position serves as a liaison between the educational and vocational rehabilitation systems. Services include outreach, education and training, and pre-employment transition services.

State Programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has an agreement in place with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative/Dakota Link for the implementation of assistive technology services. Services are provided on a fee for service basis; assistive technology services and devices are consistently one of the top case service expenditures for SBVI.

Interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States 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.

The Division of SBVI has agreements in place with federal facilities for vendors who operate under the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). In addition, there is an agreement in place with the South Dakota Department of Transportation for proceeds from interstate vending in South Dakota to be used to support the BEP.

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

Coordination with Education Officials
Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) works cooperatively with local school districts, the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE), the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI), parent/student transition groups, and the Department of Labor and Regulation to provide vocational rehabilitation services to youth with vision loss and students as they transition from school to the adult world. SBVI is committed to providing quality transition services to youth with vison loss that facilitate movement from school to post-secondary education and/or successful employment. A seamless system with involvement of workforce partners and education is integral to provision of quality, individualized services.

Cooperative Agreement: Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities
South Dakota's human service agencies and education system have forged a strong coalition to implement a number of pre-employment transition activities and transition services to prepare students with disabilities for post school activities that lead to successful employment outcomes. The South Dakota Cooperative Agreement Concerning Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities was revised in January 2014. The following South Dakota entities are included in the agreement: 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 Regulation and the 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 Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired 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 pre-employment transition services and transition services.
The agreement presents a common policy and conceptual framework for addressing interagency transition planning at the local level, thus ensuring that youth with disabilities have access to the services and resources needed to enter adult life (and employment) successfully. Cooperating agencies will benefit from maximum coordination of services, more efficient utilization of agency resources, increased service options, and improved interagency communication.

The collaborating state agencies support the following policy statements which are formalized in the interagency agreement:

- All South Dakota citizens, including youth with disabilities, will have opportunities for full participation in work and community life;
- All human services systems in South Dakota will assist individuals to achieve independence and self-sufficiency, and
- All human services systems in South Dakota recognize organized constituent groups of persons with disabilities as primary sources of information for program development by consulting with and advising such groups.

The agreement will be reviewed and updated by the Core Partner Alignment Consortium with input from all participants in the agreement to ensure alignment with WIOA.

Cooperative agreement between SBVI and the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI)

This agreement was implemented to coordinate efforts to ensure that students who are blind or visually impaired receive effective, seamless services as they make the transition from school to adult life and employment. The agreement specifies roles and responsibilities including:

- Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- The role for transition planning by personnel of SBVI and SDSBVI and local school districts that facilitate the development and completion of individualized education programs;
- Roles and responsibilities including financial responsibilities of each agency and determination of state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
- Procedures for outreach to and identification of students who are blind or visually impaired who need transition services.

The cooperative agreement stipulates that SBVI and the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will provide a full time staff person who is committed to working with students who are blind and visually impaired on a statewide basis. This staff person provides technical assistance, supports and services (including pre-employment transition services) as the students move from school settings to post-secondary or post school settings.

This agreement assures coordination of services between SBVI and the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) to ensure that students who are blind and visually impaired receive effective, seamless services as they make the transition from school to adult life and employment. Students served by SDSBVI reside both at the residential school in Aberdeen, as well as, in school districts on a statewide basis. Outreach personnel employed by SDSBVI work with students who are blind or visually impaired in the public school system.
SBVI and SDSBVI share information with students, parents, and local school districts about the importance of the skills of blindness to the success of students in the world of work. SBVI is an active participant in the transition planning process and counselors become involved with students as early as age 14. For those students enrolled at SDSBVI, SBVI representatives will also attend pre-staffing meetings when appropriate. SBVI helps to determine appropriate vocational direction by providing work experiences and vocational counseling and guidance along with pre-employment transition services. The agreement clearly outlines that SBVI will attempt to have an IPE in place for every eligible student prior to graduation.

SDSBVI has a responsibility to all South Dakota students with visual impairments under the age of twenty-one. For students of "transition age" between 14 and 21, that responsibility is shared with SBVI. SDSBVI employs a transition specialist through a cooperative agreement with SBVI and has outreach consultants that work with students, families, schools, and SBVI staff on a state wide basis. Blind or visually impaired students residing in school districts that are unwilling to participate in project skills agreements are served through the SDSBVI transition specialist and outreach consultants to participate in paid work experiences.

Both SBVI and SDSBVI personnel are involved in transition services and regularly discuss mutual efforts and plan appropriate activities to benefit students and family members. A sharing of information takes place due to coordinated efforts between the Board of SBVI and the SDSBVI Advisory Council. Summer programs are coordinated to allow students to benefit from both SBVI and SDSBVI activities, and students are encouraged to participate in the Youth Leadership Forum, which is a week-long seminar to prepare high school age youth to be community leaders and self-advocates. All entities have been involved in planning the program, interviewing students, interviewing project staff and funding program activities.

SBVI also participates in an agreement for the Transition Services Liaison Project (TSL) which provides additional technical assistance and training to students with disabilities, families, local education agencies and adult service agencies; the agreement also includes the Office of Special Education and the Division of Rehabilitation Services. The TSLP liaisons are trained professionals who collaborate to perform transition planning and provide the consultation necessary to promote a smooth transition for students from the educational setting to enter or prepare for employment.

Plans to facilitate transition services of students with disabilities

SBVI continues to explore and expand transition services available to students with visual disabilities. SBVI is committed to providing quality services to ensure a smooth and thorough transition into the adult world. A brochure has been developed to specifically address transition services, including pre-employment transition services. The brochure will be distributed to school personnel responsible for assisting students with disabilities whether through an IEP, 504 plan or for students who have disabilities and are mainstreamed in the school system. SBVI promotes an increased emphasis on independence, the importance of matching a person to a career that is consistent with their interests, skills and aptitude with opportunities for advancement.

The Division of SBVI is involved in a number of initiatives in cooperation with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Office of Special Education in addition to the Transition Services Liaison Project. The initiatives address:

- Job exploration counseling;
• Work-based learning experiences, including in-school or after school opportunities and experience outside the traditional school setting in integrated environments in the community;
• Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
• Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning); and
• Peer mentoring with individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment.

Transition Services Liaison Project (TSLP)
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 TSLP Coordinator to plan, coordinate and deliver the following activities:
• Project Skills - Project Skills is a paid work-based learning 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 business-led program. This means that students learn relevant, marketable skills while immersed in the business and those businesses are active partners, participating without subsidies. Project SEARCH is a national model partnering with a large employer, local school district and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. South Dakota currently has 3 Project Search sites operating in Aberdeen, Brookings and Sioux Falls. A 4th Project Search initiative is being developed in Rapid City to begin the 2016 Fall School year.
• Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) - 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, interactive meetings for providers of services, transition-age students with disabilities, as well as educators and family members.
• Post-Secondary Disability Coordinators Forum - This forum is held annually in Chamberlain (central South Dakota) with all the Disability Coordinators from South Dakota Post-Secondary programs invited to attend. The forum has been a very successful initiative for promoting transition services 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 that addresses IDEA, Vocational Rehabilitation and introduces self-determination curriculum and other assessment materials, along with
IEP planning for transition service provision. 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.

Other Transition Opportunities
SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) Transition Week - SDRC hosts Transition Week each summer for high school juniors and seniors who are blind or visually impaired from around the state. Students participate in skills training in the traditional SDRC training areas:
- Computer training with assistive technology (including speech and Braille output)
- Travel with the use of a white cane
- Communication methods including Braille
- Home Management (essential tasks of daily independent living that include cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, etc.)
- Manual Arts (use of hand and power tools to build confidence in using the skills of blindness)
- Low Vision Services (adaptive devices, exams, worksite assessments and low vision evaluations)

Students are also offered the opportunity to job shadow at a variety of job sites, based on their individual interests. A person centered approach assists them to experience self-exploration and self-advocacy skills. They also experience dorm life while staying at a university dormitory. Tours and presentations from university staff help give them a better understanding of what to expect from post-secondary education after high school.

ASPIRE
The South Dakota vocational rehabilitation agencies are participating in a regional consortium with five other states in the Promise Grant initiative. 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 project is a 5 year initiative which is conducting a study of 200 youth in South Dakota receiving Social Security Insurance between the ages of 13 and 16. Services include pre-employment transition and transition services. The Director of SBVI serves on the ASPIRE advisory committee.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations
Makeup of Community Rehabilitation Programs
Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) offer access to a variety of services from professionals trained in areas that benefit those who participate in services from the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI). South Dakota is a large sparsely populated state and the option to access services through CRPs allows citizens with disabilities access to a variety of services. CRPs consist of Community Support Providers, Mental Health Centers, Career Learning Centers, Job Shops, Independent Living Centers, the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Communication Services for the Deaf.

Manner in which cooperative arrangements are established
In conjunction with the Division of Rehabilitation Services, SBVI has policies and procedures in place for provider standards to establish and approve service providers. Applicants/eligible individuals are provided choices in the selection of providers. Vocational Rehabilitation
Counselors issue authorizations to the provider for services agreed upon in the Individual Plan for Employment. The scope of services purchased depends upon each individual’s needs, interests and employment goal.

Improve capacity and quality of services from CRPs
The Divisions of SBVI and DRS continually work on improving the capacity and quality of services from CRPs. A variety of education and training options are developed to offer the opportunity for CRP staff to become Certified Employment Support Professionals. Those who meet requirements for certification and attend two day Person Centered Thinking training receive a 25% increase in their service rate. Thirty six hours of continuing education hours are required every three years to maintain the certification. SBVI and DRS annually assess the training needs of staff and providers; one method used to determine training needs is an annual survey. Community Rehabilitation Programs are offered the opportunity to submit surveys in order to provide their input on topics for training offered by SBVI and DRS. SBVI provides blindness-specific training to CRP job development providers as a strategy designed to improve the quality of services provision for citizens with vision loss.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services
The coordination of time limited and on-going support services is vital to the provision of supported employment services. The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired works collaboratively with service providers and public agencies to coordinate funding sources and policies related to supported employment. These efforts are categorized into two areas:

- Formal Cooperative Agreements
- Informal Cooperative Efforts with Agencies

Formal Cooperative Arrangements
SBVI and the Division of Rehabilitation Services have in place a formal cooperative agreement for transition services (including pre-employment transition services) for youth with disabilities. The agreement includes the Department of Human Services Divisions of SBVI and DRS and the Divisions of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, Office of Special Education, and the Department of Labor and Regulation. 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 and the Division of Behavioral Health;
- time-limited services to be provided by SBVI and DRS;
- the process for service plan development;
- requirements for transition to extended services; and,
- responsibilities for post-employment services.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities has a memorandum in place with the Divisions of SBVI and DRS. The memorandum defines how each agency’s funding sources are coordinated in regard to the time limited and on-going support services. This agreement has had a significant
impact on service provision for people with the most significant impediments to employment resulting in the ability to obtain and maintain employment.

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place to help with coordination of services and funding between the Divisions of Behavioral Health, SBVI, and DRS. This agreement serves as a policy directive for the Community Mental Health Centers and the local SBVI and DRS Offices. It provides guidance in three areas relative to providing vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

1. Services to be provided by the Community Mental Health Center;
2. Services available from Vocational Rehabilitation; and,
3. Appropriate Division to pay for the variety of services.

Informal cooperative arrangements with agencies
SBVI 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:

- SBVI State Office staff are co-located with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, communication to coordinate services between Divisions occurs as needed for citizens with a variety of disabilities.
- SBVI’s vocational rehabilitation counselors are co-located with the local Department of Labor and Regulation Offices in the states to largest cities. When vocational rehabilitation counselors travel, they make frequent visits to collaborate with staff from the Department of Labor and Regulation, Social Services, Community Rehabilitation Programs and other agencies to reinforce mutual clients and a seamless delivery system.
- The public vocational rehabilitation agencies are working closely with all partners identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to collaborate in the implementation of the mandates in the law. Staff serve on implementation workgroups, task forces, and local Interagency Resource Teams.

Coordination with Employers
Initiatives with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and transition services (including pre-employment transition services) for students and youth with disabilities

South Dakota Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) has implemented and participated in a number of initiatives to work with employers to benefit citizens with vision loss who are served through SBVI. These initiatives include:

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, and employers to match the students with work experiences in their interest areas.
Project Search: Project Search is a national model partnering with a large employer, local school district and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. South Dakota currently has Project Search sites in Aberdeen, Brookings and Sioux Falls. A 4th Project Search initiative is being developed in Rapid City to begin fall 2016. Other opportunities to expand Project Search sites will be explored.

See What I Can Do Outreach Campaign – SBVI developed an outreach campaign with employers specifically targeted as part of the audience to be reached by the campaign. Focus groups and surveys of employers provided insight about their awareness of the capabilities of citizens with vision loss and the availability of SBVI services. A television ad, radio ads, brochure and banner stands were developed to promote hiring citizens with vision loss as well as relying on SBVI for job retention for current employees. Materials include students and youth with disabilities to promote employer engagement.

Business Representatives on the Board of SBVI: There are two business led non-profit entities in South Dakota that offer supports to the business community. The Business Resource Network in Sioux Falls and the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills provide education, consulting, and technical assistance to businesses on the hiring, accommodations, supports and retention when employing people with disabilities. The Executive Director of the Workforce Diversity Network is a former SBVI consumer and a member of the Board of SBVI. SBVI contributes to the Business Resource Network (BRN) by providing office space and clerical support. The manager of the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (in the Division of SBVI) is on the governing board for the BRN. The Workforce Development Council representative on the Board of SBVI is the gubernatorial appointed Department Secretary for the Labor and Regulation. This representation brings the employer/business perspective to strategic planning and Board activities.

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 Chambers of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and the South Dakota Retailers Association. These opportunities support connecting with businesses to learn more about their workforce needs and technical assistance and training opportunities.

Business Engagement Teams: Business engagement teams will be developed at the local level to strengthen cross-agency partnerships and to engage businesses. This model will ensure interaction and collaboration between workforce development partners and the business community, including business led organizations like the South Dakota Retailers Association, the Society for Human Resource Managers and Chambers of Commerce. The opportunity for an open line of communication for addressing industry demands for skills and preparing citizens for successful career paths will help to sustain and expand business partnerships.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP): The SBVI Business Enterprise Program supports snack shop, cafeteria and vending opportunities for citizens who are blind. In addition to federal sites, the BEP operates in all state office buildings in the state capitol of Pierre. The BEP is partially supported by income from interstate vending through an agreement with the South Dakota Department of Transportation. Blind vendors and the SBVI BEP manager interact with businesses and employers to promote program expansion and sustain existing operations.
Interagency Cooperation
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, in conjunction with the Division of Rehabilitation Services has formal and informal interagency arrangements and levels of cooperation with a number of agencies and organizations to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

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). This project is funded by the Social Security Administration.

Interagency Resource Teams
This agreement was implemented to meet the need for continued interagency involvement at the local level in an efficient and effective manner. This agreement ensures that resources available through the State of South Dakota are available to citizens with disabilities, including those who face barriers to employment; addresses fully utilizing the capacity and expertise of each agency and encourages 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 Medicaid 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 for the purpose of defining administrative and fiscal accountability responsibilities.

State Agency Responsible for 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 (SBVI and DRS) allowing the opportunity regular communication and collaboration between programs.
Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities
This agreement was implemented 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 Regulation.

Policy Memorandum with Division of Developmental Disabilities
The Division of Developmental Disabilities has a Policy Memorandum on in place 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 regard to the time limited and on-going support services. This policy agreement has had a significant impact on how services are provided to individuals with the most significant impediments to employment.

State Agency Responsible for Providing Mental Health Services
The South Dakota Department of Social Services/Division of Behavioral Health is the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. A Memorandum is in place to help coordinate the services and funding between the Divisions of Behavioral Health, 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 rehabilitation services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

1. Services that can and should be provided by the Community Mental Health Center,
2. Services available from Vocational Rehabilitation (DRS and SBVI), and
3. Which Division pays for the services.

The Core Partner Alignment Consortium will review and revise agreements as necessary to meet the requirements of WIOA.

Comprehensive System on Personnel and Personnel Development
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has implemented procedures and activities to ensure staff receive training so they are able to deliver quality services to citizens with vision loss and to ensure the Division has an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals. The Assistant Director of SBVI is the designated training officer for the Division; this position works with the DRS training officer and other SBVI and DRS staff to coordinate activities related to the comprehensive system of personnel development.

Data System on Qualified Personnel Needs
The 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 sponsored training, seminars, workshops, conferences, and undergraduate and graduate level courses supported by the Division. Individual district offices maintain files on educational backgrounds, training activities and goals and plans of employees to meet the agency requirements for qualified rehabilitation professionals and Certified 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 analysis of results from the annual training needs assessment. This analysis assists with prioritizing future training.

The Division has a web-based management information system (VR FACES) which includes a CSPD module for tracking employee training and education. This system also tracks whether Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) or their development plan to work toward CRC status. Input of information is required of individual employees and/or 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 for projecting future personnel and training priorities. Staff progress toward meeting CSPD requirements is also tracked by the VR FACES system.

Currently, SBVI employs seven vocational rehabilitation counselors who serve citizens with vision loss statewide and one vocational rehabilitation counselor who works primarily at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. A total of 517 people were served during FFY 2015; 97% were reported to have significant disabilities. Caseloads, territories, and customer service are reviewed periodically to determine the best utilization of existing staff and to determine future ratios to best meet the needs of the people receiving vocational rehabilitation services. For FFY 2015, the ratio of counselors compared to the applicants and eligible people receiving services is an average of 74 clients per caseload. The remaining active caseload as of 10/01/2015 was an average of 45 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 Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired to remain under the ratio of 1:60 active clients per counselor. The Division evaluates the need for a position in a specific location before replacing an employee when a vacancy occurs. Counselors who serve sparsely populated areas cover large territories and serve fewer clients due to demographics of a large sparsely populated state. Those with larger caseloads work in urban areas with higher population which results in less travel to deliver services.

The following chart illustrates the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, and includes current vacancies and projected vacancies in the next 5 years. The 8 projected vacancies indicated below are for personnel who are expected to retire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Position</th>
<th>Total Positions</th>
<th>Current Vacancies</th>
<th>5 year projected vacancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Center Teachers</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Center Administration</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Center Employment Consultant</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel Development
SBVI anticipates the need to recruit 3 counselors in the next five-year period based personnel turnover trends and data on those eligible for retirement in this time period. South Dakota State University (SDSU) offers a master's of science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling.
SDSU started their master’s program in the fall of 2005, and their first student received a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling in the fall of 2007. Recruitment of qualified staff is accomplished through promoting job announcements at SDSU in addition to other universities in Region VIII with master’s level programs. SBVI has a cooperative agreement with SDSU to provide internship opportunities, participate on their advisory council, and to recruit qualified candidates. SBVI provides paid internship opportunities for students pursuing their master’s degree in Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Division also offers internship opportunities for students with other related degrees when appropriate.

The University of Northern Colorado, Montana State University and Utah State University are other sources for recruitment of graduates with master’s level degrees in vocational rehabilitation counseling. In addition, South Dakota universities offer accredited programs with master’s degrees in counseling. Graduates of these programs are recruited for vocational rehabilitation counselor openings. They are hired and trained to prepare for the CRCC to meet the highest qualifications in the state for rehabilitation counselors.

The following chart shows the institution of higher education in the state (SDSU) that is preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals. Currently 10 students are enrolled in the SDSU master’s program with ten enrolled with RSA funds. Four students graduated in May 2015 and all were sponsored by RSA funds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Employees sponsored by RSA or State of SD</th>
<th>Graduates sponsored by SBVI or RSA</th>
<th>Graduates from the previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota State University</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel Standards
Working in conjunction with the Bureau of Human Resources, the Division has established minimum state standards for secretarial, rehabilitation counselors, senior rehabilitation counselors and program administrator positions. These standards are reviewed periodically in light of changing personnel needs, labor market supply and training resources. These are generic job classifications within the state Bureau of Human Resources system. The Division does establish specific education and work experience requirements in order for individuals to enter these positions.

Since South Dakota is a small state, there are several one of a kind staff positions. Each year in the personnel performance evaluation process, SBVI identifies the professional development needs of these staff. Each employee's immediate supervisor monitors individualized staff development plans. National certification standards are used for the Orientation and Mobility Specialists and the Low Vision Therapist through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). The Assistive Technology Specialist attends regional and national training to keep up to date on the latest advances in technology. In addition, staff members hold certifications for Deaf-Blind services from Helen Keller National Center; Traumatic Brain Injury, Braille and assistive technology through training and various accrediting organizations.
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. The Division will support costs associated with pursuit of master’s degrees. Funds for supporting employees’ pursuit of master’s level degrees consist of RSA grants, and program 110 funds. Senior rehabilitation counselors are certified through the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor process. The priority for 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 them to become qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors within eight years. Based on this requirement, the following illustrates the completion date anticipated for counselors in the next five years:
- Hire date in 2015; target date to complete CSPD standards by 2023;
- Hire date in 2016; target date to complete CSPD standards by 2024;
- Hire date in 2017; target date to complete CSPD standards by 2025;
- Hire date in 2018; target date to complete CSPD standards by 2026; and
- Hire date in 2019; target date to complete CSPD standards by 2027.

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 there are vacancies.

The Rehabilitation Act as amended and the Vocational Rehabilitation regulations refer to “Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors”. SBVI has the following definitions in place to address qualified rehabilitation counselors employed by the Division:

All Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
a. meet the standards for Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor;
b. meet the standards for Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor but are not CRC certified;
c. meet the standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor;
d. have been employed by the Division for a minimum of six months; and
e. have an approved plan to be eligible to take the CRC certification test by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) within eight years.

Employees who are not qualified rehabilitation counselors receive oversight and monitoring by a CRC certified supervisor and mentoring by senior counselors for non-delegated functions of the VR process. Counselors who meet the requirements to become certified through the CRCC are considered qualified counselors. However, to be eligible for a promotion to senior counselor, counselors are required to be certified by the CRCC. Seven of the eight SBVI counselors are CRC certified. The remaining counselor is taking master’s level coursework through SDSU and is in an approved plan for CRC certification.

Staff Development
The Division is committed to assisting vocational rehabilitation counselors with obtaining the necessary academic training and professional experience to meet the standards of a Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. During FFY 2015, 1 employee of the Division was pursuing a master’s degree in Vocational Rehabilitation through South Dakota State University.
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has approached 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 at least annually through the Accountability and Competency Evaluation System (ACES). Individual training needs assessments are conducted to evaluate current levels of education, understanding of fundamentals of vocational rehabilitation, blindness and disability-related issues, professional development and related topics. Self-evaluation, supervisor input and recommendation sections on the ACES 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, rehabilitation teachers, supervisors, managers, clerical, etc.) and for the agency as a whole.

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 also included in the document used to track training needs and attendance. The training officer works to identify resources for obtaining training in areas related to vocational rehabilitation (including the Rehabilitation Act Amendments and priorities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and RSA regulations), including serving citizens with the most significant disabilities and those from minority backgrounds. Responses from satisfaction surveys and input from the Board of SBVI are also methods utilized to identify training needs.

Cooperation with other entities in state government such as the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR), the Department of Health, and the Department of Education ensures that training opportunities are available which address topics relevant to the field of rehabilitation. In addition, Division staff members provide training concerning considerations when working with individuals with disabilities to DLR employees. Division staff members have various opportunities to attend intensive trainings at little or no cost. These conferences and/or seminars are also an opportunity to collaborate with other entities who deliver services to individuals with disabilities. DLR employees provide training on labor market trends, economic development opportunities, business engagement and other information. Training on labor market information is also conducted on line via the Labor Market Information (LMI) e-Learning Series. This five-part video series provides information on how LMI can be a useful resource for local offices, workforce development professionals, policy makers, business owners, program or economic development planners, etc. The modules are based on a benchmark PowerPoint version provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

Paraprofessional staff offered ongoing training in word processing and other software applications as well as office-related courses such as effective writing, customer service and organization skills through the BHR. Courses specific to the vocational rehabilitation case management information system and other topics specific to vocational rehabilitation are offered through in-service training sessions, usually taught 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, the state’s assistive technology project, the SBVI Assistive Technology Specialist, other nationally-recognized entities via web based training. The State Bureau of Information and Technology and Bureau of Human Resources provide assistive technology training for employees with disabilities who utilize assistive technology on the job.

Annual training conferences address current research through contracting with national Rehabilitation Research and Training and Technical Assistance programs to address specific topics identified in the annual training needs assessment. In addition, information is disseminated from RSA updates and Technical Assistance Circulars to ensure SBVI staff are cognizant of the latest trends in vocational rehabilitation.

SBVI works with the state’s Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Projects and the Native American Independent Living Project to provide training to staff on cultural diversity. Ongoing training is provided to address informed choice as it relates to agency policies and practices. The State Rehabilitation Council has recommended strategies that have been implemented for addressing informed choice in service delivery.

Plan for Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention of Qualified Staff
Recruitment of qualified staff is accomplished by announcing positions through professional organization such as the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) and RehabACTion, the state Bureau of Human Resources web site and by advertising in the state’s newspapers. Job announcements are also shared with the Board of SBVI and the state Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

Training opportunities are available through a variety of organizations to assist SBVI in preparing staff to deliver training and to retrain in priority areas for vocational rehabilitation service provision. ACVREP provides training in blindness specific topics; this training leads to professional certification in vision rehabilitation, orientation and mobility, and low vision therapy.

Agency sponsored training through seminars, conferences, and video conferences on topics such as:

- Motivational Interviewing & Person Centered Thinking;
- Recognizing Personality Disorders;
- Developing Business Strategies;
- Marketing Your Services and Program;
- Identifying Hidden Addictions & How to Work with these Individuals;
- Disability specific training related to employment & accommodations;
- DLR Programs & Services for Job Seekers;
- Beyond the Boomer – Aging in Place;
- Self-Employment “Creating a New Venture;”
- Compassion Fatigue;
- Ethical Issues VR Professionals Encounter;
- The Disability Determination Process;
- What WIOA Means for Service Providers;
- Employment for Individuals with Diverse Backgrounds;
- Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace;
Web based training is also available for a variety of topics including:

- Ethics
- Topics specific to blindness and low vision
- Supported Employment – Person Centered Planning, Job Development, Job Placement and Job Coaching Strategies
- Labor Market Information
- Disability specific topics
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Working with offenders

Training opportunities related to the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are sponsored and attended by a variety of participants from state departments and public and private entities.

To address the priority of recruiting individuals with disabilities, the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources has in rule that any applicant who meets minimum requirements for employment who has been certified to have a significant disability by a rehabilitation counselor will be interviewed for the position. This ensures that individuals who have disabilities have the opportunity to interview and compete for openings in the designated state unit and other programs in state government. Efforts to recruit individuals from minority backgrounds include announcing positions through the State Department of Labor and Regulation and the state’s Native American Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Job announcements are available to individuals residing on Tribal lands and the state's Reservations. It is the policy of the Department to provide equal opportunity employment to all employees and applicants for employment. No person working at the Department’s facilities is to be discriminated against in employment because of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

Communication with Diverse Populations
Interpreters are available for all training sessions as well as to people who are deaf/blind. Braille, materials in electronic format and enlarged print are provided to all staff or clients who request alternative formats. The Division has developed fee schedules and vendors to address the need for interpreters of foreign languages and Native American languages including Lakota, Nakota and Dakota dialects.

Coordination of the CSPD and In-service Training
Training on IDEA and transition services for students with disabilities is coordinated with the State Division of Special Education and the Transition Services Liaison 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 are a combined effort with the Department of Education Special Education Program, Department of Labor and Regulation and other entities to offer training on transition and pre-employment transition service options.
Training needs of the state’s Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, Centers for Independent Living, the Client Assistance Program and community rehabilitation programs are considered in planning training activities within the division.

As previously stated, training needs are addressed through a variety of resources. Other resources accessed by staff to meet their individual training needs include: workshops, conferences and seminars hosted by other government organizations such as Special Education, Department of Labor and Regulation and the Bureau of Human Resources. Professional organizations (SD RehabACTion, Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, etc.) regularly work with the training officer to prioritize topics relevant to employment of people with disabilities and base workshops or conference sessions on the training needs assessment conducted by the Division. Consumer organizations (SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, SD Association of the Blind, National Federation of the Blind of SD, and the SD Association of the Deaf) are examples of sponsors of training. Distance learning activities provide a cost-effective method for participation in training on a number of topics pertinent to RSA priorities. Independent study and mentoring by supervisors and senior rehabilitation counselors are other means for meeting individual staff development needs.

Statewide Assessment
Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired submits 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 VR Portion state unified plan update to reflect that a comprehensive statewide needs assessment has been accomplished with this plan submission. As a core partner in the WIOA Unified State Plan, SBVI 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 the subsequent planning process to assure that the workforce needs of the state to include individuals with disabilities are addressed.

2016 Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
The federal program year 2015 marked the first year of activity in carrying out a three year set of SBVI goals and strategies based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) conducted largely in 2014 and 2015. This South Dakota 2016 Comprehensive Needs Assessment is unique in that it 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 (WIOA). The new 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 redefined 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 the South Dakota VR/Workforce Development Council 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 including pre-employment transition services and other needs relative to the new and additional requirements of WIOA.
3. Work directly with the South Dakota Workforce Development 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. 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
2. DDN Public Meeting- SF, 04/25/2013
3. Governor’s Task Force On Employing People with Disabilities
4. Lower Brule Disability Services Summit
5. Renewing the CHOICES Medicaid Waiver: Public/Tribal Forum & Questionnaire Results
6. SBVI 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
7. DRS: 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
8. SBVI Public Meeting 4/30/15
9. SBVI Public Meeting Notes Rapid City 5/1/15
10. South Dakota Advocacy Services Public Listening Session Summary
11. South Dakota Department of Human Services Strategic Plan
12. South Dakota Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired Board Meeting Minutes and Annual Report
13. South Dakota Employment Works Task Force
14. South Dakota VR Service Providers- Training Needs Survey
15. State of South Dakota Department of Transportation Public and Specialized Transportation Fiscal Year 2012
17. Vocational Rehabilitation Program Federal FY 2014 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide
18. SBVI Consumer Satisfaction with Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Source Reports and Data (Key Data and service narrative bridge analysis conducted in 2015/16)
1. SBVI: Agency Year End Data 2013 and 2014 (Board Report), MIS Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911
2. SBVI Board Minutes spanning from June 2014, through June 2015
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.
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 were as follows:

1. Employer Public Outreach Education
   This category is composed of specifically identified needs to educate employers, participants in work environments, and the public regarding the abilities and capacities of persons with the most significant disabilities. This category of needs pointed to a need to change the larger social context in which vocational rehabilitation services were to be received by persons experiencing blindness or low vision and who were most significantly disabled. The WIOA changes reinforce the need for extending public and business education to more deeply align the service culture and its decision points with those of the public at large and the business community.

2. Assistive Technology
   Staff and clients and public continue to recognize the importance of technology in the VR process to assist those who are blind or have low vision to compete in the open labor market. This is a need much referenced in Board meetings, public forums and also staff needs assessment. In the past two years the South Dakota legislature has increased the state’s capacity to respond to both communications and technology needs and the narrative needs of the state have intensified in this dimension of service as a result.

3. Job Placement Supports
   This category includes perceived needs for more job placement services, job coaches, frequently references specific rural placement challenges. In this category of needs are expressed through a number of statements that could have also easily been categorized in the Public Outreach/Education as the reporters often included a need for outreach and education from the service sector to the employment sector. Finally the need for specialized skills in placement supports for persons with blindness or low vision arose in both this category and also the ‘Provider Training Category’.

4. Transition Services
   In the general VR program, transitions picked up narrative weight because of the legislative changes and considerable conversation gathering around this topic, the impact has been less intense for SBVI. Transitions remains, however, an important service need, but the volume of students with blindness and or visual impairments makes this more of a student-by-student need. That said the emphasize in this category will be to assist shifting the agency into full compliance with the new requirements of WIOA.

5. Benefits Work Incentives
   This need emerged from commenters who expressed misconceptions or misinformation
regarding work incentives and also from public forums where people were discussing their needs with regards to information about SSA programs and benefits.

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

1) Employer Public Outreach/Education
There were numerous requests for public education targeted to language and cultural sensitivity as needed to better serve unserved or underserved. Similarly people articulated a need to create an enhanced culture based understanding of the challenges of people who live in contexts other than the mainstream culture in South Dakota. The tone of the narrative responses in this assessment pointed to the need to change the larger social/economic context in which vocational rehabilitation services were to be received by persons experiencing blindness or low vision and who were had the most significant disabilities.

2) Services for Native Americans
This category refers to the need for services to Native Americans living on the reservations or within the Indian Nation boundaries as well as services to those Native Americans who were not living within the reservations. Collaboration, local education events, information/referral, economic development, more appropriate provider services, and cultural awareness represent some of the needs expressed under this category. Many of the expressions of need through the scope of this statewide assessment have referred to the need for job opportunities and economic development within the Indian Nations and this conversation may find more traction as part of the WIOA alignment process.

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 keeps the needs for the transition response high for the 2017 service considerations with respect to minorities, hard to serve and un-served.

4) Self-Advocacy Skills
This need category references expressions of need to assist minority persons with the most significant disabilities to effectively represent their own needs in social and works settings. Additionally the Department of Human Services has a self-advocacy emphasis in its current strategic plan. A caution was added to these expressions of need for self-advocacy skills by the representative of 121 Programs on the SBVI Board. The person stated that Native American individuals may have a very different perception and practice when it comes to the value and means of ‘self-advocacy’.
5) Cultural Understanding
There was a broad spread of expressions regarding the need for South Dakota citizens to better understand the implications and requirements of the cultures of the minorities who share the state. This depth of this need is also reinforced by the strength of the first need category “Employer Public Education/Outreach”. For both VR programs in South Dakota, many of the necessary responses to the impediments faced by minorities, un-served and underserved exceed the scope of the VR service system. Overall respondents suggested a need for VR to help represent as best possible the minority disability perspective in the larger, human service and workforce systems.

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, SBVI personnel partner with the state workforce system at the local level through consultation on an individual case basis and by attending and presenting at statewide workforce conferences. SBVI currently participates on the Core Partner Alignment Consortium WIOA Implementation and Planning Group to assure the shifts in emphasis in the statewide vision and goals meet 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
In addition to the new legislation of WIOA, both the South Dakota Governors Employment Works initiative and the Department of Human Services strategic plan currently place a strong emphasize on activities that will have an impact on the Work Force System. This impact is targeted in part in increasing the effectiveness of interactions between SBVI and employers who seek work force talent. These employer and workforce outreach and education activities have been identified as needs at many levels of this tri-annual needs assessment.

2. Skilled Employment Training
There were requests for the work force system to generate and offer more specialized skill training opportunities for people with disabilities. The Performance Indicators of WIOA recognize and support this broader systems need. This specific needs message has the capacity to impact the larger WIOA system of realignment.

e) Individuals who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including as appropriate their need for pre-employment transition services (PETS) or other transition services
SBVI in coordination with the Division of Rehabilitation Services 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 schools 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 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.

1. Assessment of the need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs.
The CSNA surveys and forums gave evidence that the public and SBVI 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 blind and visually impaired consumers. The needed changes expressed tended to revolve around specific training for CRP staff regarding blindness and visual impairment and a greater variety of job placement options. The various responses regarding needs identified for the Community Rehabilitation programs are not collected in one dedicated goal but rather distributed throughout the SBVI goals and strategies contained in attachment 4.11 (c).

2. Job Placement Supports
This category includes perceived needs for more job placement services, job coaches, and frequently references specific rural placement challenges. The need for specialized provider skills in placement supports for persons with blindness or low vision was expressed in this category.

3. Provider Training
Provider training is understood in this assessment in two dimensions; those training needs identified by parties other than the provider and the training needs identified by the providers themselves as articulated through an assessment survey conducted by the South Dakota VR Agencies. Staff identified additional training needed for providers on job placement, and working with individuals with the most significant disabilities. On the other side, providers did request additional training and guidance in working with people with blindness and low vision. Additional training topics requested by providers included Accessing Hidden Job Market, Marketing to Employers, Assistive Technology, Autism Supports/Training, Benefits Work Incentives, and Brain Injury.

4. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and to the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Technically SBVI continued to increase the number of students who are individuals who are students and receiving services under IEP at application in 2015. The numbers as such do not represent a trend as much as a simple snapshot of the state of 12 students. The true point of assessment and need is at the individual level rather than at any level of statistical validity or finding. 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 for both South Dakota agencies 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 transition services and partnering with VR counselors in a timely manner with regards to the IEP/IPE coordinated services.
Annual Estimates

During FY 2017, the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) estimates that the following outcomes will be accomplished based on data from prior years and service projections:

1. Title I, Part B Vocational Rehabilitation – A total of 549 eligible citizens will be served at a case service cost of $1,381,833.
2. The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired will not be receiving funds for Title VI Part B Supported Employment funds. Supported employment services will be provided utilizing Title I, Part B Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

Estimate of the Number of Individuals Eligible for Services

According to the 2013 Cornell University Disability Status Report there are approximately 10,700 South Dakota citizens with a visual disability between the ages of 16 and 74. Approximately 4,900 or 48.2% of people between the ages of 21 to 64 are working full time/full year employment. Among the six types of disabilities identified in the American Community Survey (ACS), the highest full-time/full-year employment rate was for people with visual disabilities. For the same age group of 21 to 64, the citizens in the category of visual disabilities ranked 2nd highest in the employment rates of working-age people at 61.5%. SBVI is roughly estimating that approximately 3,900 or 38.3% of working-age people with a visual disability in South Dakota who are not working may be eligible for services. This number would increase if those working with a visual impairment could benefit from vocational rehabilitation services to retain employment.

The number of individuals eligible for services in the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has ranged from 152 to 233 over the past several years. In FY 2015, SBVI provided services to 517 people with 200 people found eligible for services during this year.

Estimate and Cost of Services for Eligible Individuals

The SBVI is currently able to provide services to all people eligible for the vocational rehabilitation program. The following table shows an estimate of the number of citizens to be served and the estimated cost of services for FY 2017 based on current data.

Projected Costs, Service Goals and Outcomes October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017

- Estimate of people to be served: 549
- Estimate of Successfully Rehabilitated: 123
- Projected Costs: $1,381,833

State Unified Plan

To assist the Statewide Workforce System in developing the needs determination section of the State Unified Plan, SBVI provides all partners the statewide estimates of individuals who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and supported employment services and the costs for services provided as planning and programming data as part of Attachment 4.11(b) of the SBVI state plan update. These annual estimates are reported to the State Workforce Development Council as part of partner planning for addressing service needs statewide to include services to citizens with disabilities. Public vocational rehabilitation is represented on statewide workgroups that address service delivery and capacity among workforce partners including local needs of the one-stop centers across the state.
State Goals and Priorities
The South Dakota Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) mission is to provide individualized rehabilitation services that result in optimal employment and independent living outcomes for citizens who are blind or visually impaired. To accomplish this mission, the Board of SBVI (State Rehabilitation Council) and the Division of SBVI jointly developed the goals listed below in cooperation with core partners identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Information from the comprehensive statewide needs assessment was also used in the development of these goals.

1. Develop outreach methods so that referral sources, businesses and citizens who are blind or visually impaired are aware of the unique services provided by SBVI.

2. Improve earnings, benefits, and career advancement for citizens with vision loss.

3. Ensure those who participate in Vocational Rehabilitation have access to an array of services through the workforce system that support career pathways and result in optimal employment outcomes.

4. Strengthen the agency’s ability to provide quality services to citizens with vision loss who have barriers to employment.

5. Provide quality transition services to youth with vision loss that facilitate movement from school to post-secondary education and/or successful employment.

Order of Selection
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is able to serve all eligible individuals and is not on an order of selection.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds
The South Dakota Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) is committed to ensuring that rehabilitation services are made available on a statewide basis to individuals with the most significant 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 SBVI no longer receives an annual allotment of Title VI-B funds. Due to the reporting burden with the requirements for matching and tracking Title VI-B funds, SBVI will serve individuals with the most significant disabilities through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

State Strategies
The South Dakota Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) has partnered with the Board of SBVI (State Rehabilitation Council) to develop the agency strategies listed below.

1.1 Plan and participate in activities that target businesses to educate them on the capabilities of people who are blind or visually impaired.

1.2 Annually conduct two or more activities that promote services available for citizens with vision loss including those from minority backgrounds.
1.3 Annually review and update outreach materials and procedures that staff utilize to promote services to referral sources, employers and other entities.
1.4 Ensure that outreach methods address the needs of those with the most significant disabilities.

2.1 Increase utilization of South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind to improve skills of clients of SBVI, including alternative techniques and vocational services.
2.2 Improve the quality of job development services by SBVI staff providing specialty training on employment and vision loss to providers and businesses.
2.3 Access SSI/SSDI benefits specialist’s services and training to assist individuals with significant disabilities to manage their benefits while participating in employment.
2.4 Provide staff training and continuing education in areas of need that are specific to blindness or visual impairment including assistive technology and alternative skills of blindness.
2.5 Work with businesses to determine opportunities available to job seekers with vision loss.

3.1 Develop assistive technology training resources to improve accessibility for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities.
3.2 Increase the provision of independent living and social skills training to ensure clients and youth have the skills required to obtain employment.
3.3 Educate staff and clients on programs and services offered through other entities including the Department of Labor and Regulation, the South Dakota Department of Education and other public and private entities including the Veteran’s Administration.
3.4 Prepare job seekers to make informed decisions about career pathways based on demand and labor market information.

4.1 Maintain regular contact with minority service agencies to increase awareness of services that are available.
4.2 Collaborate with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation and other programs to ensure that all services are provided in an effective and efficient manner while addressing cultural diversity.
4.3 Provide SBVI staff with resources and training so they are able to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations.
4.4 Strengthen extended services to assure successful employment for clients with the most significant disabilities.

5.1 Continue transition activities and services including: Project Skills, Project Search, Youth Leadership Forum, SBVI Transition Week, and the Transition Services Liaison Project that provide students with pre-employment transition services.
5.2 Strengthen mentoring opportunities between students and adults who are blind or visually impaired.
5.3 Collaborate with the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and public schools to improve access to pre-employment transition services.
5.4 Through a coordinated effort of systems, prepare youth with the knowledge, skills and ability to become economically self-sufficient.
5.5 Educate teachers, students and family members about the services available through SBVI and other workforce partners.

Future 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 the development and
implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, with an emphasis on services to individuals with the most significant disabilities; and to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council (Board of SBVI).

The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has reserved funds for utilization in innovation and expansion activities. These funds will be used for the following activities:

- Support the costs of the Board of SBVI. This includes staff costs (drivers), accommodations and other direct costs involved in Board activities.
- Support initiatives approved by the Board of SBVI 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, monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 and goals and priorities of the State.
- Areas of emphasis include the provision of assistive technology services and devices, services for students and youth with disabilities, improving community rehabilitation programs, working with businesses and employers to achieve and optimize employment opportunities and outcomes for individuals served by SBVI in conjunction with other core partners in the workforce system.
- Performance accountability measures will be addressed in the Board of SBVI annual report and future goals and strategies will be developed to address performance measures once data is available for the performance accountability measures as stipulated section 116 of WIOA.

Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals
Progress in Accomplishing Strategies and Goals
All goals were achieved in FY 2015, and all strategies contributed to achieving the goals that are outlined. There were no factors that impeded the achievement of goals.

Goal 1: Improve the earnings, benefits, and career advancement for consumers served by SBVI.

**Strategy 1.1** Increase utilization of South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) to improve skills of consumers served, including alternative techniques and vocational services.
- Program participation for SDRC services increased from 175 participants in FY 14 to 223 participants in FY 15.
- SDRC implemented new approaches for assistive technology training to increase participation.

**Strategy 1.2** Improve the quality of job development services to SBVI consumers by providing specialty training on blindness and visual impairments to providers.
- SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors perform job development in instances that their expertise in blindness and visual impairments is critical. Training on service provision to citizens with vision loss is provided by counselors to providers including resources available to clients with vision loss. In addition, the Division provides training on topics related to accommodations for clients with vision loss as part of seminars and conferences to providers along with staff of SBVI.
**Strategy 1.3** Increase the use of SSI/SSDI benefits specialist services and training to assist individuals with significant disabilities to manage their benefits.

- Counselors have increased referrals for benefits specialist services from 5 client referrals in FY 13 to 12 client referrals in FY 15. Counselors work closely with Benefit Specialists and promote their services with clients who are on SSI/SSDI.

**Strategy 1.4** Provide annual training in areas of need that are specific to blindness or visual impairment including assistive technology (AT).

- 2015: AT training was provided to SBVI staff through DakotaLink, and through web based seminars. Staff utilizes the AT Specialist at the SD Rehabilitation Center for training regarding specific topics related to assistive technology.
- A session specific to vision loss was held during the annual vocational rehabilitation Fall Conference. This session included information from an optometrist and certified low vision therapist on how to interpret information on eye reports and addressing functional limitations for vision loss.

**Strategy 1.5** Exceed performance levels established for the Performance Indicators under Evaluation Standard 1- Employment Outcomes (established in 34 CFR Sec. 361.84(c)(1) of the Federal Regulations).

- SBVI has consistently exceeded performance levels for all six Standard 1 Performance Indicators including in FY 2014 & FY 2015.

**Goal 2:** Develop outreach methods so that referral sources, employers, and citizens who are blind or visually impaired are aware of the unique services provided by SBVI.

**Strategy 2.1** Design and disseminate outreach materials and participate in activities that target employers to educate them on the capabilities of people who are blind or visually impaired.

- In FY 2015 staff increased outreach efforts to educate businesses, schools, providers and the general public on services available from SBVI. Staff report on their efforts on a monthly basis and this is a performance expectation on their annual appraisal reviews.
- A radio ad promoting SBVI services in Lakota for Native Americans was distributed to radio stations covering Tribal lands resulting in an increase of referrals in these areas.

**Strategy 2.2** Annually conduct two or more activities that promote services for citizens with vision loss including those from minority backgrounds.

- SBVI participated in State and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program biannual meetings for information sharing and to identify and address specific needs and concerns.
- In FY 2015, SBVI invited the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Department of Human Services and other disability related organizations, including Tribal organizations to participate in the gathering at Sinte Gleska University in Mission, SD. This gathering offered the opportunity to share information and develop a stronger network for service delivery on the Rosebud Reservation.
- SBVI participated in the National Disability Awareness Month event hosted by the Oun’iyekiyapi Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.
Strategy 2.3  Provide annual training and materials for staff to train them to market services to targeted audiences.
  - Outreach materials were developed and disseminated to staff with instructions for marketing services to target audiences including employers, service providers, schools and a number of other entities.

Strategy 2.4  Annually review and update outreach materials and procedures that staff utilize to promote services to referral sources, employers and other entities.
  - Additional outreach materials were developed and disseminated to staff with instructions for marketing services to health care providers and employers.
  - The Board of SBVI public relations committee participated in recommending materials and training methodologies including new brochures targeting transition age youth which are being developed.

Goal 3: Ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation consumers receive services that allow for informed choice and help them to improve their ability to communicate, interact, and perform to their potential in their community.

Strategy 3.1  Develop assistive technology training resources to improve accessibility for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with most significant disabilities.
  - The Board of SBVI Assistive Technology Advisory Committee reviews the assistive technology resource guide annually.  This information is disseminated to those served by SBVI and is available on the Division web site.
  - The Assistive Technology Specialist at the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind has implemented training options including designated times for walk-in or call in technical assistance and training.

Strategy 3.2  Increase the provision of independent living and social skills training when necessary to VR consumers to ensure that they have the skills necessary to obtain employment.
  - The SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind incorporates independent living and social skills into the curriculum for those who participate in training including youth with vision loss who attend Transition Week.
  - FFY 2015 marks the seventh year that SBVI has partnered with the Board of SBVI to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey using the SBVI Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 (CSQ-8) survey. The survey consists of eight core questions and an additional seven questions that were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI. The survey was sent to 168 people who received services from VR and were closed during the past year. Seventy-one surveys were returned for a response rate of 42%. The overall consumer satisfaction mean was very high at 29.54 out of a possible 32, with a standard deviation of 4.1. Survey participants were asked directly “In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?” 94% of survey participants indicated they were very satisfied with the service they received from SBVI. Responses from the survey illustrate that SBVI improved substantially from past years by providing services to people that were perceived as positive, effective and satisfying.
Strategy 3.3  Promote access to programs and services in the statewide workforce investment system.

- SBVI works with the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) through a memorandum of understanding that outlines roles and responsibilities of vocational rehabilitation and other programs in the state workforce investment system.
- Bi-weekly meetings were held with SBVI managers and managers from DLR in 2015 to discuss and implement strategies for further collaboration. Training is conducted for audiences at the annual vocational rehabilitation conference to offer the opportunity for the audience to learn about DLR services.

Strategy 3.4  Serve at least 5 individuals in Supported Employment to ensure services are comprehensive and have long term supports.

- Training was provided to SBVI staff on supported employment strategies, motivational interviewing and person centered planning which resulted in counselors providing supported employment services and identifying long terms supports for 9 SBVI consumers in FY 2015.

Goal 4: Strengthen the agency’s ability to provide quality services to the ever-changing minority populations that exist in South Dakota.

Strategy 4.1  Maintain regular contact with Native American Nations and minority service agencies to increase awareness of services that are available.

- In FY 2015 SBVI joined the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Directors of the Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in meetings designed to continue the positive strides that have been made over the past years in coordinating services and promoting the employment of Native American citizens who are blind or visually impaired.
- SBVI has had an informational booth each year at the Lakota Nation Invitational (LNI) held in Rapid City.

Strategy 4.2  Collaborate with tribal VR programs to ensure that all eligible individuals are served in an effective and efficient manner on reservations and tribal lands.

- SBVI staff utilizes the cooperative agreements that are in place with Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Programs as a guide when coordinating services on reservations and tribal lands.
- SBVI is working closely with the Oglala American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Program during a lapse in their federal funding to assure continued services for Native Americans with disabilities on the Pine Ridge Reservation. SBVI is traveling to provide a weekly staff presence in Kyle and Pine Ridge office locations to educate people on State VR services and take applications for those interested in services.

Strategy 4.3  Provide bi-annual training to agency staff to provide tools for meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of culturally diverse populations.

- Training on to address cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations was delivered through collaboration with local agencies and the Tribal VR Programs.

Goal 5: Provide quality transition services to eligible students that facilitate the students’ movement from school to post-secondary education and/or employment and results in successful employment.
Strategy 5.1  Continue transition activities and services, such as Project Skills, Project Search, the Youth Leadership Forum, and SBVI Transition Week, which provide students with valuable experience and skills needed to move from school to employment.

- Eighteen youth with vision loss participated in FY 2015 transition activities.
- An agreement with the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired addresses transition services for students with vision loss on a statewide basis.

Strategy 5.2  Develop additional mentoring opportunities for students who are blind or visually impaired.

- Mentoring activities were planned in conjunction with Transition Week at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind through participation of SBVI Board members in transition and job exploration activities.
- SBVI staff who are blind or visually impaired serve as mentors for citizens with recent loss of vision.

Strategy 5.3  Collaborate with the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Transition Specialist to provide statewide education to teachers, students and family members about services available to students through SBVI.

- SBVI collaborates and provides oversight to ensure that enhanced VR services are being provided to SBVI transition age youth.
- The SBVI Assistant Director serves on the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Council.

Supported Employment: Goals and Performance
SBVI is committed to ensuring that rehabilitation services are made available on a statewide basis to individuals with the most significant disabilities who have not traditionally been competitively employed or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent. SBVI does not receive a supported employment Title VI Part B allotment. Instead, Title I vocational rehabilitation funds are authorized to providers of the consumer’s choice; the amount of funds authorized is based upon the individual’s needs, type of placement, hours, and type of employment.

Performance: In FY 2015 nine SBVI consumers received supported employment services. Services included job placement, job coaching, employment follow along, and other services needed to support and maintain those consumers in their chosen employment in an integrated setting.

Federal Program Evaluation Standards
The Federal Government measures vocational rehabilitation agency performance in part by using six “Standard 1” performance indicators. SBVI’s performance on each indicator is illustrated on the corresponding chart. SBVI has exceeded all six of the Standard 1 indicators for the past eleven years (FY 2004 thru FY 2015). These indicators are the Division’s “report card”. SBVI is the only vocational rehabilitation agency for the blind in the nation to meet or exceed all six Standard 1 indicators throughout this time span.

Standard 1: Employment Outcomes

1.1  The number of successful case closures compared to the preceding two years’ number of successful closures.
1.2 The percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services.

1.3 The percentage of consumers who exit the VR program in competitive employment at or above the state minimum wage.

1.4 The percentage of individuals who have significant disabilities who obtain competitive employment at or above the state minimum wage.

1.5 The ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state.

1.6 The difference in the percentage of individuals at application versus closure who reported their income as the largest single source of support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Minimum Requirement</th>
<th>Division Performance</th>
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<td>Indicator 1.1</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>244</td>
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<td>Indicator 1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicator 1.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SBVI Performance in case closures have consistently exceeded national and/or peer averages in employment outcomes, average hours worked, and integrated supported employment.

Standard 2: The ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services.

Indicator 2.1: Minority Background Service Rate- SBVI served less than 100 individuals from minority backgrounds so cannot apply the performance level of .80 prescribed by RSA. According to the 2010 census, South Dakota’s minority (non-white) population was 14.1%. The largest minority group in South Dakota involves American Indians from nine South Dakota Tribes making up approximately 9% (8.8% - 2010 U.S. Census) of the state’s total population. In FY 2015, 12% of SBVI closures were comprised of individuals of American Indian descent, and 19% of all closures reported coming from a minority background, which exceeds census data for minorities in the population of the state.

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. The Division of SBVI achieved all goals and strategies described in the FFY 2013 State Plan attachments 4.11(c)(1) and 4.11(d).

✓ That SBVI exceeds all standards and indicators in the Rehabilitation Act.
✓ There is an evaluation of progress implemented to improve the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program.
✓ A Quality Assurance Plan is in place to address performance through a variety of activities on an ongoing basis.

Performance outcomes of both vocational rehabilitation programs in South Dakota (general and blind) are summarized for and discussed with the Workforce Development Council in addition to the state rehabilitation councils (Board of SBVI and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation).

Utilization of Innovation and Expansion Funds – SBVI
The Rehabilitation Act requires that a portion of funds be reserved for innovation and expansion activities. The Division of SBVI works with the Board to prioritize these activities. The Board of SBVI utilizes the Division senior secretary for support of Board activities due to the limited resources available for personnel. Activities supported by the Board of SBVI in FY2015 were as follows:

- Costs associated with Board Member attendance at quarterly meetings;
- Public Meeting promotion and facilitation (to gather input on the need to expand services, especially for individuals with the most significant disabilities);
- Consumer Satisfaction Surveys;
- Joint activities with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council;
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities;
- Workshop registration and travel expenses for Board Members attendance at agency training, RSA sponsored training, and consumer conventions;
- Education and outreach to promote the capabilities of citizens with vision loss and service offered by SBVI;
- Workshop registration and travel expenses for consumers’ attendance at state conventions of consumer organizations;
- Other activities approved by the Board of SBVI to address agency goals and strategies.

Board members participate in prioritizing innovation and expansion activities which impact citizens who are blind or visually impaired. Innovation and expansion funds are used in accordance with priorities in the Rehabilitation Act as amended.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services
Quality scope and extent of services provided
The new law under WIOA requires that half of the allotment received under Title VI be used for provision of supported employment services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities (up to age 24), with administrative costs limited to 2.5% of the allotment. These youth may receive extended services (i.e., ongoing supports to maintain an individual in supported employment) for up to four (4) years. Due to the administrative burden of the new requirements, the Division of SBVI does not receive Title VI funds. Instead, SBVI will fund the purchase of job training services and other allowable vocational rehabilitation services considered to be supported employment services as needed by clients served by SBVI thorough Title I funds. SBVI has adequate funding to provide supported employment services to individuals with significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities with Title I vocational rehabilitation funds.
Supported Employment Definition
The Act as amended defines supported employment as:
Competitive work in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment:
a. Has not traditionally occurred; or
b. Has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
c. Who, because of their nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services for the period, or extended services to perform such work.
d. This also includes transitional employment for persons with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness.

Quality of Supported Employment
The Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) provides services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. The services are designed to meet the current and future needs of these individuals whose disabilities are of such a nature that they need continuous, ongoing support and extended services in order to engage in and maintain gainful employment. SBVI provides services including evaluation, assessment, job matching, job development, job placement, job coaching, and training for natural supports including extended services and other comprehensive follow along supports.

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 Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. SBVI works in collaboration with the South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to ensure the supported employment services incorporate key values such as self-determinism; choice; person-centered supports; quality of life; and full inclusion.

SBVI and DRS provide training to VR counselors and supported employment service providers to ensure quality services. The South Dakota Center for Disabilities provides training for supported employment service providers in South Dakota through an agreement with vocational rehabilitation.

In June 2015, the Divisions of DRS and SBVI implemented a 25% higher reimbursement rate to supported employment service providers who obtain a Certified Employment Support Professional credentials and participate in a two day person centered planning training. In addition, the Divisions sponsor and arrange trainings to help service providers improve their service ability and maintain their continued education credits.

Timing of the Transition to Extended Services
The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (DRS and SBVI) provide 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 for service provision 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 prior to case closure.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>X or NA</th>
<th>Statement of Assurance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td><strong>X</strong> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td><strong>X</strong> 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.</td>
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| **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:  
(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.  
(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):  
(A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.  
(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.  
(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).  
(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)  
(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)  
(g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency 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.  
(h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required |
by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(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.

(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.

(m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(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.

(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)

(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.

(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(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.

(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.

(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 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(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.
(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State,  
(A) has developed and will implement,  
(i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and  
(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  
(B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

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<td>(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.</td>
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<td>(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.</td>
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<td>(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.</td>
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|   | (b) The designated State agency assures that:  
   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  
   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. |
## Certifications

**WIOA Statement of Certification**  
**Vocational Rehabilitation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS OF CERTIFICATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I certify that the South Dakota Department of Human Services (hereinafter referred to 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I certify that 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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</table>

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:** 11-24-16