Florida VR General Anticipated Permanent Changes to Business

* Florida VR was planning the first steps toward implementing telework in anticipation of reducing leasing costs and our physical footprint statewide when the pandemic hit. The need to enable widespread teleworking for large numbers of staff in a short period of time accelerated the plan; however, telework will become a regular part of VR operations moving forward. A plan for reducing our office space by 25 percent over the next five years is pending approval. This plan included refreshing all desktop computers with laptops as needed. Instead, more than laptops were purchased and distributed to staff who either had desktops or repurposed laptops (ready for surplus or taken from conference rooms and training areas).
* VR’s processes rely heavily on “wet” signatures and paper documentation. Teleworking has necessitated changes to processes and requirements on everything from internal personnel documents to customer documents to payments to employment services providers. Implementation of electronic signatures and paperless processes has been well received by staff, and will be formalized and refined moving forward.
* Service delivery in Florida has focused on face-to-face meetings with customers with both VR staff and service providers. In collaboration with service providers and other experts, VR has created mechanisms for delivering as many services virtually as possible.
* VR was planning on implementing Microsoft Teams over the next 12 months. The need for a secure, virtual platform accelerated implementation of Teams for internal and external meetings statewide shortly after offices closed to the public. This tool has quickly become an essential part of VR’s daily operations.
* VR staff are not provided with cell phones. A solution was needed to enable VR staff to have remote access to our current VOIP telephone system. The software application has been made available to all staff who interact with customers. Long-term solutions to untether staff from specific offices and physical phones are being explored.