

**DEI/Workforce Partnership Activities**

Highlights of State and Local Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation

May 2014

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)

# DEI/Workforce State and Local Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation

## Highlights of Examples from DEI Projects

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The following reflects examples shared by Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) projects on the types of state and local partnerships that are taking place between DEI Projects/public workforce system and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

Of the sixteen projects that shared examples of partnership activities with VR:

* 5 = Round Two--California, Ohio, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin—funded from October 2011 – September 2014. Four focus activities on adults, while South Dakota selected a youth focus.
* 5 = Round Three—Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Rhode Island funded from October 2012 -- 2015. Four focus activities on adults, while Minnesota selected a youth focus.
* 6 = Round Four—Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Maine, New York and Virginia—funded 2013 – 2017. Five focus activities on adults, while Idaho selected a youth focus. It should be noted that four of the six funded Round 4 projects—Alaska, Maine, New York and Virginia—were recipients of Round 1 DEI project funding. Since Round 4 projects are only in their first year of operations, they may not have much to report in terms of Round 4 activities; however, some of the projects shared activities performed under their Round 1 funding.

Partnership activities are categorized by:

1. **State Level Partnerships**

* Part of a state-level cross agency action committee
* Workforce EN Partnership Plus agreement
* Other state-level partnership activities

1. **Local Level Partnerships**

* Part of a systems local-level cross agency action committee
* Part of customer level Integrated Resource Team
* Cross staff training
* Other local-level partnership activities

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Disability Employment Initiative

# DEI/Workforce State and Local Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

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**SECTION 1: HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY FINDINGS**

This section includes key findings from DEI grantees' state and local level responses related to DEI / Workforce partnerships with vocational rehabilitation (VR). Sixteen (16) projects representing Rounds 2, 3 and 4 reported activities. The information is broken down by partnership activities at the state level and then partnership activities at the local level. For each sub category, the information reported is separated by project round: Round 2, Round 3 and Round 4.

In addition to the key activities highlighted below, DEI Projects also report “other” partnership activities at both the state- and local-levels. This information can be found in the charts.

# STATE LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS

1. **All sixteen projects reported that VR is one of the partners of a state-level committee that includes DEI/workforce and meets to coordinate and collaborate on disability-related issues.**
   1. **5 of the projects reported that VR is part of a state level workgroup created to support the state DEI project. Some activities include:**
      * ***Round 2 California*** – helping to develop a working relationship with local SSA offices.
      * ***Round 3 Iowa*** – DEI State Stakeholders that was established to respond to opportunities and challenges developed through the DEI implementation. In addition, its Operation Team, which is dedicated to advancing Iowans with disabilities through employment oversaw and implemented the Work Incentive Grant, DPN initiative and now the DEI.
      * ***Round 3 Massachusetts*** – a primary purpose is to keep the group apprised of efforts to enhance employment opportunities and how the DEI can help support these efforts. For example, news of Department of Developmental Disabilities (DD) plan to end funding for sheltered workshop enabled the group to determine how DD service providers can be more strongly linked to the AJC Network to increase employment for these consumers.
      * ***Round 4 Virginia*** – Executive Management Committee created to provide implementation guidance, recommendations and project oversight for the DPN initiative, DEI Round 1 and now Round 4. It also helps with state and local level collaboration and has helped to influence some policy decisions and procedures.
   2. **5 of the projects reported VR participation on state Workforce Development Councils/Committees. Some outcomes/impact include:**
      * ***Round 2 South Dakota (youth)*** – provides a great line of communications with government agencies and the business community.
      * ***Round 4 Alaska*** – The Alaska Job Center Integrated Steering Committee takes WIB policies and refines them for operational execution. The group began as a catalyst to access Customized Employment across agencies and continues to meet on disability related topics including DEI.
   3. **3 of the projects report being part of a partnership that has entered into formal state level agreements. Some partner agreement activities include:**
      * ***Round 2 South Dakota (youth)*** – entered into a Transition Cooperative Agreement to collaborate on disability issues.
      * ***Round 2 Wisconsin*** – DEI and DVR have a formal agreement to specify staff and responsibility for the DEI to ensure coordination and technical assistance in implementing the DEI statement of work.
      * ***Round 4 Connecticut*** – is in the process of developing a MOU under the DEI.
   4. 1 of the projects reported participation on a Governor’s Disability Committee / Taskforce.
   5. 5 of the projects reported joint activities related to an Employment First initiative that incorporates DEI activities.
2. **Eleven of the projects reported that the DEI Workforce Employment Network (EN) is partnering with VR--or in the process of--through Partnership Plus. Some examples reported of partnership activities to support workforce EN operations include the following:**
   1. ***Round 3 Iowa*** – has had an agreement in place since 2008 between Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and Iowa VR Services and Iowa Department for the Blind that has helped to remove the sense of competition. An agreement has just been established that whenever a ticket is “in-use” with VR, IWD will unassign it, but continue working with the ticket holder. When VR closes or exits a customer, they encourage them to go back and re-assign with the workforce EN or another EN, if more appropriate.
   2. ***Round 4 Alaska*** – A Partnership Plus plan was developed in January 2014 through an MOU that agrees to work across agencies with ticket holders and provide referrals to relevant Job Center EN at or prior to closure. Most Job Centers and VR offices now meet on a monthly basis and discuss cases and begin the warm handoff to the EN. VR counselors also connect with the DRCs at any point when they have an appropriate referral and the two staff meet together with the customer prior to closure for a smooth transition to the Job Center EN. As a result, AK DEI has gone from 3 to 7 assigned tickets within the last quarter.
   3. ***Round 4 Maine*** – in the process of finalizing their Partnership Plus agreement, which will emphasize the physical as well as programmatic convenience of choosing the workforce EN since it is located within the Job Center with VR. It encourages the VR counselor to ask the customer to provide authorization to release contact information so that the DEI workforce EN can make contact to offer post-placement support services and ongoing ticket assignment.
   4. ***Round 4 Virginia*** – In two of the three Partnership Plus agreements with DEI pilot/control sites, VR paid for DRCs and 1 WIA staff to be trained to provide work incentives services on a fee for service basis. This allows these sites to increase revenue and offer additional services to ticket holders, as well as increase the opportunities for handoffs to VR.

# LOCAL LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Fourteen of the projects reported that VR is one of the partners of a local interagency action committee/workgroup that includes DEI pilot sites/workforce and meets to coordinate and collaborate on disability-related issues. Some notable activities are highlighted below:**
   1. **Round 2 DEI Pilot Sites examples:**
      * ***California City of Los Angeles pilot site*** – includes collaboration between the Disability Coordinators from all 18 AJCs and VR Employment Coordinators and Counselors who come together to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services and continuously strengthen the partnership by sharing information and increasing referrals. It meets bi-monthly and each meeting includes a segment for updates, sharing of DEI practices and challenges to the collaboration.
      * ***South Dakota (youth) pilot site*** – the Rapid City VR office joined ID DOL towards developing the “Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills (WDNBH), which was conceptualized prior to DEI, but moved forward under it. The mission and purpose is to provide businesses with education, awareness, and resources to promote the successful hiring of people with disabilities. WDNBH is in the process of completing its bylaws and will submit application to become a 501 c3. Financial support will be available through the SD Department of Human Services to hire an executive director.
      * ***Wisconsin Workforce Development Board area 3 pilot site*** – participates and presents with VR in Operational Meetings at the Job Center, which consists of the supervisors and managers of Job Center partner agencies, who come together to discuss all workforce and programmatic related changes/updates.
      * ***Wisconsin Workforce Development Board area 4 pilot site*** – is working on providing a collaborative method to have WIA Adult and/or WIA Dislocated Worker and Youth provide job development services to PROMISE client family members in need of employment services. DRC is in the process of setting up a meeting with the local PROMISE counselor from VR and the PROMISE state lead.
   2. **Round 3 DEI Pilot Sites examples:** 
      * ***Iowa DEI Pilot Sites*** – all 5 pilot areas has an established local leadership team that includes the required WIA partner agencies plus others relevant to the area identified as being necessary or strategic to improve employment of people with disabilities. The group, facilitated by the DRC, implements the DEI strategies, determines how to invest the flexible funds and meet local priorities. It will serve as ongoing oversight for the Ticket to Work programs that are being developed to sustain project activities. VR is an active partner in all 5 pilot areas and is supported by their state level VR leadership.
      * ***Minnesota (youth) DEI Pilot Sites*** – Community Transition Interagency Committees were organized to assist students with disabilities by helping to provide a smoother transition. The committee consists of parents, students, and staff from area school districts and members from area service agencies including active participation from VR.
   3. **Round 4 DEI Pilot Sites examples:**
      * ***Alaska Anchorage pilot site area*** – the Job X group, a diverse group of individuals who represent agencies that work with job seekers from a variety of backgrounds, meet weekly. Membership includes representatives from state agencies including workforce development and VR, who meet to discuss employment opportunities and barriers in Anchorage for job seekers. The group invites employers to join to share opportunities and challenges they face. The linkages established during these meetings benefit the employer, the state representatives and job seekers.
      * ***Idaho (youth) DEI Pilot Sites*** – staff from VR and Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired are active on Disability Mentoring Day workgroups. VR will often provide portfolio materials that participants use for their job shadowing activities. Both agencies are very involved in regional “transition teams” that sponsor Disability Mentoring Days and College Day events. The agencies will be part of a “Ready Set Go Camp” being planned for June 2014 by ID Educations Services for the Deaf and the Blind and the ID DEI.
      * ***Maine Presque Isle pilot site*** – from Round 1 activities -- a VR counselor participated on the Asset Coalitions that were developed that met monthly and helped to plan events such as an Asset Summit, Financial Fitness Fair, etc.
      * ***New York Hempstead and Suffolk pilot sites*** – both pilot areas participate on Placement Networks with VR, where several providers meet to discuss training and job placement opportunities for customers with disabilities.
      * ***Virginia DEI Pilot Sites*** – are involved with VR in the planning and funding of local Champions events that recognize employers for hiring job seekers with disabilities.
2. **All sixteen projects reported that VR is represented on customer level Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) and fifteen provided examples outlining VR’s role and contributions. The following highlights some examples from each round of projects.**
   1. **Round 2 DEI Pilot *Sites Integrated Resource Teams (IRT)*  examples:**
      * ***California City of Los Angeles pilot site*** – VR employment coordinators attend weekly orientations at all 18 Job Centers and have work stations at some of them. Through this collaboration, the City of Los Angeles and VR have increased the number of referrals and fostered collaboration for purposes of conducting IRTs.
      * ***South Dakota (youth) pilot site area*** *–*

Natacha’s story demonstrates a multitude of the benefits of an IRT and how VR DOL blended and braided supports and funding for the benefit of this individual. Further, Natacha’s story demonstrates the fluidity of the IRT approach as both Natacha and her IRT continued to grow and learn how to best help her reach her goals throughout her recovery.

* + - Natacha, age 21, was in an accident and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Upon returning to work after sustaining her injury, Natacha was unable to retain the position she held before her accident. Determined to work and be independent, Natacha scheduled an appointment with a WIA representative at the Job Center.
    - The WIA representative proceeded to enroll Natacha for WIA youth services, but also recognized that Natacha may benefit from additional services outside of the Job Center. An IRT was developed and included the participant, her mother, a VR counselor, the WIA representative, DRC, and a service coordinator. The team developed an employment plan, leveraging funds from all three sources (VR, DOL-WIA, SD DEI) to help Natacha meet her goals. This included a WIA funded work experience. SD DEI and VR split the cost of computer retraining programs.
    - The IRT reconvened on several occasions to address Natacha’s changing needs as well as the needs of her employer. The team, again leveraging funding from VR, WIA, and SD DEI, was able to provide Natacha with a job coach, assistive technology, and additional WIA work experience hours.
    - In most recent follow-up, Natacha had been awaiting medical clearance to begin modified duties in security patrol with her work experience employer. This clearance was granted and she is excited to increase her hours to security duties. The DRC was a participant in Natacha’s IRTs to facilitate the team’s understanding of the IRT approach.
    - ***Wisconsin Workforce Development Board area 4 pilot site*** – created an IRT referral sheet with release built in to follow VR clients that meet with the DRC/Job Center while on the VR wait list or prior to VR referral. The IRT referral sheets give VR counselors a brief description of the customer and Job Center actions including the resources that the DRC recommended. This helps to identify what other IRT partners may be needed based on the customer’s status and need for support.
  1. **Round 3 DEI Pilot *Sites Integrated Resource Teams (IRT)*  examples:**
     + ***Iowa Region 11 pilot site*** – this area has conducted 5 IRTs with representation from VR. Many of the planning strategies that resulted from these meetings included braiding and blending of funds to assist the customer in meeting goals. Examples include splitting of tuition costs, support services: WIA assisting with tuition, books and fees, while VR purchased computer equipment, interview clothing and assistive technology such as an adjustable computer desk. VR has also assisted in funding job readiness activities for individuals to supplement pre-vocational activities a customer receives through the Job Center. VR has partnered with developing financial literacy strategies with the Job Center by utilizing DRC services for benefits planning and the DEI to develop a PASS plan for a common customer.
     + ***Minnesota (youth) South Central Region pilot site*** -- An example of a successful IRT meeting included the youth and his Mom, MN Valley Action Council (MVAC) Vocational Advisor, the DRC and the area VR Transitions Counselor. The youth expressed a desire to work, live independently and attend college after high school. Mom and youth had concerns about his ability to reach these goals due to his disability and high anxiety. This young man and his Mom had not been connected to resources and did not know about VR and other services. The VR Counselor explained services available through the VR Transition program and also went over the application process. This face to face explanation of VR services and application was very helpful to the Mom and youth and relived much initial anxiety. Together the IRT members were able to give information regarding other resources to assist with Independent Living Skills and housing issues. Mom was relieved to know there would be more help with transition of her son to the adult world and states “I never knew this help was out there. “

A second IRT was scheduled at the youth’s school after his first work experience through MVAC ended early due to the youth being unable to tolerate the stress of this work experience. This second IRT included the VR Counselor, the youth, his Special Ed. Instructor, Vocational Advisor and the DRC. A more suitable work experience was found at the school working in an area youth has a strong interest in. This work experience which has been very successful for this youth has been extended due to the partnership between VR and MVAC. With MVAC providing funding for the first 12 weeks and VR providing for the second 12 weeks. This extended Work Experience has benefited this youth in many ways, including giving a large boost to his confidence and helping him to learn his own DEI work environment. MVAC and VR continue to work together to provide services and support.

* 1. ***Round 4 DEI Pilot Sites Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) examples:***
* ***Virginia IRT example:***

A 35 year old female job seeker with a learning and heart transplant disability meets with the DRC who tells her about the employment services and training programs offered. It is determined that she could be eligible and benefit from the WIA training program, so she is registered for a WIA orientation workshop. She attends the WIA orientation and completes the paperwork to become enrolled in the WIA program.

Intake Appointment -- The WIA case manager meets with the job seeker and they discuss her interest in going into a job-training program to become a certified Nurse Assistant, which is a job that matches up with her love of people. The job seeker shares that she has previously worked with the VR and has a Ticket to Work. The WIA counselor asks the DRC to join the next meeting for additional suggestions and resources she might benefit from in the community.

Engaging IRT members -- In reviewing the costs of the WIA training program and the tools required for the classes, it becomes clear that the WIA training expenditure limit will be exceeded for the CNA training program. The DRC suggests re-connecting with VR to explore cost sharing and resource coordination.

Follow-Up and IRT Action -- The DRC, WIA Case Manager and VR Counselor agree to carry out the following in order for customer to reach her employment goal:

* + - The DRC takes on the role of leading the IRT.
    - The bulk of the cost for customer employment training will come out of WIA funding.
    - The DRC used the First Dollar Down fund for tuition, school supplies and transportation for the CNA program.
    - The VR Counselor commits to paying the cost of the projected needs during the lecture portion of the training series. This cost comes to almost the same amount as the training program and tools paid for by WIA. Both the VR counselor and the DRC agree that neither program alone could easily absorb the total cost.
    - The job seeker agrees to follow up with the IRT on any action items.
    - The training provider becomes part of the IRT, shortly after a discussion with the IRT members on effective accommodation strategies. Due to the high quality of customer’s work, the training provider recommends her to an Assisted Living Home position. The DRC makes the introduction and helps to educate the staff on effective low cost accommodation strategies.

After completing the 10 weeks training program, the job seeker is referred to an employer by her training provider and goes to work full-time as a Certified Nurse assistant. The DRC follows up with the IRT members providing them with information on customer place of employment / hours / pay, and follow-up services offered by each agency. The DRC also referred job seeker to a WISA counselor to discuss how her SSI would affect her employment and which work incentives to use.

1. **Fifteen projects reported examples of DEI pilot site/AJC cross staff training with VR. The following highlights some examples from each round of projects.**
   1. ***Round 2 DEI Pilot Sites examples of cross training activities:***
      * ***California City of Los Angeles pilot site*** – in all 18 Job Centers started out by learning about each other’s goals, purpose and participants served (DEI/AJC and VR) and then moved to providing cross training where the AJC and VR had an opportunity to train the group on their respective functions. Every subsequent meeting included feedback from every “cluster” on what that group did to support the collaboration. Questions included: “Did the collaboration meet in between?”, “Did they attend each other’s orientation?”, “Did they take a tour of the facilities?” “Did they make any referrals to each other?”, and “Was a warm hand off made when performing a referral?” Through this collaboration, the City of Los Angeles’ AJCs have made 85 referrals to VR and VR has made 44 referrals to AJCs.
      * ***Wisconsin Workforce Development Board area 6 pilot site*** – VR has assisted the DRC with Job Center cross staff training in the following training activities:
      * Ticket to Work WISE – for social security beneficiaries
      * Disability and Employment – Job Center staff and partners were given an overview of services available through VR and the DEI pilot site during a Lunch and Learn
      * Assistive Technology Job Center Open House – VR assisted with securing vendors for the Job Center staff and partner agencies
      * QPR Suicide Prevention – for all six AJC’s staff and partners
      * Employer Recognition Breakfast – for 2013 National Disability Employment Awareness Month
   2. **Round 3 DEI Pilot Sites examples of cross training activities:**

* ***Iowa DEI Pilot Sites*** – with the addition of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) technology in the five pilots, all partner staff, including VR, were included in training provided by Deaf Services Center of Iowa. A part of the focus on this event was to support staff of AJCs in their understanding of how to more fully include people that are deaf in services. One outcome is the promotion of the use of VRI in all partner services within the Job Center. Another is an important training opportunity that promotes the sharing of customers where it may not have otherwise occurred. There are incidences of cross referrals for deaf customers, as well as increased participation of deaf job seekers in AJC services.
  1. **Round 4 DEI Pilot Sites examples of cross training activities:**
* ***Alaska DEI Pilot Sites*** – any and all staff training offered to either VR or DEI/AJC staff is shared for cost and knowledge benefits with all staff from both agencies who are relevant audience depending on the content. Many AJCs, because of co-location, include staff on both sides at each other’s weekly staff meetings and any in-service training in addition to formalized training outside the office. Impact is broader knowledge for all and further relationships and collaboration cross agency. Recent examples of trainings have included:
  + Customized Employment
  + All staff training on Partnership Plus and Ticket to Work
  + Mental Health First Ad
  + Motivational Interviewing
* ***New York DEI Pilot Sites*** – will use a best practice implemented under their Round 1 funding. During Round 1 a Local Plan for Strategic Partnership with VR template was created to foster a stronger alliance between DRCs and VR Counselors. It serves as a tangible resource tool that helps identify a plan of action to help assist both DRCs and VR Counselors build a stronger relationship.

**SECTION 2: DEI/WORKFORCE EXAMPLES OF STATE LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS WITH VR**

| EXAMPLES OF STATE LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS |
| --- |
| 1. State Cross Agency Action Committee (generic name): VR is one of the partners of a state level committee that includes DEI/workforce that meets to coordinate and collaborate on disability-related issues?   If VR is part of an interagency workgroup, describe the make-up of the group and describe objectives, purpose/mission, activities and accomplishments. |
| ROUND 2 DEI PROJECTS |
| CALIFORNIA DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| The California State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is an integral partner of the DEI project. DOR is represented by staff at all quarterly DEI meetings, and have presented valuable information at most meetings. DOR was also instrumental in forging a solid collaborative bond between the City of Los Angeles’ DEI Staff and local VR Staff. DOR and EDD have also formed a workgroup aimed at assisting the local DEI Pilot programs in developing a working relationship with local SSA offices in their respective areas. We had a conference call with SSA Region Six Workforce Liaison, which led to better communication between the DEI local staff and AWICs throughout California. |
| OHIO DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Ohio’s VR agency, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) partners with DEI on the development of an online, one-stop web portal for job seekers with disabilities, employers, and service providers. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * The State level partnership under a Transition Cooperative Agreement among the Departments of Human Services (Vocational Rehabilitation), Health, Education, and Labor and Regulation actively provide for collaboration on disability issues. The Transition Cooperative agreement outlines the services each agency brings to the table and establishes the state commitment to working together in a positive and fruitful manner. * VR is also represented on the state Workforce Development Council along with private sector business and other state agencies (Education, Regents, Economic Development, Human Services, and Labor and Regulation). This role has established a strong relationship with the workforce agency and provides a great line of communications with government agencies and the business community.   These two partnerships, and on-going relationships at the state level, establish a concerted and directed effort at helping individuals with disabilities to be successful in life. Cabinet Secretaries have been involved with the DEI project from the inception. The Secretaries are kept abreast through regular briefings on the project and periodic meetings to showcase our progress. This gives the top executives an opportunity for hands-on interaction with program staff and partners. The Division of Rehabilitation Services and Department of Labor and Regulation are co-located in the SD DEI service area. This co-location creates cohesiveness among staff and further develops professional relationships. This arrangement is common across the state. |
| WASHINGTON DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| As GCDE was developing the application for the DEI grant the Executive Secretary met several times with the DVR Director and other executive staff to discuss the proposal. An early draft was provided to DVR executive staff and their ideas and suggestions were incorporated into the final proposal.  The DEI State Lead and the Washington State DVR Director serve on several state-level committees that address disability-related issues. While neither of the examples listed below were formed for the specific purpose of coordinating on DEI activities, the DEI State Lead collaborates with DVR on DEI activities as those opportunities are presented.   * Governor’s Disability Employment Taskforce: Responsible for assisting state agencies and private employers with recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities. * Olmstead Policy Academy on Employment: Purpose to address the low employment rate for people with mental health issues at a state level. |
| WISCONSIN DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| WI DWD Division of Employment and Training (DET) and WI DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) have a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in force through 9/30/14) to specify staff and responsibilities for the DEI grant: DVR responsibilities, DET responsibilities, and Shared responsibilities. In practice, DVR contributes two staff members (1 full-time staff person and 1 supervisor) and DET contributes two staff members (1 full-time state lead and 1 supervisor.) Purpose of MOA: To ensure coordination and technical assistance in implementing WI's DEI program. Activities: The following meetings are scheduled ongoing:   * DRC meeting – monthly – led by DVR staff person, attended by DET staff person and then supervisors as available * EN meeting – monthly – led by DET state lead, attended by DVR staff person who previously handled EN functions (no longer involved actively but attends meetings when she can, to provide background and expertise) and supervisors when available * FPO meeting – monthly – attended by all four * DVR/DET touch base meeting – weekly – attended by both full-time staff persons * DVR/DET touch base meeting – bi-weekly – attended by both supervisors and state lead (as available)   WDEI has experienced severe staffing issues with the state lead position. DVR stepped in to ensure that DEI continued. DET now has a full-time state lead, but to maintain consistency and give the state lead time to transition into the job, the DVR full time staff person functions as the chief DRC liaison and conducted the annual site reviews when there was no designated state lead. The state lead functions as the EN coordinator and manages national office communication. The two work together to enhance DRC recordkeeping, conduct monthly and quarterly reports, revise PY14 monitoring, and ensure that grant deliverables are met.  Accomplishments:   * DVR mentored/coached new state lead (DET) with data processing required with Maximus regarding TTW and transitioned EN functions to DET. State lead needs no further DVR assistance. DET staff now have suitability and complete EN capability. * PY 13 site reviews and reports finalized and sent to Workforce Development Boards. First draft of revised monitoring form has been approved by the federal program officer. PY 14 site reviews are scheduled and will be conducted by both full time staff persons (DVR and DET.) * Continuity with DVR's liaison activities with DRCs with new state lead on board. DRCs have adjusted and are communicating as instructed. |
| ROUND 3 DEI PROJECTS |
| IOWA DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR is a collaborative member on a number of DEI related planning groups. In addition, VR is the lead agency for the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Project, which operates hand-in-hand with our DEI activity.   * Operation Team – VR facilitates the activities of the Eight State Agency Operation Team, as well as serves as a member. This team oversaw and implemented the WIG, Navigator and DEI initiatives, among others, but with these three, Iowa Workforce Development (also a member of the Operation Team) served as the grant recipient and project lead on behalf of this partnership. The purpose of this group is to advance Iowans with disabilities through employment. * DEI State Stakeholders – this group meets twice a year with regard to the activities of the DEI, and is a work group established to respond to opportunities and challenges developed through the DEI implementation. This is a much wider than the Operation Team. In addition to State Agencies, this includes representatives from Private non-profit agencies, Centers for Independent Living, Mental Health Services, key initiatives such as “Money Follows the Person”, PROMISE Jobs (our TANF employment program), WIPA, Transportation, Housing and other employment and disability related efforts. There are approximately 10 invitees just between Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Between 40 and 50 attend each of these stakeholder meetings. The purpose of this group is to share in what we’re learning with the DEI strategies, look for opportunities among our shared resources and interests to strengthen the impact of those strategies, and to look and challenges together to determine helpful suggestions for our pilot regions. VR has provided the meeting room for these meetings in addition to participating in leadership. |
| LOUISIANA DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| At the State Level leadership from VR and DEI have a Taskforce enforced. The goal of the Taskforce is to collaborate and implement DEI practices between VR and DEI on improving educational and employment services to individuals with disabilities. |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| The VR state agency, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), is part of the inter-agency project coordination group. The group is co-chaired by MRC Commissioner and is made of a cross section of disability agencies (in addition to VR, these include Departments of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Workforce Development, and federal and state representatives from the VETS program, project partners (ICI and Work Without Limits), and representatives of disability advocacy groups. The group’s objectives are to provide guidance on the progress of the DEI project, and identify opportunities for further collaboration on DEI objectives at the state level. A primary purpose is to also keep the group apprised of general efforts to enhance employment opportunities within the state, and how the DEI project can be utilized to support those efforts. Examples of this include sharing information on the Department of Developmental Disabilities plans to end funding for sheltered workshops. As a result, efforts are underway to determine how DDS service providers can be more strongly linked with the workforce development systems and Massachusetts Career Centers, in order to increase employment for DDS consumers. |
| MINNESOTA DEI (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| Minnesota’s Shared Vision for Youth (SVY) State Team includes a wide variety of state-level representatives, including from VR. Members include: Department of Employment and Economic Development (Youth Services, State Services for the Blind, VR); Department of Human Services (Child Safety and Permanency, Office of Economic Opportunity, Transitions to Economic Stability); Department of Education (Safe and Healthy Learners, Adult Basic Education, Career Tech Ed, Dropout Prevention, Special Education Policy); Department of Transportation (Office of Civil Rights); Department of Labor and Industry (Apprenticeship); Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Career Tech Ed, Student Affairs, Chancellor’s Office, iSeek); University of Minnesota (Institute on Community Integration); Department of Corrections (Juvenile Services); Department of Health (Adolescent Health Coordinator); Department of Public Safety (Juvenile Justice Specialist); Minnesota Housing (Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance); Minnesota Alliance with Youth; The Link; Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities; PACER Center; Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa; Wilder Foundation; Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center; Minnesota Workforce Council Association; Social Security Administration, and Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest.  The SVY State Team has the following Vision and Mission Statement: “By age 25, Minnesota’s young people will be ready for the responsibilities and rewards of economic self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, community involvement, stable housing and life-long learning.” Mission Statement: State agencies will collaborate to assure that Minnesota’s neediest youth will acquire the talents, skills, and knowledge necessary to ensure their healthy transition to successful adult roles and responsibilities. The team meets quarterly and has collaborated on a variety of projects and services around the following outcome areas: improve transition outcomes for all at-risk youth; improve transition outcomes for youth aging out of foster care; improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities; prevent and end homelessness; reduce high school dropout rates. |
| RHODE ISLAND DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| The RI DEI has partnered with VR as part of an interagency workgroup brought together by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) known as the Employment First Initiative. Stakeholders on this committee include: the Rhode Island Department of Education, VR, BHDDH, private provider agencies, advocacy organizations, families, individuals served and self-advocates involved in employment services, and the Department of Labor and Training. Historically, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals has provided state funds to support sheltered and supported employment services offered by licensed provider agencies for adults with developmental disabilities. The second phase of Project Sustainability is to further promote and emphasize integrated community-based employment and meaningful integrated day programs that build vocational skills and community connection as a priority for all individuals with developmental disabilities.  The Employment First Committee meets monthly as a resource to discuss, develop and advance the Employment First policy initiative by: (1) developing employment support models and options, (2) creating a venue for people who are providing employment supports to share information about creating employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities; (3) identifying and sponsoring training and technical assistance needs, and (4) educate all stakeholders as to the positive outcomes and strategies in achieving integrated employment and full community integration. Employment First Initiative Mission:   * Maintain annual membership in the State Employment Leadership Network; * Develop a three (3) to five (5) year implementation plan with annual benchmarks to increase integrated supported employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities in the community while incrementally reducing service delivery and employment in sheltered workshops and segregated settings; * Establish clear outcome expectations for employment including annual baseline employment data and specific percentage goals for developmentally disabled individuals receiving day services; * Expand evidence-based practices that enhance employment services as licensed provider performance outcome measures and responsibilities. Require regular and periodic monitoring and reporting on the employment status of individuals receiving services; * Realign the orientation and funding of day services to focus on establishing and sustaining real work opportunities for individuals and expanding integrated, community-based employment support models that are designed to help individuals remain employed over the long-term using follow-along and employer support; * Collaborate with the State Department of Education and local school divisions to promote (1) early transition planning, (2) assessment for and use of appropriate assistive technology, and (3) ongoing involvement of relevant state and local agencies to support integrated employment; * Collaborate with the State Department of Education and Office of Rehabilitation Services to expand school to work transition programs for the developmentally disabled that expose students to job opportunities and enable them to graduate with jobs in place, and create a model to provide support for individuals interested in developing their own businesses; and * Conduct and/or participate in a statewide awareness and education campaign about Employment First. |
| ROUND 4 DEI PROJECTS |
| ALASKA DEI (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| 1. AJCISC -- Alaska Job Center Integrated Steering Committee: This group collaborates on working level operations of the American Job Centers in Alaska. Committee takes the WIB policies and refines them for operational execution. Group began as a catalyst for individuals with disability to access Customized Employment across agencies and to develop the use of discovery in front line services. This led to on-going use of modified discovery and triage model to serve job center customers. The group continues to meet on disability related topics including DEI. Agencies involved include; Americas Job Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Public Assistance and WIA service delivery agency. 2. Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative: DEI State Lead sits on this committee. The purpose of the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative is to prioritize employment as the first and preferred option for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Alaska. Partnership consists of; Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Education and Early Development, Disability Law Center of Alaska, and the Center for Human Development and Workforce through DEI staff. Goals are to address barriers and develop replicable, sustainable strategies using a three-pronged approach: 1) policy development to focus on implementation of policy at all levels (legislative, regulatory, day-to-day policies and procedures), including obtaining, allocating, or re-allocating resources (people, time, money); 2) capacity building to focus on building knowledge, training, consultation and technical assistance, and peer-to-peer learning; and 3) resource leveraging to include pooling of assets and resources, blending and braiding resources, and integrating IEI activities with other priorities and initiatives including DEI. 3. Mental Health Trust, Employment Focus Area; Involves multiple agencies including, DEI/Workforce, VR, Housing, Therapeutic Court system, Veteran’s agencies, Independent Living, Behavioral Health, Health and Social Services, Senior and Disability Services and others. Group is in planning phase for implementation and is meeting for a statewide Employment Summit at the end of May. Overview on goals and objectives from initial workgroup meeting in January is also attached to email for more information. |
| CONNECTICUT DEI (ROUND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| CT DOL currently works directly with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS) to address the need to develop an MOU under the CT DEI. CT DOL DEI staff also participate on many statewide groups related to serving individuals with disabilities including the CT Transition Community of Practice (State Department of Education, Department of Social Services, BRS, local school districts), CT Disability Focus group (Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Developmental Services, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind, BRS, and SDE), CT Assistive Technology Work Group (BRS, DEIB, DMHAS), and various local work groups. |
| IDAHO DEI (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Idaho Employment First Consortium: The consortium was established in April 2012 and is supported by the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities for the purpose of improving how employment services and systems work in Idaho so that people with disabilities are able to reach their career goals. The initial focus is on individuals with developmental disabilities as a pilot and progressing to all disabilities as lessons learned are implemented. It includes representatives from state agencies, advocacy organizations, service providers, parents and disability self-advocates. The group developed an action plan, is currently researching avenues for better data design/collection of state disability statistics and successfully promoted legislation in the 2014 state legislative session to include pursuit of employment as a Medicaid funded activity, which had previously been restricted to health and safety when funding decreased because of the Great Recession. * Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition: The mission of the council is to provide and promote a common conceptual framework that leads to quality opportunities for youth with disabilities in integrated community living, recreation, continued education and employment. Representatives from the following organizations/agencies make up the council: State Department of Education - Special Education Bureau and SDE Professional Technical Education; Assistive Technology Project, University of Idaho; Department of Health and Welfare; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; Department of Juvenile Corrections; Department of Labor; Disability Rights Idaho; Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc.; Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities; Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind; Community-based 18-21 student transition program teachers; Eastern Idaho Technical College Disability Support Services; Idaho State University Disability Support Services; Idaho Falls Community Transition Team; Special education directors. One of the goals of the council is to create better support and coordination for transition teams and development of such teams where none exist, also facilitating student involvement in Disability Mentoring Days and transition conferences. * Idaho Assistive Technology Project: The Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) is a federally funded program administered by the Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the University of Idaho. The goal is to increase the availability of assistive technology devices and services for older persons and Idahoans with disabilities. Both the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Idaho Department of Labor are represented on the project’s advisory council.   A primary activity of both the Interagency Council on Secondary Transition and the Assistive Technology Project is the annual Tools for Life Secondary Transition and Technology Fair to showcase assistive technology, assistive technology services, and transition activities that help students access higher education, employment and community living. It has grown to two full days (and an evening); involves numerous partners; includes workshops for families, educators, and advocates; and has either spawned or re-energized several statewide student leadership and empowerment initiatives. The Tools for Life Fair is often a student's first time staying in a hotel, going to a restaurant, or getting away from home—essential transition groundwork. The fair rotates between the northern, southwestern and southeastern regions of the state and attracts 250-350 participants depending on which area of the state it is held. Please see <http://www.idahoat.org/Portals/0/Documents/Tools4LifeReport_2014.pdf>. |
| MAINE DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * DEI and VR are both members of the Commission on Disability and Employment, a committee of our state WIB. VR is a prominent agency in the Employment First Maine coalition and DEI serves on its Business Engagement Work Group. * Both VR and DEI are members of the Benefits Counseling Network, which brings together agencies providing services to individuals receiving federal disability benefits. * In DEI Round 1 we had an Interagency Workgroup at the Bangor and Presque Isle Career Centers. It was made up of the DEI Career Center manager, the WIA Career Center manager (provider partner), the VR Regional Manager, the LWIB Director and the DEI Lead, the DRC and RCI. One of the topics we tackled among many was the #s of people with disabilities being served by WIA in each region, which varied, but was below the % of people with disabilities in our communities. We set goals for increasing this number and were able to successfully serve more people with disabilities. As a group we also reviewed the Career Center customer flow for all customers and then specifically for people with disabilities to see where improvements could be made |
| NEW YORK DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC: <http://ddpc.ny.gov/>) -- This state level council is divided into three active committees; (a) Adult Issue, (b) Children’s Issues, and (c) Systems Issues and Community Education. NYSDOL and ACCES-VR participate on the Adult Issues Committee which meets quarterly. Overall, the mission of the DDPC is to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities. The DDPC through its available funding contributes to a comprehensive, coordinated, consumer/family-centered and directed system of community services and individual supports that enable self-determination, independence, productivity, and community inclusion and integration for those with developmental disabilities. The following state agencies are members of the DDPC: NYS Office for Mental Health; NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities; NYS Justice Center; NYS Office for the Aging; NYS Department of Transportation; NYS Department of Labor; NYS Office for Child and Family Services; and NY State Education – ACCES VR.   DDPC has an annual budget of approximately $3 million of which the majority of these dollars is awarded via grants to selected providers. Each year projects of priority are identified and committee members vote to approve or disapprove funding for these projects. The most visible project currently is highlighted below:   * The Adult Issues Committee determined that the "Disability Benefits 101" (DB101) product, currently in use in several states, is the most viable product and platform to achieve the goal of providing comprehensive, current, and user-friendly information on disability benefits. The Adult Issues Committee is seeking to implement a customized version of DB101 in New York State. * One-Stop customers will have access to this online disability benefits information portal. * DB101 will be funded with a set aside in the amount of 310,000 per year, for a potential 3 year. |
| * State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)   The Council provides advice and support to ACCES-VR on behalf of people with disabilities and their families regarding the delivery of effective rehabilitation services which lead to employment for people with disabilities. The following state agencies are members of the SRC: ACCES – VR; NYS Office for Mental Health; NYS Justice Center; NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities; NYS Commission for the Blind; and NYS Department of Labor  NYSDOL participates on the Workforce Development committee which is currently brainstorming ideas to increase involvement by businesses on the SRC. The SRC meets quarterly for a 1 and ½ day agenda. For more information on the SRC refer to this link: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/src/home.html> |
| VIRGINIA DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * DEI Executive Management Committee that provided guidance, recommendations and project oversight for DPN and DEI Round I, will continue with Round IV. Members include representatives from WIB directors, VR, Depts. for Blind and Vision Impaired, Adult Education, Employment Commission, Workforce Center Managers, Social Services, Behavioral Health and MIG director and WIA State level administrators, community partners. Invited guests from ETA/ODEP/DOL/NDI technical assistance team highlight national issues; and local challenges with DEI and successful implementation with the AJCs. This group provides invaluable information for practical implementation of DEI project and state and local level collaboration for these initiatives. As a result this group has influenced some policy decisions and procedures. * VR participated in the initial blended funding for Common Screening Tool along with WIA and WP. It was expanded under DEI to include data collection for the DEI Evaluation component and disability disclosure. The percentage of individuals who self identified with a disability has increased to 15%, at the AJCs utilizing this form. The Common Screening Tool tracks core services, referrals to partner agencies and identifies other needed support services. The steering committee was comprised of VR Assistant Commissioner, Employment Commission Workforce Services Director, Community College’s Workforce Services Manager and WIB Deputy Director. The User’s Group provided recommendations for upgrades. * VR initiated the efforts to carry out the Governor’s Executive Order 55 (NGA’s A Better Bottom Line) and worked closely with the Virginia Workforce Council staff. DEI worked with VR to expand the outreach effort to include more private sector businesses. Discussions focused on: how agencies can partner to increase the use of best practices related to hiring people with disabilities and veterans; and on strategies to improve hiring in the private sector. As a follow up regional workshops were held with hiring managers representing employers from both the private and public sectors. The effort was successful and a second round of EEO 55 workshops are being proposed. * VR Assistant Commissioner/DEI Project Co-Director is on the Workforce Development System Workgroup, which is advising the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) on the implementation of Virginia’s Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) is the co-director. The WDQI in Virginia has five goals and objectives:  1. Develop a workforce longitudinal system; 2. Develop the capacity to link education and workforce data; 3. Improve the quality of workforce data; 4. Use data to understand workforce programs and drive improved performance; 5. Promote the system through the development of web-based portals.   The Workforce Development System Workgroup was created in July 2011 as a part of the implementation of Virginia’s workforce data quality initiative. Agencies represented on the Workgroup include the VCCS, VEC, Departments of Education, Rehabilitative Services (VR), Social Services, Correctional Education, Blind and Vision Impaired, and Labor and Industry. The Workgroup was been charged to examine workforce data issues within and across public workforce programs in Virginia, develop potential strategies to enhance workforce data, create a unified method to describe how the workforce system is serving Virginia, and identify areas of improvement for the workforce system.   * DEI Project Lead and VR staff are members of the Homeless Coordinating Council -Workforce Development Workgroup that is discussing the various options and strategies to increase employment opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness and to facilitate partnerships with the workforce development system, so that services and human resources are more available for those harder to serve. Recommendations will be provided to the Virginia Workforce Council. Agencies represented on the workgroup are: Departments of Social Services, Corrections, Veteran Services and VR; Virginia Employment Commission and DEI. |
|  |
| 1. DEI Workforce EN has entered into a Partnership Plus Agreement   If your workforce EN is partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation through Partnership Plus, please describe this agreement and provide examples of how this partnership is supporting your workforce EN operations including assignment of Tickets and generating revenue? |
| ROUND 2 DEI PROJECTS |
| CALIFORNIA DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| The Partnership Plus (PP) agreements have been signed between DOR and 4 of the five Pilot areas. Los Angeles chose not to sign the PP agreement. The PP process has not proved to be very effective because the Pilot areas and VR staff do not believe there is a need for such formality, and they have a solid working relationship based on communication and recognition of their mutual goal for the customer. |
| WASHINGTON DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Our Workforce EN has not yet partnered with DVR through Partnership Plus. We are in the preliminary phase of this partnership. We are conducting meetings with key payers to determine the best procedures for this partnership with both our Workforce EN and the EN established with the Association of Washington Business. |
| WISCONSIN DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| WI has six DEI pilot areas.   * 2 are independent ENs with their own Partnership Plus agreements (see below.) * 1 is a new, independent EN w/o a Partnership Plus agreement enacted yet * 3 operate under the state administrative WFEN. State admin WFEN does not intend to enter into a Partnership Plus agreement at this time due to the short timeframe of the DEI grant. However, under discussion is DET continuing to operate as a WFEN in post-DEI time period to offer to the DEI control areas the opportunity to try TTW and operate under our WFEN for a limited time. If control areas are interested, DET will revisit entering into a Partnership Plus agreement.   WDB 8 (Workforce Resource) – has had agreement for the past year. *"DVR lets exiting consumers know about all ENs in the area."*  WDB 11 – TTW Partnership Plus agreement has been in place since February 2013. *"The agreement has bolstered ticket assignments and EN payments for SWWDB."* |
| ROUND 3 DEI PROJECTS |
| IOWA DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| We have had an agreement in place since 2008 between IWD and the two VR agencies: Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department for the Blind. This agreement has worked very well, and has helped to remove the sense of competition that might otherwise exist without it. There are 110,000 Ticket Holders in the state of Iowa, and VR serves a little over 2000 of them at a time. We’ve just established an agreement that whenever a ticket is “in use” with VR, we will unassign it, but continue working with that individual. When VR closes or exits a customer, they encourage them to go back and re-assign with the workforce EN or another EN if more appropriate. |
| LOUISIANA DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DEI and VR have agreed to work collaboratively in an effort to assist TTW participants. This collaboration includes the following:   * VR provides a monthly report of SSI/SSDI individuals in delayed or closed status * VR and DRCs make referrals, when appropriate * VR share any other additional information when deemed relevant to the TTW program. |
| MINNESOTA DEI (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) workforce EN has an active Partnership Plus agreement with VR, completed in June of 2013. The agreement has not yet resulted in any assignment of Tickets or revenue for the DEED EN. |
| ROUND 4 DEI PROJECTS |
| ALASKA DEI (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Statewide meeting occurred in January, 2014 between the state Lead for DEI and statewide VR managers and all local VR managers to develop a Partnership Plus plan and increase the referrals to generate revenue for both agencies. As a result we have entered into a robust partnership and have an MOU that agrees to work across agencies with Ticket Holders and provide referrals to relevant Job Center EN at or prior to closure. Most Job Centers and VR offices now meet on a monthly basis and discuss cases and begin the warm handoff to the EN. VR counselors also connect with the DRC’s at any point when they have an appropriate referral and the two staff meeting together with the customer prior to closure for a smooth transition to the Job Center ENs. As a result we have gone from 3 to 7 assigned tickets that are Partnership Plus within the last quarter and anticipate this to increase substantially as we move forward. VR management were extremely open and understood the benefits to their agency so have embraced the Partnership Plus model and have made the process an expected part of doing business with any ticket holder. |
| IDAHO DEI (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| The Idaho Department of Labor EN is currently completing the suitability stage of the security clearance process, so has not actively begun taking Tickets. However, the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Idaho Department of Labor have been discussing Partnership Plus opportunities for some time. In 2013 Vocational Rehabilitation convened a series of meetings with ENs active in the state to develop an MOU template for Partnership Plus. Adopted by several ENs already, the template is being reviewed by Vocational Rehabilitation and Labor for additional language to reflect the special relationship between the two agencies. |
| MAINE DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| In DEI Round 1 in the Bangor region, through efforts of the DEI Team and VR manager, a letter was developed that went to all VR clients (who were also SSA beneficiaries) whose cases were closing informing them of the opportunity to assign their ticket with a local Employment Network. All of the ENs in the area were listed in the letter.  We are on the brink of finalizing a PP Agreement between VR and our DEI EN. Once implemented, it is designed to provide people whose VR case is closing due to 90 days of employment detailed information regarding the DEI EN, emphasizing the physical as well as programmatic convenience of choosing the DEI EN since it’s located in the one-stop along with VR. It encourages the VR counselor to ask the client to provide authorization to release contact information so DEI can contact the client to offer post-placement EN support services and ongoing ticket assignment. In six months we will evaluate the agreement to see how well it’s working. |
| NEW YORK DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Pilot sites under Round 4 DEI are members of the NYS Administrative Employment Network. This statewide network has a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) signed February 2013 with ACCES-VR which is titled, “Partnership Plus Agreement Regarding the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work Program available at: <http://www.nyess.ny.gov/contracts/TTW/NYS%20Education%20Department%20-%20Ticket%20to%20Work.pdf>  The core of this MOU is that an individual who has a Ticket may receive VR services through ACCES-VR to meet his/her intensive up front service needs. Upon closure of the VR cases, ACCES-VR will facilitate assignment of the Ticket to the Administrative EN to enable the individual to receive ongoing services and supports.  At the local level, Round 4 DRCs will be trained during 2014 to build a relationship between the local ACCES-VR office and the Career Center. One of the objectives of this relationship will be to develop a referral system that will encourage ACCES-VR staff to transfer customer ticket assignment to the statewide Administrative Employment Network upon completion of ACCES-VR services. |
| VIRGINIA DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR Ticket to Work Coordinator presented at the DEI Executive Management Committee meeting on the Partnership Plus program and its benefits for job seekers in the Ticket to Work program. VR Ticket to Work Coordinator with DEI Project Management facilitated the enrollment of DEI/DRCs in the Cornell Training to become Certified Work Incentives Specialists.  3 DRCs and 1 WIA staff completed the Cornell training and became certified WISAs.  VR has three current partnership plus agreements with DEI pilot/control sites. Virginia VR Partnership Plus Model for ENs agreement available upon request. In two of them, VR paid for DRCs and 1 WIA staff to be trained to provide work incentives services on a fee for service basis. This allows these sites to increase revenue and offer additional services to their EN Ticket to Work customers, as well as increase the opportunities for handoffs from VR.  DEI/VR Project Co-Director (VR Assistant Commissioner) was elected to the National Employment Network Association. This involvement has assisted VR and DEI to learn more about Partnership Plus implementation and new business models for ENs from other EN/ Ticket to Work projects. VR reports that there have been a total of 116 cases that have left VR and are now a part of the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus program (PP). These cases are spread across 16 PP Employment Networks in Virginia. Included in this number are 22 fully completed, expedited hand-off cases. Under the expedited handoff pilot, cases are identified for handoff prior to VR closure and a plan is signed by the client and the EN for services post VR closure. This expedited pilot has greatly increased the number of clients participating in the program and has allowed PP ENs to receive ticket assignments and ticket payments in a timelier manner. |
| 1. Other State Level Partnership Activities with VR.   Please list each separately and describe. |
| ROUND 2 DEI PROJECTS |
| CALIFORNIA DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) - DOR and EDD have been co-leaders in the California YLF Program for the majority of its 24 years of existence. YLF is an annual event that assists high school delegates with disabilities in leadership development and career exploration. |
| OHIO DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| OOD and Ohio’s DEI project is working on an interagency agreement for OOD to conduct employer outreach to build the business case for employers to hire and retain workers with disabilities. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| SD DEI has sponsored a variety of trainings and presentations specific to supporting education, training and employment of individuals with disabilities. Invitations to these trainings and presentations are extended to VR staff in the SD DEI service area, and when feasible, for DLR and VR staff across the state using the SD Digital Dakota Network video conferencing platform. The DRC is a member of the planning team for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). As a part of NDEAM activities, the DRC sends email blasts about employment of individuals with disabilities to DLR and VR staff across the state.  As we have started a move to sustainability we have broadened our outreach effort to acquaint DLR, and other partners, of the best practices the DEI project has learned and developed. The concept of the DEI approach has been presented at various state-sponsored training events across the state. |
| WISCONSIN DEI (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * WI DWD DET processes ticket lists through Maximus's e-DataShare and provides monthly to each WDA pilot area, including the ones who are their own EN. VR coached the state lead in the processes but is no longer directly involved. * We are pursuing DET's state lead with an appointment to the governor's Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council. |
| ROUND 3 DEI PROJECTS |
| IOWA DEI (ROUND 3---ADULT FOCUS) |
| * WIPA * Employment First State Leadership Mentor Project * Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment |
| LOUISIANA DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR is actively involved in the Diversity Works Job Fair Committees Statewide. The Diversity Works Job Fairs are FREE to job-seekers and employers. The goal of the Job Fairs is to put talented job seekers in direct contact with potential employers. The Job Fairs also includes an Employer Mini-Symposium which is geared to provide participating businesses with information on a variety of employment-related topics, such as Tax Benefits and the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. These Job Fairs play a vital role in addressing the community needs and offer an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and the general public to meet with local businesses that are looking to diversify their workforce. |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Have presented to the MRC staff regarding the DEI Program and it resulted in more cross referrals. |
| MINNESOTA DEI (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Cooperation with VR in developing a contract with PACER Center to ensure that the DEI does not duplicate any of the services already being contracted for by VR. * VR representative is a member of the DEI steering committee. * VR and DEED’s Workforce Development Division are part of a collaborative youth strategic planning workgroup with the Minnesota Workforce Council Association. The group has promoted a Youth Council Resource Guide describing DEI practices and collaborative activities among Minnesota WSAs to effectively serve all at-risk youth, including youth with disabilities. One of the co-chairs of this group is from VR. |
| RHODE ISLAND DEI (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| RI DEI partnered with VR with a mutual vision to achieve employment for all RI SSI/SSDI Ticket to Work holders. Both departments agree to maximize use of their resources to link employers and RI SSI/SSDI Ticket to Work holders for support services by:   * Continuously identifying areas within each agency’s needs related to employment of individuals with disabilities and identify areas within its operation where sharing staff and resources would achieve this purpose * Establish a protocol for communication and resolution * Delegate appropriate management level staff to meet quarterly to determine what and how available resources can be shared to meet areas of need * Share training opportunities and resources on topics common to both agencies through the respective staff development units * Develop and/or utilize existing marketing tools and methods which support the vision * VR provides comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities according to the current order of selection to become employed * Provide technical assistance to DEI staff on disability and accessibility issues |
| ROUND 4 DEI PROJECTS |
| ALASKA DEI (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| State as a model employer work group. Includes representative from DEI/Workforce, VR, US DOL Veterans Employment and Training, Governor’s Council on Disabilities, Health and Social Services. Goal of the group is to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities through the State of Alaska Provisional Hire process. Provisional Hire is a program that allows Alaska state hiring managers to hire qualified persons with a disability in a permanent or non-permanent position for up to 4 months of trial work without the requirement to hire as a permanent employee. Program is run through referral from VR to hiring managers of qualified applicants. Work group focus is to increase awareness among state hiring managers and increase the usage of this hiring modality to save time on lengthy recruitments for hiring managers, create greater exposure to the workforce for individuals with disabilities and increase permanent hiring of individuals with disabilities into state government jobs. |
| IDAHO DEI (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Vocational Rehabilitation and Labor are active on the “Employment Track” workgroup for the Tools for Life Fair, soliciting keynotes as well as presenters for breakout sessions. Both agencies also present breakout sessions at the fair on topics related to career development and job search skills. * Vocational Rehabilitation and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired were a part of the Idaho DEI kickoff event at the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind campus at Gooding, Idaho (formerly Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind) on December 11, 2013. The kickoff involved a day of presentations and workshops for students at the school. * The field services manager for the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the DEI state lead are part of a recently formed subgroup of the Idaho Employment First Consortium that is researching curriculum to increase “soft skills” and middle skills to help better prepare secondary school students for entering the workplace, possibly a year-long course for credit that is aligned with Common Core standards. Other members of the group include the consortium’s coordinator from the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, the coordinator of special education programs at the Idaho Department of Education, and a consortium member doing consulting work with school districts in the state of Iowa whose expertise the group wants to capitalize on. |
| MAINE DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Maine Business Leadership Network: a state chapter of the US BLN, both VR and DEI serve on the Executive Committee. * Healthcare Workforce Academy: a new pilot project being spearheaded by VR and DEI, with involvement of DEI as one of many programs offered to recruit trainees for entry level healthcare occupations training. * DEI Round 1: In collaboration with VR we launched a Regional EN group in the Bangor area that met every other month. The meetings were productive. Each EN shared information about tickets they had assigned, issues they were having (if any), successes etc… In these meetings, we always talked about VR Partnership Plus and how we could improve on the # of ticket assignments to local ENs following VR closure. While we all understood the potential, the partnership never made real tracks during DEI Round I. |
| NEW YORK DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Statewide Consortium – NYS Partnerships in Employment Systems Change Initiative (<http://www.nysapse.org/documents/NYSAPSEADDGrantPresentation.pdf>)-- This project creates statewide and regional consortia of stakeholders (agencies, individuals, and employers, parents) to collaborate to bring about systems changes that encourage competitive employment. Focus includes: * Developing policies that support competitive employment in integrated settings (not jobs that only employ individuals with disabilities) as the first and desired outcome for young people. * Removing barriers to competitive employment in integrated settings. * Improving employment outcomes for young people. * Enhancing collaboration to make the transition from secondary school to prevocational training or integrated employment smoother.   The following state agencies are members of this statewide consortium: NYS Office for People with Development Disabilities; NY State Education – ACCES VR; NY State Education – Office of Special Education; NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; and NYS Department of Labor. This consortium meets quarterly. |
| * Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (Promise)   This $32 million award from the federal government was recently awarded to New York State and many state agencies (including NYSDOL and ACCES-VR) are involved in this project. PROMISE utilizes an indigenous model that naturally equips and engages schools, local disability service providers, independent living centers, one stop centers, literacy zones, regional parent training centers, work incentive planners, regional transition specialists, and other community transition stakeholders to achieve higher postsecondary employment, education and economic outcomes for SSI youth by...   * + Improving state, regional and local collaboration across agencies and providers serving SSI youth.   + Implementing an outcomes-based payment system for service providers.   + Building local and regional capacities in implementing best practices, conducting impact assessment, and exercising continuous quality improvement in transition to adulthood services.   + Collecting high quality evidence for studying program effectiveness of the NYS PROMISE intervention. |
| VIRGINIA DEI (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DEI Project Management and VR provided recommendations and input on the WIA/WP Integrated State Plan. The committee focused on strategies to branding the system, enhancing labor market information usage and business engagement, as a single point of contact to increase employment opportunities and inclusion of special groups including persons with disabilities.  VR Assistant Commissioner/DEI Project Co-Director was asked to join the Virginia Values Veteran’s V3 Strategic Alliance Group. He has been asked to chair the Training and Operations Committee. The primary goal for the committee includes creating and maintaining best practices for Veteran hiring and retention.  VR leads a team of disability services agencies and consumers providing ADA accessibility reviews of AJCs. The ADA trained team members provide a report that is synthesized by the VR ADA Specialist.  The VR ADA Specialist is collaborating with Virginia Community College System Workforce Services staff on efforts to certify Virginia Workforce Centers and provide Americans with Disabilities Act-related information and guidance on assessing sites and drafting accessibility survey follow-up reports.  DEI Project Management and VR ADA Specialist are members of the state’s One-Stop Center Certification peer review Teams. These Teams ensure that local WIB areas have at least one Comprehensive Workforce Center that has been determined to meet uniform certification standards so that businesses and job seekers can expect to encounter high quality services regardless of location.  One of the previous Governor’s budget initiatives is the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), a collaborative initiative of five state agencies, was endorsed by the Virginia Workforce Council and, after four years of development, it was officially launched in 2013. Providing researchers the ability to request and receive data from across Virginia’s education and workforce agencies, VLDS provides information that was formerly too time consuming, expensive or impossible to obtain. VLDS data is currently fueling research to answer “burning” questions as to the impact, best practices and return on investment of major education and workforce programs. VR Assistant Commissioner/DEI Project Co-Director is providing input for the development of this system. Once the VR data are available in the system, it will be possible for our analysts to address such questions as: (1) How many VR clients who receive DARS-funded postsecondary education complete that education, and what educational credentials do they receive? (2) How many VR clients receive services from other workforce programs, and what types of services do they receive? (3) What are the employment experiences of VR clients who register with the Virginia Employment System (VEC), and how do they compare with VR clients who do not register with the VEC? (4) How many transition-age VR clients whose cases are closed because they cannot be located have dropped out of school, and what is their post-closure employment and educational status?  VR Assistant Commissioner/DEI Project Co-Director represented VR at the Career Pathways Executive Committee meeting which involves all agency heads for Career Pathways and Workforce Development programs. The meeting included a national perspective on the Virginia career pathways effort. The presentation clearly identified Virginia as a leader in the national movement to link career pathways to a more prepared workforce with training that is demand driven. There was a review of the integrated WIA and WP State Plan. Applications from the Virginia longitudinal database were presented and discussion on how this new data warehousing concept can enhance outcome measures for participating agencies. A review of the Governor’s budget initiatives related to career pathways was provided which includes regional career pathways efforts and support for the Virginia longitudinal database. |

**SECTION 3: DEI/WORKFORCE EXAMPLES OF LOCAL LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS WITH VR**

| EXAMPLES OF LOCAL LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS |
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| 1. Local Interagency Action Committee (generic name): VR is one of the partners of a local level committee that includes DEI/workforce of coordination and collaboration activities on disability-related issues?   If VR is part of a local interagency workgroup, describe the make-up of the group and describe objectives, purpose/mission, activities and accomplishments. |
| ROUND 2 DEI PILOT SITES |
| CALIFORNIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Golden Sierra: Monthly DEI Step meeting where agencies with a focus on serving people with disabilities meet to provide updates, job opportunities and exchange information and ideas. |
| * City of Los Angeles: The purpose of the collaboration between DOR and Disability Coordinator (DC) is to come together to effectively identify ways to better serve people with disabilities in an efficient and seamless manner. The collaboration includes Disability Coordinators from ALL eighteen (18) AJCs and DOR Employment Coordinators and Counselor from the Los Angeles, Valley and South Bay areas. Objectives for the collaboration include opportunities to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services and continuously strengthen the partnership by sharing information and increasing referrals, with the common goal of supporting participants and assisting them in becoming self-sufficient. The collaboration currently meets bi-monthly which includes anywhere between 3-35 staff members from AJC’s and DOR. Each meeting includes a segment for updates, sharing of DEI practices and challenges to the collaboration. |
| * San Francisco: the local VR collaborates in two community job placement committees. 1) The JOBS group, historically this group has been focused more on legislative advocacy however, VR is now focusing on helping federal agencies and contractors meet their goals around hiring people with disabilities. 2) The Mayors Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The group just had its annual job fair in April and is a collaboration of for profit and non-profit organizations with the goal of helping people with disabilities go to work. |
| * Verdugo: DOR is a member of Verdugo WIB, which is the governing body that oversees AJCC operations. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * In the beginning, a SD DEI Partnership Committee was formed. *The Mission of the Partnership Committee is to improve employment outcomes of young adults with disabilities through partnerships and collaboration.* Members of this committee include the District Supervisor of the DVR and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/Service for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI). DLR and VR staff has been closely involved with participants of SD DEI. The Active Resource Coordination activities and the Integrated Resource Teams have included a member of VR in almost every instance. Blending and braiding of supports and funding among WIA and VR have become a natural approach in providing education, training and/or employment services to all individuals with disabilities. Although in South Dakota this is a normal approach to conducting business, SD DEI has strengthened the team approach among VR and WIA staff in assisting individuals reach their employment goals. The SD DEI Partnership Committee, including the VR members, has been instrumental in furthering the objectives and goals of SD DEI in recruitment and enrollment of young adults with disabilities into WIA; disability training for DLR staff; development of tools for young adults with disabilities to access supports and services through DLR; and developing new and strengthening existing partnerships and collaborations. * The Rapid City VR office has joined forces with DLR towards developing the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills (WDNBH). The concept was discussed prior to DEI, but moved forward with the energy created through SD DEI. The mission and purpose is to provide businesses with education, awareness, and resources to promote the successful hiring of people with disabilities. In order to fulfill its mission, WDNBH is formed for the following purposes:  1. Provide educational opportunities regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities. 2. Create a greater awareness of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities within the community. 3. Act as a resource for both prospective employees and employers regarding employment opportunities and employment and worksite accommodations and/or modifications. 4. Provide a variety of services to businesses including, but not limited to, the scheduling and coordination of activities and educational events which promote the hiring of persons with disabilities.   WDNBH is in the process of completing their bylaws of incorporation and will submit application to become a 501C3 once the bylaws are filed. Additionally, financial support will be available through the SD Department of Human Services to hire an Executive Director for this organization. |
| WASHINGTON DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| WorkSource (AJC) Redmond: The DRC was invited to participate as a team member of their local Disability Access Team (DAT). This team, which was formed through efforts of the Disability Program Navigator grant, consists of staff representing this WorkSource center. |
| WISCONSIN DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * WDB 2 (Milwaukee): "The Milwaukee WIB has always been a partner with VR and maintains communication with several case managers along with being listed on VR's Wait-list. Customers are referred to DRCs who assist with exploring employment and training needs; updating resumes; communicating labor market information on best career choices; and other resources as needed. Many times the assistance from the DRCs enables the customers to move on and not need VR services or enhances the tools needed while waiting for the VR services." |
| * WDB 3 (WOW): "VR participates in Operational Meetings at our Workforce Development Center. DRC presents at this meeting regularly and collaborates with DVR area Director and Supervisor and keeps them apprised of efforts at the Workforce Development Centers in all three counties. DVR in turn relays information on what is happening at the State and local level with DVR. This committee/team consists of the supervisors and managers of Job Center partner agencies. This team comes together to discuss all workforce and programmatic related changes/updates. The ultimate purpose of these meetings is to better assist staff and job seekers in having a broad understanding of the programmatic resources that are available to our job seekers." |
| WDB 4   * Refugee Mentoring project – involves DVR, World Relief and Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is doing unpaid work placements for new refugees on their build sites and in their ReStore for six weeks. They are looking for individual mentors to work the entire shifts with the refugees. Unfortunately, most volunteers only work a few hours a week and not the 25 – 35 hours that the refugees work. So we are looking at DVR counselors screening appropriate DVR clients that have interest in human services/social work area and/or retail to work in these Habitat placements to mentor the refugees as a paid work experience. This would provide mentorship to the refugees and also build the DVR client’s resume with not only retail skills, but limited supervisory skills and skills in working with diverse cultures and diverse coworkers. Placed a few DVR clients, but the screening and referral process needs streamlining and tweaking. Currently working on that." * WDB 4 and state level WI Dept of Corrections and state DVR: "DOC/DVR screening project – currently facilitating a MOU between DVR and DOC to do a test site for screening potential DVR clients in medium security prison for Cat. II service while still in prison to receive services earlier upon release. Test site would be OSCI (Oshkosh Correctional Institution) with clients returning to Winnebago County. It has been a long road and a lot of planning, but the MOU is currently approved by DOC and being looked at in DVR. Just informed this morning that revisions will occur due to changes in status of the wait list in Cat. II for DVR. But the local WDA 4 DVR director, Craig Wehner also just informed me that DVR is working on a statewide MOU with DOC and that he wants this project’s MOU to be looked at and/or possibly incorporated in the statewide MOU." * DVR PROMISE Grant collaboration – working on providing education and referral services for counseling pieces of wrap-around service: Focus on Trauma theory and Family Systems theory in counseling and how it could affect outcomes for employment for PROMISE clients. Currently have Lutheran Social Services (LSS) as a primary contact and referral source. The plan is to have LSS provide basic knowledge and education to DVR PROMISE counselors about the impact of Family Systems and Trauma to employment, what to look for, how to resolve at a low level and when to refer in a workshop format. LSS would like to work out a referral method for services and a possible payment structure (generally MA first and then maybe supplemented by PROMISE funds when applicable). In return, I am looking at DVR counselors to provide basic DVR service education and the DRC will provide information about employment goals of working for clients receiving SSI in a workshop format. Just met with LSS to work out details and now looking to touch base with DVR PROMISE local counselor, Tania Hanford."   Working on providing a collaborative method to have WIA Adult and/or WIA Dislocated Worker and Youth provide job development services to PROMISE client family members in need of employment services. Since service providers for family members without disabilities may be hard to secure, the WIA program is a perfect fit to help these individuals since that is WIA program’s focus. Currently working with local PROMISE counselor from DVR, Tania Hanford and the state lead on Promise, Suzanne Lee. Setting up a meeting between the three of us after Suzanne returns from vacation shortly. |
| WDB 6   * DVR is an active partner with the DRC in WDA 6. We work closely together with individuals currently receiving DVR services in the areas of Social Security Benefits Analysis and other Social Security employment related questions and concerns. * WDA 6 DVR & the DEI have worked in conjunction to provide Job Center Staff Training surrounding Suicide Prevention as well as jointly hosting and Employer Appreciation Breakfast during NDEAM in October of 2013. * WDA 6 DVR does a great job of referring individuals on their Waitlist to the DRC for potential resources and services while they are awaiting services. The DRC works with the individuals on getting a resume started as well as referring them to other programs for assistance such as WIA Adult. * DVR Counselors also attend many of the Trainings that the DRC offers and they have also assisted in outreach activities under the DEI Project such as Ticket To Work Recruitment. * The DRC has also provided the DVR Business Services Representative with Employer Outreach Materials. * DVR also assisted in the development of a Reasonable Accommodation Request Policy for WDA 6 Job Centers. |
| * WDB 8: Workforce Resource is authorized by DVR to provide Benefits Analysis and Job Coaching for their consumers." Workforce Resource and DVR just entered into another agreement for benchmark payments. Benchmark Payments will vary between $500-$2000 per consumer for additional follow-up services for employment retention. Benchmark payments are in addition to EN Milestone or Outcome payments." |
| * WDB 11: "VR and SWWDB are members of the Job Center’s Employer Relations Team (ERT). The mission of the ERT is to build and assist local business within workforce development. Part of the mission does include assisting local business with hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. Major accomplishment is the spring and fall job fairs. 50-75 local employers participate in the job fairs." "SWWDB is an acting Work Incentive Benefits Counseling Service Provider. For the period July 1, 2013 through April, 30 2014 SWWDB has provided benefits analysis to 74 DVR Consumers." |
| ROUND 3 DEI PILOT SITES |
| IOWA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Each of our 5 pilot regions has an established local leadership team that includes the required partner agencies identified in the WIA, as well as other key agencies identified by that leadership team, as being necessary or strategic to improve employment of people with disabilities. This group, facilitated by the DRC, implements the DEI strategies in each region, determines how to invest the flexible funding to enhance the grant strategies (and meet priorities established by each of the separate workforce boards in their local planning processes). This team will be a necessary ongoing oversight component for the ticket to work incentives that are being developed to sustain the project. If this group is not sustained after the grant is completed, it is not as likely the ticket efforts with be as effective, or as integrated into the one-stop operation at the level our customers need for this complicated mix of agencies, programs and services to make sense. VR is an active partner in all 5 pilot regions, and is supported in their participation by state level VR leadership. |
| LOUISIANA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT PROJECT) |
| Local Level Partnerships process is as followed:  Customer Process:   * DRC will receive information on all of the individuals in VR Staff  Delayed Status * VR Staff will find out if customers are receiving social security benefits (SSI/SSDI) * VR Staff will find out If customers ticket is assigned to an agency/organization * If customers ticket is assigned to an agency/organization then customer remains in VR Delayed Status * If customers  ticket it is not assigned to an agency/organization LRS Staff continues with process * VR Staff will contact customers by phone or mail to ask if customers are interested in employment opportunities * VR Staff will ask if customers are interested in full time employment * VR Staff will ask customers if it is alright for the DRC to contact them to arrange an appointment to come in to further discuss full time  employment opportunities * VR staff will make a list of all of their customers that are interested in employment opportunities and email the DRC with names and phone numbers   Additional Support:  If there is additional support needed to accommodate the customer in getting or maintaining employment DRC Staff contact VR Staff to brain storm on resolving the issue/issues such as:   * Medical examinations (general physical, psychological, or other specialist examinations * Vocational evaluation of interests, skills, and abilities for future work * Additional Vocational Guidance * Additional Career Counseling * Physical or mental restoration services that could include mental health counseling, speech therapy, physical therapy, etc. * Training-universities, college, technical, supported employment, etc. * Rehabilitation devices such as medical equipment necessary for employment (wheelchairs, prosthesis, glasses, self-help devices, etc.) * Rehabilitation engineering-assistance with job site modifications (changing lighting, adapting a telephone, a computer, or a tool, etc.) and training on the use of the modified equipment. * Assistance with job placement   Committee Meetings:  VR Staff attend and assist in the facilitation of the quarterly DRC meetings and Community Agencies/Organization Roundtable Discussions; “How to Better Meet the Need of Customers with Challenges to Employment” |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Mass Rehab Commission is on each of the Local Disability Resource Committees along with members from Department of Mental Health, Mass Commission for the Blind, local Community among other local agencies. The mission is to work collaboratively to provide the DEI possible services for individuals with disabilities. Have discussed co-funding for training programs, sharing of events, customer referral process, and outreaching to other community organizations. The DEI accomplishment has been the general awareness of DEI and also the excellent collaboration with our referrals. |
| MINNESOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| In Minnesota, Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) were organized to assist students with disabilities by helping to provide a smoother transition from high school to the adult world. The focus is on students ages 14 - 22 and their families. The committee consists of parents, students, and staff from area school districts and members from area service agencies. CTIC's committee members work to provide information, referral, and services in the ten areas of transitions. VR staff actively participates on the CTIC in the local areas. |
| * Southeast MN Region: Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI) and VR have collaborated on a brochure together with SEMCIL (Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living) to market resources for youth with disabilities. The DRC and VR manager have worked to create better relationships and promote collaboration when working with youth. We have created/implemented a team approach rather than going to VR and being referred then to WDI. We are making an effort to meet together, as almost a mini IRT at times to effectively serve the youth. VR and WDI have also worked together at the schools in our WSA so that there is less confusion and frustration on the school faculty as to whom to refer students or whom to contact. The objective is to make better use of everyone’s time and create less confusion for the youth and families looking for services. |
| * Rural MN CEP Region: A VR regional manager does sit on RMCEP Workforce Council which provides recommendations regarding objectives, purpose/mission and activities to RMCEP’s Board of Directors. The group includes the Senior Leadership of RMCEP, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, business leaders throughout the WSA, and tribal leaders. |
| * South Central Region:   + Mankato Area CTIC through the DEI sponsored a workshop titled “Transition to Employment” for youth and parents. The workshop was preceded by a very well-attended Resource Fair. Parents and youth were able to visit with local providers of services for youth with disabilities. PACER presented the first part of the workshop on Transitions and VR and Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) partnered to give the last part of the workshop. Information was given on services/programs available to youth though each agency and the added resources and support available through DEI. Examples were given regarding how VR and MVAC have partnered/co-enrolled to offer youth services. Participants in this event also received information from other local providers on their services and how the DEI can help form partnerships. The CTIC from the Fairmont area has also used DEI funding to provide workshops to parents, youth and providers. The Fairmont area VR Transitions Counselor gave a presentation on mental illness and available resources.   + The VR Counselor and local MVAC Youth Career Development staff in the two largest counties have a regular monthly meeting to discuss new referrals, current co-enrolled youth and available resources. This regular meeting has been very helpful to MVAC staff and the VR counselor as well. Communication has improved and is more open between meetings also. |
| ROUND 4 DEI PILOT SITES |
| ALASKA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| In Anchorage Job X group meets weekly: Job X is a diverse group of individuals who represent agencies that work with job seekers from a variety of backgrounds in Anchorage. Every Thursday, representatives from Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran’s Administration, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Catholic Social Services, Alaska Military Youth Academy, Job Corps, Alaska Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Anchorage School District, Nine Star Enterprises, CSS, Immigration and Settlement Program and others meet to discuss employment opportunities and barriers in Anchorage for job seekers. We invite employers to also join us to share opportunities and challenges they face in meeting their staffing needs. We have found that the linkages established during the employer meetings benefit the employer, our representative agencies, and the job seekers.  All American Job Centers in Alaska have collaborative relationships with VR and many are collocated which results in integration of services on many levels. |
| CONNECTICUT DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Capital Workforce Partners: VR/DRC (DEI/Workforce) Sit on multiple collaborative committees together: Opening Doors to Employment, CT Transition Community of Practice, Journey Home, CT Business Leadership Network, CTDSS Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinating Committee, Job Development Leadership Network, APSE, Connect-Ability- MIG Committee, CT Asset Building Collaborative. |
| * Northwest Regional WIB: DRC has met with the VR CWIC who has assisted our customers with evaluating and planning. Soon we will meet with the BRS [VR] employment specialists and VR TTW EN coordinator. |
| IDAHO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation and staff from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired are very active on Disability Mentoring Day workgroups. VR will often provide portfolio materials that participants use for their job shadowing activities. Both agencies are also very involved in regional “transition teams” that sponsor Disability Mentoring Days and “College Day” events. the agencies will be part of a “Ready Set Go Camp” being planned for June 9-11, 2014 by Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind and the Idaho Disability Employment Initiative.  The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired will often seek assistance with staff at the Department of Labor for presentations on career development and job search skills and for employer contacts to develop work experiences for participants in the commission’s Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP). SWEP is a six-week summer camp designed to help students prepare for entering the world of work. |
| MAINE DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR and DEI services are both present in the AJC offices. We are just gearing up Round 4 now. VR will certainly be one of the routine partners in IRTs. VR is also included in some of the asset building activities/events presented locally.  DEI Round 1: In Machias, Presque Isle, and Bangor, a VR counselor participated on the Asset Coalitions that were developed through DEI Round I. These groups met at least every other month –more often when planning an Asset Summit, Financial Fitness Fair, or other event. |
| NEW YORK DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Hempstead Works Career Center is involved with the ‘Long Island Working Partnership’, which consists of businesses, community agencies, and government working together to advance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Hofstra University will be hosting a seminar entitled ‘Getting the Winning Edge’ in June – a no-cost staff development and training conference for counselors and placement specialists who work with people with disabilities. * Both Hempstead and Suffolk participate on Placement Networks with ACCES-VR, where several providers meet to discuss training and job placement opportunities for customers with disabilities. Other partners involved include Independent Living Centers, Developmental Disability organizations, educational institutions (BOCES), Federation of Employment & Guidance Service (FEGS), and numerous other community-based organizations. |
| VIRGINIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR and DEI are involved with planning and funding local Champions events that recognize employers for hiring job seekers with disabilities. An example: One event included over 140 participants of which 85% were from businesses. The keynote speaker was a Vice President from a local, multi-national corporation with a proven history of hiring persons with disabilities. His keynote speech focused on how hiring persons with disabilities *can improve* the bottom line.  VR and DEI are on the planning committees and participate in local job fairs. For example: ‘Hiring our Heroes’ event with over 1300 job seekers and 140 employers in attendance. This event was held in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, multiple Military commands and organizations, Peninsula Worklink, Peninsula Council For Workforce Development, Peninsula Chamber, U.S. DOL, Office of Senator Mark Warner - event’s Honorary Chair, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Wounded Warriors program, VR, DEI, Community College, Military Affairs, DOL Veterans Employment and Training Services, NBC News, and other local partners.  DEI held 3 Asset Summits, one with introductions by DEI/VR Assistant Commissioner and Michael Morris, NDI on the importance of building assets, as a pathway out of poverty along with the Financial/Asset Development and Disability communities and agencies. Action plans developed local workgroups to focus on how to expand economic empowerment opportunities within the community, for low-wage workers with disabilities. |
|  |
| 1. Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs): VR is included as a partner of IRTs.   Provide examples of IRTs that have included representation from VR outlining their role and contributions to the employment, training and/or education needs of a job seeker. |
| ROUND 2 DEI PILOT SITES |
| CALIFORNIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Golden Sierra: VR has been very involved in IRTs. They have brought funding for education, materials, transportation and other necessary services. VR partners to fill resource gaps in the customer’s employment plan. |
| * City of Los Angeles: We continue to foster the collaboration between ALL 18 AJC staff and the DOR for purposes of the IRT. Currently, DOR Employment Coordinators attend weekly orientations and have work stations at some of the City’s AJC’s. DOR staff are available to meet with participants one on one and assist with a more speedy enrollment into the DOR. Through this collaboration, the City of Los Angeles and DOR have increased the number of referrals, which has provided the participant the resources and support needed to benefit the individual job seeker in helping reach self-sufficiency. |
| * Madera: Several IRTs have included DOR for concurrent customers. Outcomes have included the following agreements: A participant interested in self-employment was able to open a beauty supply store with the assistance of DOR and the Job Center. DOR agreed to cover the first and last month of rent, supplies, and a laptop. The AJC covered license and additional supply expenses. DOR paid for a participant’s Medical Assistance training and the AJC purchased an adjustable desk and chair to accommodate the participant’s disability. The Job Center paid for Workkeys assessment fees and DOR covered Fork Lift Training expenses for another participant. |
| * Verdugo: The case managers, especially the EN counselor and DRC have a very good relationship with the DOR counselor stationed at the AJC. An example of this partnership: the DRC, DOR counselor and the homeless shelter counselor recently met along with a customer to discuss his housing situation while he was doing job search. |
| OHIO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Area 1- two OOD customers are attending school, funded by VR, and are enrolled in DEI for support services. * Area 3 – DRC and Ticket Holder met to submit paperwork for WIA ITA training (GED verification) to ITA provider. WIA ITA dollars used to fully fund CDL-A training. OOD will provide employment and benefits analysis services and DRC to obtain copy of Ticket Holder’s GED using DEI flexible funding dollars. Tick Holder started his WIA-funded training on 1/6/14 and will completed training in February 2014. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Example 1: John is a young man with Autism. He is 23 years old. He has fairly significant deficits in social skills and verbal communication. He is quite adept at communicating in written format and highly skilled in working with computers. John was referred to SD DEI by his VR counselor in January 2012. She had been working with him for several years, including his time with Project Skills and as he obtained his AA from Western Dakota Technical Institute (WDT) in computer programming. After receiving his AA, John worked with a private provider/job developer, funded through VR.   + Upon referral to SD DEI, the service coordinator contacted his primary professor at WDT to learn more about John and his skills. Arrangements were made for John to participate in an internship under the supervision of this professor, with both John and the professor volunteering their time. The idea behind the internship was to provide John with “real world” experience, allows John to show work experience on his resume, and develop a portfolio of computer programming projects. This internship lasted approximately three months.   + When the internship was completed, John’s VR counselor funded another private provider/job developer to assist John in the job search/application process. Concurrently, John also began the enrollment process for WIA. He earned a silver National Career Readiness Certificate as part of his WIA enrollment.   + John was offered an interview with an advertising and marketing company that provides services such as web page development, logo design, web hosting, and video production. At this time, with John’s permission, both John’s private provider/job developer and his WIA representative contacted this employer to discuss interview accommodations and possible WIA OJT opportunities. The interview accommodation was found by DRC using JAN and was then provided to the private provider/job developer and WIA representative. The particular accommodation was to provide John with the interview questions in written format in advance and allow John to respond in writing. The employer was very open allowing this accommodation.   + John was asked for a second interview which tested his computer programming skills. Upon proving his abilities, John was offered the full-time position. John, advocating for himself, expressed a concern about working full-time hours at the start. The employer accommodated this request and is allowing John to begin work at 20 hours per week, gradually increasing to 40 hours per week, based on John’s feedback.   + WIA is funding John’s OJT. The WIA representative contacted the state DRL office and requested an accommodation to start the OJT at 20 hours per week, with the understanding that this would be a full-time position eventually. This accommodation request was granted.   + John’s VR counselor also offered to fund job coaching, should it be needed.   + Currently, John is doing well in his new position. John has some particular behaviors due to his disability, but the employer has found ways to accommodate these by calling upon the IRT as it is available for continued support. John’s WIA representative provides monthly updates to the team on progress or concerns as they arise.   + The IRT approach has been utilized in every facet of John’s path to employment. It continues to be a support for him and his employer. Throughout this path, the IRT has evolved and included the following members: John, John’s parents, VR counselor, WDT professor, WIA representative, private provider/job developer, services coordinator, disability resource coordinator, and now his employer. |
| * Example 2: Natacha was selected as her story demonstrates a multitude of the benefits of an IRT and how VR DLR blended and braided supports and funding for the benefit of this individual. Further, Natacha’s story demonstrates the fluidity of the IRT approach as both Natacha and her IRT continued to grow and learn how to best help her reach her goals throughout her recovery.   + Natacha age 21, was in an accident and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Upon returning to work after sustaining her injury, Natacha was unable to retain the position she held before her accident. Determined to work and be independent, Natacha scheduled an appointment with a WIA representative at the Job Center.   + The WIA representative proceeded to enroll Natacha for WIA youth services, but also recognized that Natacha may benefit from additional services outside of the DLR. An IRT was developed and included the participant, her mother, a VR counselor, the WIA representative, DRC, and a service coordinator. The team developed an employment plan, leveraging funds from all three sources (VR, DLR-WIA, SD DEI) to help Natacha meet her goals. This included a WIA funded work experience. SD DEI and VR split the cost of computer retraining programs.   + The IRT reconvened on several occasions to address Natacha’s changing needs as well as the needs of her employer. The team, again leveraging funding from VR, WIA, and SD DEI, was able to provide Natacha with a job coach, assistive technology, and additional WIA work experience hours.   + In most recent follow-up, Natacha had been awaiting medical clearance to begin modified duties in security patrol with her work experience employer. This clearance was granted and she is excited to increase her hours to security duties. The DRC was a participant in Natacha’s IRTs to facilitate the team’s understanding of the IRT approach. |
| WASHINGTON DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Reported December 2013, Everett WorkSource, IRT example:   A customer who came to the WorkSource for services on the verge of losing her housing and needing a job right away to stabilize. The DRC worked with her to find a job and WIA paid for a bus voucher so she could get to interviews and work. Once she got the job, WIA helped with uniforms and the fees for the food handler’s permit. She is now stabilized in her housing and working part time as a deli clerk. She is enrolling with DVR to identify a career path that is less physically demanding and get a skills upgrade to move toward a long term employment goal.   * Reported September 2013, Everett WorkSource, IRT example:   A job seeker was referred to the DRC by the WorkSource resource center because she was unemployed and needed help with benefits access and services. This customer was enrolled in WIA intensive services and referred to DVR. She obtained full time employment at the Tulalip Casino. |
| WISCONSIN DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * WDB 2: "The Milwaukee VR office is member of the Integrated Resource Team and is accessible one on one. Referrals from DVR to DRC for the TTW Program are on- going. Client referrals have had orientation to the Ticket to Work Program and Benefit analysis. Our JC’s have provided assistance with updating resumes, and interviewing workshops. DVR has paid for certification in Office Assistant Training which has led to part-time employment and full-time employment." |
| * WDB 3: "Example of IRT: VR Counselor, Independent Living Consultant, DRC, DVR Job Developer, and consumer. Consumer was struggling with finding employment due to traumatic injury. This consumer used to work as an RN manager with 75 people underneath her. Due to the severity of her traumatic injury, she can no longer perform that type of work. This consumer has severe memory related issues associated with her injury. The VR counselor took the role of providing career guidance to the consumer, as well as echoing previous conversations and providing her with a summary of what was discussed, as she frequently forgot what had been discussed. The VR counselor had a challenging role in this particular IRT, because the consumer often reverted and wanted to apply for jobs that she no longer was able to perform. She would often forget that she no longer qualified for these types of jobs." |
| * WDB 4: "Created an IRT referral sheet w/ release built in to follow DVR clients that meet with the DRC while on the DVR wait list or prior to DVR referral. The IRT referral sheets give DVR counselors a brief description of what was said in the DRC appointments, what the consumers self-stated short and long term goals are, and what resources that the DRC gave the consumer. This allows the DVR counselor to get an idea where the consumer is at, what resources were offered and to open the conservation around what resources were used and what the outcomes were. Also, identifies who may be part of the IRT for the DVR consumer at the time of DVR services. Currently doing this on some clients, but need to tweak details and find a more consistent method to have the IRT sheets reach the counselors 100% of the time. DRC is currently looking at these details." |
| * WDB 6: "DVR has been included in WDA 6 IRT’s as requested by the client. I have been able to assist a DVR client in Temporary Work Experience with needed work clothes under the DEI Flexible Funding Program. DVR is aware of the use of IRTs and consults with the DRC as needed." |
| * WDB 8: "Every benefits analysis WRI (Wisconsin Resource) does is an IRT with DVR. DVR sets up the employment opportunity, training and WRI lets DVR and consumer know the impact of earnings on current benefits." |
| ROUND 3 DEI PILOT SITES |
| IOWA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| In Region 11; we have completed 5 IRT meetings with representation from VR. Many of the planning strategies that resulted from these meetings included braiding and blending of funds to assist the person served in achieving their goals. Examples would be splitting of tuition costs, support services, WIA assisting with tuition, books and fees; while VR purchased computer equipment, interview clothing, and AT such as an adjustable computer desk. VR has also assisted in funding job readiness activities for individuals to supplement pre-vocational activities a person receives through the Workforce Center. VR has partnered with developing financial literacy strategies with the Workforce Center by utilizing DRC services for benefits planning and the DEI way to develop a PASS plan for a common customer. |
| LOUISIANA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR is regularly included in communications involving active resource development. |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Have collaborated as an IRT with Mass Rehab. Commission with regards to our customers. There have been frequent meetings with the customers that have resulted in some entered employments and one potential training. |
| MINNESOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Southeast MN Region: An IRT for a youth in special education that included the IEP team, VR and WDI case manager- VR and WDI case manager worked together to collaborate on funding support services, worked together to help the youth job search/find a work experience placement. In most cases, the VR representative and the WDI case manager work together on purchasing AT equipment, support services and contributions to looking for employment. In the IRT, they work together to accomplish the tasks/plan with the youth they serve. |
| * Rural MN CEP Region:   + VR Counselor in the Alexandria area has attended several meetings for a homeless youth with a disability who will be attending college in the Fall of 2014. The counselor had provided several supportive services that will increase the likelihood of success for the individual. VR support will be critical as the school is outside the county of current residence and will lead to a disruption of support. VR also helped pay for a valuable 3-day vocational assessment which assured the IRT that it was on the right track as far as college went.   + VR Counselor in Little Falls/Brainerd Area has been critical in identifying key resources for customers during IRT meetings. Job development services were provided on multiple occasions and educational assistive technology has been purchased for those currently in college.   + VR Counselor in the Bemidji Area will support an Occupational Development Center placement for a six week assessment. This assessment will be critical in determining what sustainable work matches the skills and abilities of the customer. VR involvement is critical to leverage funds from the school district. |
| * South Central Region:   + One example of a successful IRT meeting included the youth and his Mom, MVAC Vocational Advisor, the DRC and the area VR Transitions Counselor. The youth expressed a desire to work, live independently and attend college after high school. Mom and youth had concerns about his ability to reach these goals due to his disability and high anxiety. This young man and his Mom had not been connected to resources and did not know about VR and other services. The VR Counselor explained services available through the VR Transition program and also went over the application process. This face to face explanation of VR services and application was very helpful to the Mom and youth and relived much initial anxiety. Together the IRT members were able to give information regarding other resources to assist with Independent Living Skills and housing issues. Mom was relieved to know there would be more help with transition of her son to the adult world and states “I never knew this help was out there. “   + A second IRT was scheduled at the youth’s school after his first work experience through MVAC ended early due to the youth being unable to tolerate the stress of this work experience. This second IRT included the VR Counselor, the youth, his Special Ed. Instructor, Vocational Advisor and the DRC. A more suitable work experience was found at the school working in an area youth has a strong interest in. This work experience which has been very successful for this youth has been extended due to the partnership between VR and MVAC. With MVAC providing funding for the first 12 weeks and VR providing for the second 12 weeks. This extended Work Experience has benefited this youth in many ways, including giving a large boost to his confidence and helping him to learn his own DEI work environment. MVAC and VR continue to work together to provide services and support. |
| RHODE ISLAND DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Customer 1 researched resources to work toward her goal of full time employment and learned about the training opportunities offered by VR. Customer met with DEI Program Coordinator, DEI counselor, VR counselor and VR supervisor. Purpose of the meeting was to discuss customer’s strong desire for training and possible braiding of funds for WIA training. DEI Coordinator clarified information regarding VR and RI DLT services. IRT Outcome:   + Customer submitted Ticket to RI DLT netWORKri   + Customer will remain open with VR   + VR funded Benefits Planning assistance   + VR funded WIA training   + VR continued to provide supportive services |
| * Customer 2 met with DEI counselor to discuss options/avenues and a plan of action to re-enter the workforce. Customer informed DEI counselor she is confused and lacking motivation coupled with an interrupted attention span in her job search. DEI counselor discussed this situation with DEI Coordinator; DEI Coordinator recommended to schedule an IRT, members of the IRT included: Customer, customer’s guardian, DEI counselor, DEI Program Coordinator and VR counselor   Purpose of the meeting: discuss a plan of action for customer’s desire to re-enter the workforce; address her lack of follow through, and travel challenges.  Challenges: customer becomes confused taking public transportation. DEI Coordinator discussed element of accountability/ownership from customer in order to meet program guidelines. DEI Coordinator and VR expressed concerns regarding job readiness.  IRT outcome: VR/DEI counselors created an Action Step Plan:   * + VR submitted Goodwill Industries authorization paperwork for travel training utilizing public transportation; VR funded the travel training   + Customer will follow up with VR/DEI counselor when travel training is complete |
| * Customer 3 participated in the DEI program for several months and accepted a job offer. At this time; the DEI Benefit Planners were not on board; customer is in need of BP services. IRT meeting with VR to discuss funding for BP services through WIPA. IRT members included: DEI customer, parents of customer, DEI Program Coordinator, DEI counselor, DEI BSS, VR counselor. DEI Coordinator emphasized the critical component of BP services; VR is on board and will fund BP; VR will send authorization forms to Customer and arrange for BP services. |
| * Customer 4 attended a netWORKri WIA orientation and was referred to the DEI program by netWORKri WIA staff. Customer met with DEI staff; and expressed interest in becoming a Nursing Assistant; customer is also open with VR. DEI staff enrolled customer in WIA; unfortunately, due to the Government shutdown; the Providence/Cranston WIB was not funded at this time; DEI staff called VR counselor to discuss this situation and recommended VR to review the Training Provider List. Customer found a provider and completed the paperwork on 10/4/13 for a course that would begin 10/7/13. Customer stated she is ready to return to full time employment and requires training to become re-certified as a Nursing Assistant. Because Providence/Cranston WIB was not funded, DEI staff referred Customer to the PACE C.N.A. program at the Community College of RI (whom we have a signed MOU) orientation and suggested that the Customer continue with VR in order to request funding for training. On 10/25/13 the Customer was accepted into the PACE training program; funded by VR. |
| * Customer 5 requested to unassign his Ticket with VR and assign Ticket to DEI program. The nature of the IRT meeting focused on the best choice (s) for the customer in promoting his journey to independence and making certain that all members of the IRT agreed with his choice. IRT members included: VR supervisor, VR counselor, DEI Coordinator, DEI counselor, customer. All members of the IRT agreed that the customer remain open with VR to receive supportive services/accommodations; and be provided employment and job development services in the DEI program; IRT meetings continue as needed.   Follow up to IRT meeting: members of the IRT included: DEI counselor, VR Counselor, VR Job Developer (newly added IRT member) and DEI Program Coordinator, DEI BSS was unavailable.   * + DEI counselor provided customers progress; strategy includes: DEI Counselor meets with customer twice/wk; provides job postings for customer to review; Customer selects jobs to apply for and DEI counselor assists customer with the application process, including tailoring cover letter/resume to match job description; DEI Counselor meets with DEI BSS frequently and requests that BSS contact employer to help arrange interviews   + VR Job Developer reviewed status of customers progress in job development; strategies include: providing job leads to customer; reviewing resume/cover letter against job leads to meet job qualifications   + Customer stated he is content and satisfied with services from both DEI and VR and strongly desires employment * Meeting Outcome: DEI Coordinator recommended the following:   + DEI counselor will continue to touch base with VR Counselor; VR Job Developer and DEI BSS   + DEI counselor will continue to meet one-on-one two days/wk with customer   + DEI BSS will continue to touch base with VR Job Developer; DEI counselor   + DEI BSS will continue to meet one-on-one with customer two days/wk   + DEI BSS introduced a job search log to customer for reference to be used as a tracking tool for customer and the IRT team   + Customer will take full ownership and accountability in his effort in the job search process |
| ROUND 4 DEI PILOT SITES |
| ALASKA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| When referrals happen from VR to WIA or vice versa for co-enrollment there is always an IRT or several IRTs as plans, goals, employment, training etc. progresses. Colocation in many centers of the two programs makes this an easy accomplishment and meetings happen around the customer and with the customer on a regular basis. Also both VR counselors and WIA case managers accept and integrate each other’s plans into their own to provide a seamless experience for the customer. Braiding funds and sharing resources is a common occurrence. |
| CONNECTICUT DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Capitol Workforce Partners: 1) VR handled job placement with an OJT, while WIA funding paid for training and DDS provided Life Skill Coach/Retention and the CWIC provided benefits counseling. 2) VR handled job coaching to set up communication in the workplace, while the Job Center handled placement using Step-Up funding and Probation Office will do long term job retention services and the CWIC provided benefits counseling. |
| IDAHO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| Several of the AJCs have arrangements with VR to provide services on site. The VR counselors not only provide one-on-one assistance with customers, but also consult with WIA case managers and Employment Services staff on individual cases. In turn, VR counselors will call or ask about assistance in connecting VR customers to employers. The counselors will often be available for job fairs, REA orientations and various workshops in case their program might be needed by some of the participants. |
| MAINE DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| In Round 1, about 1/3 of our Flexible Employment Fund applicants were co-enrolled with VR. As such VR staff participated in these IRTs along with other local agencies as appropriate. VR provided financial support for a variety of needs and the FEF picked up the costs of some items / services that were not covered by VR or other agencies involved.  VR Counselor I is included as a partner of IRTs. While the convening of IRTs is still in the planning stages, both the DRCs and the VRC I are going to be involved in the development of our work plan for implementing the IRT process in Region 3. |
| VIRGINIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| A 35 years old female job seeker with a learning and heart transplant disability meets with the DRC who tells her about the employment services and training programs offered. It is determined that she could be eligible and benefit from the WIA training program, so she is registered for a WIA orientation workshop. She attends the WIA orientation and completes the paperwork to become enrolled in the WIA program.  Intake Appointment  The WIA case manager meets with the job seeker and they discuss her interest in going into a job-training program to become a certified Nurse Assistant, which is a job that matches up with her love of people. The job seeker shares that she has previously worked with the VR and has a Ticket to Work. The WIA counselor asks the DRC to join the next meeting for additional suggestions and resources she might benefit from in the community.  Engaging IRT members  In reviewing the costs of the WIA training program and the tools required for the classes, it becomes clear that the WIA training expenditure limit will be exceeded for the CNA training program. The DRC suggests re-connecting with VR to explore cost sharing and resource coordination.  Follow-Up and IRT Action  The DRC, WIA Case Manager and VR Counselor agree to carry out the following in order for customer to reach her employment goal:   * The DRC takes on the role of leading the IRT. * The bulk of the cost for customer employment training will come out of WIA funding. * The DRC used the First Dollar Down fund for tuition, school supplies and transportation for the CNA program. * The VR Counselor commits to paying the cost of the projected needs during the lecture portion of the training series. This cost comes to almost the same amount as the training program and tools paid for by WIA. Both the VR counselor and the DRC agree that neither program alone could easily absorb the total cost. * The job seeker agrees to follow up with the IRT on any action items. * The training provider becomes part of the IRT, shortly after a discussion with the IRT members on effective accommodation strategies. Due to the high quality of customer’s work, the training provider recommends her to an Assisted Living Home position. The DRC makes the introduction and helps to educate the staff on effective low cost accommodation strategies.   After completing the 10 weeks training program, the job seeker is referred to an employer by her training provider and goes to work full-time as a Certified Nurse assistant. The DRC follows up with the IRT members providing them with information on customer place of employment/hours/pay, and follow-up services offered by each agency. The DRC also referred job seeker to a WISA counselor to discuss how her SSI would affect her employment and which work incentives to use. |
| 1. Cross Staff Training: Is the DEI Project/AJCs conducting cross staff training with representatives from VR?   If so, please provide descriptions of the types of training activities including audiences and impact. |
| ROUND 2 DEI PILOT SITES |
| CALIFORNIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Golden Sierra: VR has provided work incentive overviews for customers who are either receiving VR services, DEI services or both. |
| * City of Los Angeles: In order to ensure the success of the collaboration, it was critical to identify the goals, purpose and participants of the collaboration. Once this was presented, we moved on to doing “Cross Training” where by the AJCs and DOR had an opportunity to train the group on their respective functions. Every subsequent meeting included feedback from every ‘cluster’ on what that group did to support the collaboration. Questions included, “Did the collaboration meet in between?”, “Did they attend each other’s orientation?”, “Did they take a tour of the facilities?”, “Did they make any referrals to each other?”, and “ Was a warm hand-off when performing a referral?” Through this collaboration, the City of Los Angeles’ AJCs have made 85 referrals to DOR, and DOR has made 44 referrals to the City of Los Angeles’ AJCCs. |
| * Madera: The DRC and Case Manager presented at a DOR staff meeting on the DEI, Ticket to Work Program and Benefits Planning as it relates to the Partnership Plus Agreement. On a continual basis, the DRC and Case Manager works with the VR Counselors to better coordinate ticket referrals through the Partnership Plus process and how to better serve co-enrolled participants. The DRC and Case Manager also met with the VR Counselors to develop a benefits counseling referral process for DOR customers. This discussion resulted in a Benefits Planning Referral Form, which could potentially generate a co-enrollment in DEI. The DRC provided the VR Counselors with the BPQY Authorization Forms. The VR Counselor is responsible for gathering the customer’s signatures prior to referring the customer to the DRC for Benefits Planning. The DRC then submits the BPQY forms to SSA. This process has provided the DRC with the necessary information to ensure thorough and quality benefits counseling is taking place. |
| * Verdugo: DOR and DEI staff meets once a month to discuss various issues/concerns with their programs and the customers they serve. In these meetings, staff receives training on the aspects of each program (DOR and DEI) and they learn about timelines, criteria, qualifications for programs, etc. Therefore when a customer meets with a DEI case manager and has a question regarding the basics of DOR then the case manager is able to answer the question rather than send the customer to DOR to obtain information. If it is a subject they are not too familiar with then they call the DOR counselor themselves and ask and provide the answer to the customer. |
| OHIO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| OOD staff in the DEI pilot areas received customized employment (CE) training under Ohio’s CE training and technical assistance contract in an effort to improve the capacity of the local areas to provide CE services. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| Training among VR and DLR staff has been conducted in formal presentations regarding each agency’s products and services. Staff from each agency presented as panel participants and discussed the services and products provided to mutual SD DEI participants. VR and DLR staff has been involved with Individual Education Plans of young adults specific to transitioning out of high school into post-secondary education or employment. VR and DLR staff has been involved with the Community Connection Event at local high schools. This event is sponsored by the South Dakota Transition Services Liaison Project which brings together community resource representatives, young adults with disabilities and their family members/advocates. |
| WASHINGTON DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| The DVR and DRC at the Everett WorkSource developed and delivered a staff training on making appropriate referrals. When the DRC first began in her position, job seekers with disabilities were generally referred to DVR. The DRC worked with the DVR staff (who is a former DPN) to educate staff about when and to whom job seekers with disabilities should be referred to DVR and the DRC. |
| WISCONSIN DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * WDB 3: "Disability Training at our Workforce Development Center has focused on many topics including the following: mental health, disclosure, ADA, and AODA to name a few. Recently, our local Independent Living Center has conducted and will continue to conduct AJC Disability Staff Trainings. These trainings focus on Disability Etiquette and Employment and Disability related topics. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and VR Consumer Case Coordinators have participated in these trainings and are invited to attend. Audiences for these recent trainings include DWD-Job Service Staff, Veterans Reps, W-2 Staff, Waukesha County Technical College Staff, and FSET staff. The impact of this training has been profound and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive." |
| * WDA 6 DVR has assisted in JC Cross Training with the DRC in the following training activities:   + \*TTW WISE Event- Social Security Beneficiaries   + \* Disability and Employment- JC Staff and Partners were given an overview of services available through DVR and the DEI Project during a Lunch & Learn.   + \*Assistive Technology JC Open House- DVR assisted with securing vendors for the JC Staff and Partner Agency’s.   + \* QPR Suicide Prevention Training for All WDA 6 Job Center Staff & Partners * \* Employer Recognition Breakfast for 2013 NDEAM." |
| ROUND 3 DEI PILOT SITES |
| IOWA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * With the addition of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) technology in the 5 pilot regions, all partner staff, including VR staff, in each region were included in training provided by Deaf Services Center of Iowa. A part of the focus of this event was to support staff of one-stops in their understanding of things they need to know in order to fully include people that are deaf in services. One outcome is the promotion of the use of the VRI in all partner services within the one-stop. Another is an important training opportunity that promotes the sharing of customers where it may not have otherwise occurred. There are incidences of cross referrals for deaf customers, as well as increased participation of deaf job seekers in IowaWORKS services. * Self-Employment Resources – partner staff, including VR staff, will be participating in training that will help support them in advising people with disabilities how to start and maintain their own businesses. * Benefits Planning Training – one of our DRC’s was not able to complete the CWIC training with VCU as the classes were all packed with new WIPA staff. VR was training some of their own staff with assistance from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and allowed the DRC to go through that training with the VR staff. This was a valuable contribution from that agency to the DEI strategy. * The Operations Team has established an Assistive Technology Team (A-Team) with the responsibility of evaluating and recommending how new technology can be used to enhance one-stop accessibility for customers. Team includes a VR representation, who has joined the rest of the team so far in evaluating one of the pilot region offices for opportunities in exploring new technologies with regard to access. She has had strong recommendations for the use of apps on IPads that will greatly enhance service accessibility for a wide variety of disability types. She is consulting with one of our pilot DEI regions who are very interested in piloting these suggestions. |
| LOUISIANA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3-ADULT FOCUS) |
| Staff development trainings take place yearly. |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| We have presented to the MRC staff regarding the DEI Program and it resulted in more cross referrals. |
| MINNESOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Southeast MN Region:   + All Workforce Development Inc. (WDI) case managers have been trained on the role of VR and all VR staff have been trained on the role of the WDI case manager: this creates a better understanding of how to collaborate   + WDI/VR/SEMCIL staff all have cross-training on the services.   + Benefits Analysis Training: WDI/VR/SEMCIL staff, understand the availability and necessity of doing a Benefits Analysis   + Guideposts Training- SEMCIL/VR/WDI/School Faculty/Parents: Helped to see how to apply the Guideposts to all youth that we are working with and how it can benefit them   + DB101 Training- SEMCIL/VR/WDI/School Faculty/Parents: Helped to see how the youth and the family can be impacted by work and when it is appropriate to use DB101website   + Ticket to Work Training- WDI Staff/VR/SEMCIL: this was mostly a review for SEMCIL and VR staff but good to understand that this is part of DEI |
| * Rural MN CEP: In October 2013, VR counselors and a regional manager attended the two-day collaborative training for RMCEP Team Leaders where PACER, RMCEP and DEED staff also participated. VR was one of the trainers who spoke about the need to collaborate and share resources. |
| ROUND 4 DEI PILOT SITES |
| ALASKA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Any and all staff training offered to either VR or DEI/AJC staff is shared for cost and knowledge benefits with all staff from both agencies who are relevant audience depending on the content. Many AJCs, because of collocation, include staff on both sides at each other’s weekly staff meetings and any in-service training in addition to formalized training outside the office. Recent examples have included; Customized Employment Training, all staff training on Partnership Plus and Ticket to Work, Mental Health First Aid, and Motivational Interviewing. In general it is more likely VR who bring a national trainer to Alaska for a topic and the AJC staff are invited to attend. Impact is broader knowledge for all and further relationships and collaboration cross agency. |
| CONNECTICUT DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Cross training has been provided to the DRC and DEI Case Manager (local DEI project staff) but not yet with other AJC staff. |
| IDAHO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * The Idaho disability program navigators were always invited to and attended the annual Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation statewide in-service. A similar invitation is expected for our Disability Employment Initiative, which began in October 2013. * The regional meetings of Vocational Rehabilitation staff were one of the first orientations to the Disability Employment Initiative targeted by the Idaho DEI team after the initiative was launched. * Vocational Rehabilitation counselors generally provide training to American Job Center staff as needed. The training topic is usually based on a particular issue at the time, for example, when a need for information on types of hidden disabilities presents itself. |
| MAINE DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DEI Round 1: We co-provided Disability Etiquette and ADAAA training with VR as part of the DEI project. These were offered to all AJC staff including WIA, Wagner-Peyser, VR, and Unemployment Insurance.  DEI and VR plan to provide joint training as part of rolling out the Partnership Plus Agreement. DEI Round 4: Plans are being made to cross train staff from the Career Centers and VR counselors on the assistive technology available in the Career Centers in Region 3. There are also discussions around providing cross-training on disability etiquette and cultural competency. |
| NEW YORK DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| A best practice that was implemented under Round 1 will once again be implemented under Round 4. During Round a Local Plan for Strategic Partnership with ACCES-VR template was created to foster a stronger alliance between DRCs and VR Counselors. This local plan is a tangible resource tool that helps identify a plan of action to help assist both DRCs and VR Counselors build a stronger relationship. The focus of this alliance is improving the number of referrals from ACCES-VR counselors to DEI DRCs.  Highlighted below is technical assistance language that will soon be shared with all DRCs under Round 4 to set in motion the ACCES-VR / DEI local plan for a strategic partnership:  In an effort to formalize the relationship between DEI pilot sites and the NYS Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) local offices, the attached template (final version) has been developed as a tool for identifying a strategic plan that will foster an effective partnership between Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs). The purpose of completing this template is threefold:   1. To empower the local areas to foster a DRC/VRC relationship with minimal oversight at the state level that will ultimately benefit customers with disabilities seeking services within the ACCES-VR and/or One-Stop Career Center environment. 2. To provide support, justification, and accountability for funds invested by USDOL into the DEI. 3. To identify best practices at the local level that may be replicated statewide.   Please begin the process of collaborating at the local level with your ACCES-VR counterpart(s) to complete the “Local Plan for Strategic Partnership with ACCES-VR” template. All sections of this template do not require input; only complete those sections that accurately represent the scope of your local strategic partnership. Remember, there is no right or wrong response. |
| VIRGINIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DEI Project Management conducted customer flow training for Virginia Workforce Center, partners and VR staff who are utilizing the Common screening Tool. The training assisted staff in understanding their processes and how the Tool captured their customer referrals for other services.  WorkWORLD (WW) staff presented the newly enhanced Web-based version to DEI Project Management and work group representatives from Dept. of Education, Board for People with Disabilities, Employment Services Organization and state association staff.  Lead DRC and VR Ticket to Work /Partnership Plus Coordinator held a comprehensive training on WW Decision Support Tool for People with Disabilities and Families Who Are Receiving Public Benefits. The training was conducted for 22 participants from Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC, via Go to Meeting. Participants included DRCs and recently certified Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISA).  VR WISA specialist and Ticket to Work Coordinator provided training to VR and DRCs staff on the WorkWorld decision software program and Partnership Plus program.  DEI facilitated ADA Accessibility Training to the local multidisciplinary survey team members, state One Stop Coordinator and Workforce Center Managers/staff on the new 2010 ADA Standards.  DEI management and DRCs coordinated Disability Etiquette and Awareness trainings in pilot WIB areas for 85 Workforce Partners and Employers. A ‘Train the Trainer’ program followed for 27 of the participants to develop their skills in the delivery of Disability Awareness trainings. The trainings promoted disability etiquette and awareness and foster collaborative trainings to be conducted by workforce partners. A follow up session for the Trainees reviewed their training experiences and skills. Participant organizations staff included: WIBs, Employment Commission, Veteran’s Programs, VR, Employment Services Organizations, Social Services, Housing Programs, Blind and Vision Impaired services, Public Schools, other community based services and Employers. |
| 1. Other Local Level Partnership Activities with VR. Please list each separately and describe (e.g., co-funding of a staff person; blending/braiding of resources to get a customer services; shared MIS) |
| ROUND 2 DEI PILOT SITES |
| CALIFORNIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Golden Sierra: Established Peer Advisory Committee (peer support) with local VR in Auburn. Local VR office in Roseville will be establishing a Job Club with VR and DEI participants. VR counselor in Placerville (El Dorado County) has met with DEI staff and is partnering to braid funds for training, transportation, education and participation in Interpersonal Skills workshops provided by the AJC. Counselor is also working to establish effective referral process for both programs. |
| * San Francisco: Local VR does include information about the DEI program in community trainings around serving people with disabilities. There is a wide range of topics from employment to various mental health trainings and there is never a cost to attend. |
| SOUTH DAKOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| South Dakota has long held to the concept of co-location where feasible. VR and DLR in most locations across the state operate in the same facility and some share staffing assignments, although mostly for reception and clerical supports. The costs of the facilities are shared as well has for supplies and equipment. This arrangement provides a leverage of resources and an economy of scale which corresponds to increased service for customers. |
| WASHINGTON DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 2—ADULT FOCUS) |
| November 2013 North Seattle WorkSource/Community College center: The DEI Lead and the DVR Regional Director convened a meeting with the DRCs, DVR supervisors and counselors, and WorkSource Administrators and supervisors for both Snohomish and King County Workforce Development Councils. During the meeting the group reviewed the roles and responsibilities of DEI and DVR and discussed how best to work together to serve job seekers with disabilities served by WorkSource. During the meeting the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus program was discussed and agreement was made to continue the Partnership Plus discussion at a future date. |
| ROUND 3 DEI PILOT SITES |
| LOUISIANA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DRCs host monthly orientations in partnership with VR to people with disabilities with emphasis on SSA Ticket to Work program. Information presented covers VR and EN services in general as well as localized services available through both agencies. This session is also approved as a VR orientation session. Center staff will then follow-up with VR to determine which participants qualify for VR services as well as which participants are referred back to the Center for services. |
| MASSACHUSETTS DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| Co-Funding of staff: There is no co-funded staff person. Blending and braiding of services: This is an ongoing process where we are constantly working together on how to better assist individuals with disabilities. Shared MIS: With a release form signed by the customer both MRC and local Career Centers are able to share the information from each other’s system. |
| MINNESOTA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * Southeast MN Region: Collaboration on trainings: Guideposts for Success, DB101 website, Ticket to Work. Collaborating on referrals: with the VR waitlist now many of the youth are being able to be served through DEI. School presentations/visits are happening together instead of on separate occasions. |
| * Rural MN CEP Region:   + March 2013 - Local VR Manager and DRC agreed to mutually support each other’s programs by getting more VR customers into the WIA programs. This was further supported by the Director of Operations, Rural MN CEP Inc.   + April 2013 - VR made the recommendation to create a DEI strategic working group that would bring managers from both agencies into one room to discuss the DEI way to achieve increased outcomes for both agencies.   + January 2014 – RMCEP Work Incentive Planning Fee for Service proposal presented to VR. RMCEP agreed to a trial that would provide evidence to local VR managers that RMCEP will provide a quality service work incentive and benefits planning to their customers. The feedback from these trials has been positive.   + May 2014 - A limited vendor fee for service contract will be applied, which will allow VR to utilize RMCEP’s Work Incentive Planner services. The contract will be limited to $20,000 annually. |
| RHODE ISLAND DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 3—ADULT FOCUS) |
| VR funded a training program in the healthcare field offered at the Community College of RI for a DEI customer. |
| ROUND 4 DEI PILOT SITES |
| ALASKA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 and 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * AJCs have been a testing ground for VR consumers to try work and broaden their skills through on the job learning. This has resulted in an excellent record of helping to place them in unsubsidized employment.  This has been a model program in the Eagle River Job Center and they have really led the way on that activity.  The model works so well in the Eagle River office that the DVR counselor there is the top producing counselor for DVR in the State, and has almost entirely quit using contractors to assist DVR customers as AJC staff do the same or better job and do not charge DVR for the service. * Monthly meeting occur in many AJCs across Alaska between AJC staff and VR staff around specific customers, service delivery, referral processes, employment opportunities etc. * All local offices have email list serves that share recruitment information particularly when job fairs or AJC on-site recruitments are coming up and that is always shared with VR. * VR and AJC staff jointly staff Job Fair booth at many of the annual Job Fairs around the state. * DVR Placement and Business Outreach staff work on a regular basis with AJC Business Services staff to coordinate outreach to employers, do joint employer site visits and marketing, and participate jointly in job fairs and recruitment efforts. A recent example from Eagle River Job Center; DVR placement coordinators just participated with Eagle River manager in meeting with Walgreens management.  AJC manager invited VR to talk to the Walgreen’s management team about Individuals with Disabilities who are work ready.  There was a lot of interest from the Walgreen’s team regarding VR customers. * AJC/WIA, SCSEP program and VR meet and write joint plans several times a year for customers. * In Eagle River Job Center; Every month DVR participates with in their monthly Partners meeting.  In this meeting, ESD/DVR/DPA/MASST all get together to discuss items pertinent to the operation of the Job Center. * Many AJCs collocated with VR have regional management meetings regarding overall service delivery and operations of the centers. All agency management team are present and actively involved with every aspect of operations from building emergency planning to jointly serving customers. * State Lead DRC meets regularly with state wide VR program manager and jointly present at VR and AJC staff meetings on several DEI related strategies including Partnership Plus, Asset Development, IRTs etc. * Section 503 and VEVRAA statewide AJC policies on outreach, response and assistance to Federal Contractors and recruitment efforts were developed with VR and shared with all AJC and VR staff. Letters received from federal contractors are shared and sent between agencies to the business services staff and joint marketing, recruitment and outreach strategies and in place. Initial training was done by DEI statewide lead to all AJC and VR staff on changes and final rule for Section 503 and VEVRAA. * Mentor Day for students with Disabilities in Anchorage is a joint venture between Anchorage School District, AJC staff and VR to place youth into work for a day in areas of interest. Great success has occurred with students gaining workplace exposure. |
| IDAHO DEI PILOT SITES (ROUND 4—YOUTH FOCUS) |
| * WIA case managers access VR expertise in a variety of ways, for example, arranging with VR for an assessment of a WIA participant. Dual enrollment will often ensue. In one case where a participant needed support to obtain a Class A CDL (Certified Driver’s License), VR funded the training and WIA paid for an eye examination and eyeglasses. * As mentioned above, VR and the DEI team have been partnering in a variety of transition events. As DEI staff members continue to explore opportunities with school districts, VR is very interested in helping to support whatever activities develop and vice versa. Here is a final example: * Blaine County School District: Through participation on the Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition, the DEI initiative became aware of a project by the Idaho Department of Education to provide additional transition support to a specific school district in south central Idaho. DEI staff met with the director of student services at the school district, gave an overview of the Disability Employment Initiative and provided examples of events, projects and partnerships done previously through the Disability Program Navigator initiative. Discussion took place about how we might partner with and assist their school district by working with special education teachers and developing activities such as a mentoring day, work experiences, and so on. The discussion brought into perspective VR staff involvement in teaching employment aspects as part of the special education curriculum. In subsequent meetings attended by VR and other partner agencies, a plan of action to develop work experiences during the next school year was developed and a timeline established. Plans are also being made for DEI staff to help support the VR sections of the curriculum. |
| MAINE DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| DEI Round 4 is covering the salary for a Rehabilitation Counselor I (VRC I) who serves as a liaison between BES/DEI and VR and provides a concrete team presence for VR.   * VRC I has participated, assisted, and networked at the DEI Round 1 Asset Development event: “Stretch Your Dollar Day” held at the UMA Bangor campus on March 15th. As a result of this networking, two workshop presenters from the University of Maine’s Cooperative Extension Program have indicated their availability to do presentations at future DEI Round 4 events. * VRC I is an active member of the Augusta CareerCenter‘s Job Fair Planning Committee. This committee is comprised of both Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Employment Staff. In addition to working on holding monthly Job Fairs, this committee is working on a DEI collaboration around Resource Fairs and Financial Fitness events. Additionally, the VRC I will be participating in Job Fairs at both the Skowhegan and the Wilton Career Centers. * VRC I will be co-presenting a Career Planning Workshop monthly. This workshop is for the Augusta Career Center jobseekers and is a new collaboration between the staff of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Career Center staff. The VRC I will be using parts of the CEW (Career Exploration Workshop) in this monthly presentation. * VRC I is involved or will be involved in assisting with a VR Orientation for Career Center jobseekers in the Lewiston, Wilton, and Augusta Career Centers. |
| NEW YORK DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * Suffolk County Career Centers (both Hauppauge and Patchogue) invite a representative from ACCES-VR to provide Orientations two times per month on services available. * A VRC is present at Hempstead Works every Wednesday morning to meet with customers. The VRC also speaks frequently with Career Center staff to remind them of available services. VR Orientations are also occasionally held at the Center. |
| VIRGINIA DEI PILOT SITES (ROUNDS 1 AND 4—ADULT FOCUS) |
| * VR through cost sharing agreements supports front desk staff in some Comprehensive AJCs. * The Common Screening Tool is a shared MIS system among multiple agencies within in an AJC. |