

State Plan Updates FFY 2014

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council. The SRC met as a full Council 5 times and the Executive Committee met 5 times since the last State Plan was submitted. Each of the SRC committees also met throughout the year.

The SRC and DBVI are pleased to report positive results from combined outreach efforts that have resulted in an increase in the number of applications. Also, all of the policies and procedures were reviewed, revised, and approved jointly. The membership committee created a mentoring program for new members that will be fully implemented in the fall.

Each SRC meeting included an update from the DBVI Director, the Special Services Library, and the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Council is fully aware and updated about services throughout the state.

The SRC and DBVI were very active in working together to review the projects of the division and updates were given at each meeting. The projects reviewed included assessment/goals/strategies, progress on DBVI's Consumer-Centered Culture initiatives, and preparing for the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring visits, which involved several pre-visit phone conferences. The RSA review took place in February and the areas reviewed were financial, organizational structure, and transition. The SRC Chair was interviewed and provided input for the report.

The SRC provided input as DBVI prepared for several all-day transition workshops that included peer workshops and outside experts. The purpose was to bring together DBVI customers throughout the state to learn about higher education and work preparation.

In February the SRC provided input for the design of a DBVI "Welcome Packet." They answered the question that a successful Welcome Packet:

Results in...

- A clear understanding of scope/better understanding of resources/well-informed consumer/clear service expectations
- Understandable language
- Engaging the person/client satisfaction
- Examples of success of others
- What the agency provides/a better understanding of DBVI

Does not result in...

- Frustration
- Misunderstanding
- Ambiguity

Is...

- Accessible
- Mission-driven
- Understandable/clearly-written/jargon/acronym-free
- Client-centered
- Engaging/Inviting/Welcoming
- Comprehensive
- Empowering
- Informative

DBVI agrees with these attributes and will work hard to include these in the final product.

The SRC requested an agenda for the April meeting that included the theme of job development. The meeting included a panel discussion with 3 DBVI job developers who gave presentations about their work and included a time for questions and discussion. Each job developer discussed their role and some of their challenges and successes. The SRC members responded with some questions and ideas. The SRC feels strongly that there is a definite need to educate the public and businesses about the abilities of people who are blind. The job developers and DBVI staff agree and brainstormed some ideas. All agree that sharing success stories using a variety of media is a great way show people demonstrating their skills at work.

Last June, DBVI and the SRC had an all-day combined meeting. During this meeting, we discussed customer-centered culture, needs assessment and goals and strategies. We also discussed how DBVI has on-going collaboration with the general Vocational Rehabilitation division regarding customers that have multiple disabilities. One example included working with VR, and the Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to provide adaptive equipment training for a person who is deaf-blind to use Braille interface technology for communication.

The SRC Chairperson attended quarterly meetings with the Vermont Secretary of Human Services and the Commissioner of the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL). He also attended a two-day workshop on Customer-Centered Culture sponsored by DBVI for its staff and partners. The Chair represented the SRC by working with the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) to be a spokesperson for the program in schools to teach students about blindness.

Results of Public Meeting—DBVI State Plan (held June 20, 2012)

DBVI did not receive any comments at the Public Hearing or in writing.

DBVI Response to SRC Input

- DBVI and the SRC worked collaboratively to revise the policies and procedures. The language was revised in a way that all can support the final version.
- The SRC and DBVI agree that educating the public about blindness is very important. Together we will begin to explore the best ways to share success stories.
- The SRC gave direct input about specific attributes they would like to see in the new DBVI “Welcome Packet.” The attributes are described above and DBVI will work hard to include them in the final product. DBVI is also developing measures and will report results to the SRC.

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development -- DBVI

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) operates in the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAAIL) in the Agency of Human Services (AHS). DBVI employs 10 full time positions and one half time position.

DBVI is organized to allow a structure that allows for advancement based on increased skills and job responsibilities. This originally occurred in response to changes that were made four years ago to reduce the number of paid Vermont State employees. Qualified seasoned DBVI employees added to their job responsibilities to fill the gap of positions that were eliminated. The director of DBVI met with the State of Vermont Agency of Human Resources for a Request for Review (RFR) resulting in significant changes within DBVI’s job structure. DBVI was successful in meeting the goal to set up a career ladder within the job series recognizing increasing levels of expertise and responsibility. In addition to the changes that were made previously to create positions for Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, DBVI set up a step system for the Rehabilitation Associate position that is based on increased levels of job responsibility. This change is a positive move for DBVI as it more accurately recognizes job duties and skill level. DBVI continues to operate under a structure that allows for increased professional abilities, improved services and knowledgeable management by recognizing the individual skills within. This move has taken DBVI in a positive direction for implementing new management strategies that are being implemented (Customer Centered Culture and Individual Development Plan).

At this time we have sufficient VR counselor capacity to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers. Each of the four regional offices has one counselor and one rehab associate. The four regional offices are Burlington, Montpelier, Rutland, and Springfield. The director of DBVI and the administrative assistant work out of the central office, that is temporarily located in Williston. The Central office was moved to Williston after severe flooding that occurred in the summer of 2011. The assistive technology trainer works out of the Rutland office and provides services for the entire state.

Under the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, DBVI collaborates with the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for: Human Resources Management, Transition Services, Benefits Counseling, Supported Employment, and the business office.

In FFY 2013 DBVI Counselors served an average of 90 consumers annually. With FFY 2014 over half-complete it appears that DBVI will serve a similar average of consumers annually per Counselor. Counselors have an average caseload of about 70 consumers at any given time. At this time DBVI has maintained a high level of performance. Staffing levels are sufficient.

Four rehabilitation counselors provide direct client services for vocational rehabilitation services in the four regions in the State of Vermont. Each Counselor works with and supervises a rehabilitation associate. Presently DBVI has 3 (.5 FTE each) job developers for three of the four regions. This service is contracted through Vermont Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation. Technology services are provided by the assistive technology trainer and a contracted professional rehabilitation technology expert. Overall supervision is provided by the division director.

Presently all DBVI positions are filled by qualified professionals. It is expected that a DBVI rehabilitation associate will be leaving her position within the next few months. It is expected that this position will be filled by a qualified individual. This individual will receive extensive training to help them learn and understand services for visually impaired individuals and the implication caused by visual loss. DBVI will use the same training model that was used for a recently hired rehabilitation associate in the Montpelier office. Training provided will focus around meeting with other highly trained vision professionals both within DBVI and from our sister agency, The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. All new employees receive training with a qualified rehabilitation therapist, a low vision therapist and orientation and mobility instructor. In addition they are scheduled to meet with our rehabilitation technology specialist to learn about how adaptive equipment can enhance job opportunities. They will meet with professionals from Vermont Association of Business Rehabilitation and Industry to learn about job placement. The performance of the newly hired rehabilitation associate is meeting all the expected standards established for the position. DBVI is confident that we will be able to fill any future vacancies through recruitment as there are many qualified individuals looking for employment in the State of Vermont. It is expected that DBVI will be able to recruit and hire highly trained professionals within the Agency of Human Resources for future job vacancies.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Blind Services Director	1	0	0
2	Administrative Assistant	.5	0	0
3	Senior Rehabilitation Counselor	2	0	0
4	Rehabilitation Counselor	2	0	0
5	Rehabilitation Associate	1	0	0
6	Rehabilitation Associate II	2	0	1
7	Rehabilitation Associate III	1	0	0
8	Assistive Technology Trainer	1	0	0

2. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

In the State of Vermont the local institutions of higher education that offer professional training for DBVI and DVR are Johnson State College and Springfield College. Assumption College works closely with DBVI and DVR to develop programs for vocational rehabilitation counselors to meet the educational requirements needed to become CRC eligible.

The state of Vermont remains without a rehabilitation training program at the graduate level. Presently, DBVI has one rehabilitation counselor that is attending Assumption College. He is enrolled in the Rehabilitation counseling, MS program. This is a fully accredited program that prepares individuals to be highly qualified counselors. Required classes cover core VR requirements (i.e., a) Medical or Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities, b) Delivery of Rehabilitation Services or Community Resources, c) Vocational Assessment and Evaluation, d) Job Placement or Occupational Information.

To maintain training and skill levels, DBVI constantly seeks and distributes information and training opportunities for staff at the regional and national level. DBVI maintains current educational material through journals, internet sites and information gathered at conferences and trainings. DBVI works with the Human Resources Manager at VR to ensure inclusion in opportunities offered by educational institutions for vocational rehabilitation professionals. Opportunities for on-line and distance learning are also available.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	Assumption College	1	1	0	0

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Recruitment, Preparation and Retention: It is DBVI's intention to develop and implement a solid plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel. Our goal is to recruit professionals who have an expertise in rehabilitation with knowledge of visual diagnosis and the implications of visual disability. In addition DBVI will recruit personnel and individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds to ensure a diverse qualified professional staff. DBVI constantly checks its caseload for interested and appropriately skilled individuals to provide services to Vermonters with vision impairments. DBVI ensures a high standard of qualified personnel with training directed toward an expertise for working with people with visual impairment. This is done through close collaboration with the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. New staff participate in a training program that covers the implications of visual loss and services such as orientation and mobility, rehabilitation teaching and low vision services. In addition training and consultation occurs with our rehabilitation technology consultant on an ongoing basis. Rehabilitation Associates are recruited with a strong preference given to those with Bachelor's degrees and a strong commitment to blind services. Through flexible work schedules and approved time-off DBVI makes it as convenient as possible to pursue degrees and education. DBVI will continue to support staff members who want to further their relevant education, as this will benefit the whole staff through projects and shared information. DBVI supports the staff and its professional development through public recognition and opportunities for job advancement through a newly developed career ladder within the division.

Personnel Standards

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

Personnel Standards:

DBVI will follow the same standard used by Vocational Rehabilitation to be in compliance with Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992. This requires State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to establish qualified personnel standards for rehabilitation personnel. This addresses the qualifications necessary to meet the highest standards which are required in the State of Vermont. In addition DBVI intends to develop a system of personnel development which will ensure retention and individual plans for professional development.

Rehabilitation Counselors that obtain Masters Degrees in counseling or related fields, or are pursuing an undergraduate and Masters Degree, will be required to take a graduate level course in each of the following areas:

- a) Medical or Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities
- b) Delivery of Rehabilitation Services or Community Resources
- c) Vocational Assessment and Evaluation
- d) Job Placement or Occupational Information

Under the Vermont State Employees Association contract, staff are allowed eight hours of educational leave with pay per two week pay period. This policy will also be in force for programs that are held via distance learning.

All efforts are made to hire new Counselors into this standard. When this is not possible, new hires are required, by written agreement, to attain the standard in a reasonable amount of time. The availability of on-line course work should allow any new hires to reasonably take the four "core" courses or any other course work they would need to reach this standard.

DBVI has a standard of Bachelor's degree for new Rehabilitation Associates. This standard lays the groundwork for moving Associates into graduate programs, helping to assure DBVI of maintaining qualified staff.

DBVI allows for a flexible work schedule, makes training assistance available, supports state, regional and national learning options and is strongly supportive of the time, effort, and commitment expended by each staff member to attain educational standards.

DBVI encourages the use of training funds for staff to use to attain and maintain professional standards and to maintain and enhance their professional capabilities.

With a small staff that includes four Rehabilitation Counselors, when fully staffed, DBVI can easily assess training and staff development needs.

Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessional's significant knowledge from research and other sources.

Staff Development:

The main objective in staff development at the Division for the Blind will focus on assessment, vocational counseling, job placement and rehabilitation technology in relation to visual impairment. Training for counselors will focus on the essentials of a comprehensive vocational assessment. This will address aspects of how a person with a visual impairment can access independence and achieve a high standard of independence. Our mission to "support Vermonters who are blind or visually impaired in their efforts to achieve or sustain their economic independence, self-reliance, and social integration to a level consistent with their interests, abilities, and informed choice".

This year each DBVI employee will receive an IDP (Individual Development Plan) package that will contain tools to address how each employee can contribute to DBVI's; goals and strategies, improve customer satisfaction, support policies, philosophy, competencies and future vision. In addition, the purpose of the IDP is to ensure that each DBVI employee receive appropriate and adequate training to meet their professional standards and requirements of their position

DBVI staff will be asked to evaluate strengths and weakness, and develop a plan of activities that will improve professional capacities. Each employee will have long and short term educational and professional development goals to improve skills. Tools provided will allow each employee to address goals for professional development. The plan will be self-evaluating using the "Smart" goal model to ensure that their plan is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. This will give employees an opportunity to identify their career ladder. DBVI staff will be given opportunities to take on higher level duties backed by participation in education and training programs. This can lead to a higher step grade as determined by the VT Department of Human Resources.

DBVI has a partnership with the vocational rehabilitation Human Resource Manager. DBVI meets with the HR manager bi-monthly to advise DBVI on upcoming trainings available within the Agency of Human Resources and to work with DBVI on goals as outlined in the five year Vermont VR-Blind in-Service Training Grant. The HR manager will facilitate and address trainings that meet the RSA standards set by TACE. The HR manager will advise DBVI on trainings that are required and relevant continuing educational opportunities. Needed trainings will be determined through IDP developed by DBVI staff. DBVI staff will be encouraged to participate in training opportunities to increase leadership, partnering and collaboration skills that will lead to increasing employment opportunities for people who are blind and visually impaired.

DBVI's five year training grant will support:

- Ongoing training requirements to ensure all rehabilitation counselors have a Masters Degree with CSPD/CRC eligibility.
- In partnership with DVR, DBVI participated in training for access and analysis of current labor market information, presented by, Dr. Paul Harrington from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University and the VT Department of Labor. This training provided counselors with information and skills to match the needs of their consumers with the needs of the local labor market. Training enhanced counselor's ability to interpret labor market information to assist their consumers to make informed career decisions and effectively work as a team with job placement staff. Counselors are better able to identify training and post-secondary education options that are in demand in the local labor market.
- In partnership with DVR and AHS, DBVI purchased distance education learning tools for video conferencing. These tools will allow increased training opportunities, and increase the availability of statewide meetings while cutting the cost of travel and time.
- DBVI will work with a marketing agency to develop training materials / welcome packet for outreach and marketing. This packet will identify a clear understanding and scope of what DBVI can do to ensure that DBVI customers are well informed. It will be accessible, comprehensive, empowering, understandable and informative. This tool will be used during the initial interview and for outreach to customers, family members, medical professionals and service providers.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approved DBVI's comprehensive plan for staff development. This plan outlines DBVI's intent to comply with federal regulations and its professional development objectives.

Through needs assessments, staff input and advice from the SRC, the Human Resources Manager develops programs, funded through the five year Training Grant that meet staff development needs. The current Training Grant began in October of 2010 and has the following objectives.

Objective 1.1: Develop a training model and set of tools that will enable DBVI Counselors to better understand today's labor market.

Objective 1.2: Provide ongoing training to staff on the curriculum and training models developed by Dr. Harrington.

Objective 1.3: Develop training options for high wage, high demand, and high growth jobs.

Objective 2.1: Train staff in DBVI and DVR and across all departments in AHS.

Objective 3.1: To develop an outreach and marketing plan to improve the referral rate of patients with low vision being treated by Vermont and neighboring health care providers.

Objective 3.2: Deliver training modules to DBVI staff.

Objective 3.3: Develop capacity for ongoing technical assistance in outreach.

Specific Staff training-Updated

Customer Centered Culture-Over the past year DBVI has continued our work on creating and enhancing a Customer Centered Culture. This model was developed by Robin Lawton. Under his guidance and consultation DBVI continues the process of looking at customer satisfaction and organizational performance. When using this method of management it helps us to identify the "voice of the customer". Over the past year DBVI has been working to incorporate this model of management into our service delivery. DBVI has met with small groups of consumers from the community. Training has been provided to our SRC, the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the DBVI staff. The main dimensions of the model are: Focus on the customer, Eliminate ambiguity, Include customer priorities, Empower the end user, Define success, Reduce ambiguity of language, Link customer and operational priorities, Integrate and leverage existing initiatives, Focus on improvement, Address outcome first, process last, Satisfy strategic objectives as well as operations, Improve knowledge of products first, Emphasize sustainability of new practices, and Challenge traditional assumptions. Using this model will help to improve customer satisfaction as it will decrease ambiguity and improve communication. It allows a method to measure successful outcomes based on the "voice of the customer".

This approach to customer service is being used in the development of DBVI's strategic planning. The information is used to increase communication and clarity by finding a common language. After collecting data provided by customers, a small focus group was developed. Presently the group is working on a Welcome Packet to give to customers. This group will gather information that is accessible, comprehensive, empowering, understandable and informative. Our goal at this time is to ensure that our customers are well informed and feel like they are being heard. DBVI will work closely with our customers and the SRC to determine the needs. Training and consultation provided by Robin Lawton allows DBVI staff to improve a method for providing quality customer satisfaction and a higher level of performance.

Motivational Interviewing-DBVI has partnered with VR for providing training in Motivational Interviewing. This method of counseling was originally developed by William Miller and Stephen Rollinick. It is an effective evidence-based approach to overcoming the ambivalence when participating in a rehabilitation process. This training is designed to develop techniques and skills to work successfully with our most challenging populations. This technique is used to assist consumers to take responsibility for change. DBVI staff attended the initial training session. In cooperation with VR and coordinated by the HR manager a series of trainings on this topic will be offered for DBVI to enhance skills.

Co-Training for DBVI/VT, DBVI/NH, and Veterans Administration staff- This training was designed specifically for staff who work with clients who are visually impaired. The focus of the presentation was to learn about new technology and low vision aids. Presentations were given by Chris Fields, OD, Geoff Howard, Technology Consultant, and the Perkins School for the Blind.

Great Expectations-Voices and Choices for the Future-DBVI sponsored two seminars for staff and consumers. This is a project in a series of seminars that will address the needs of younger people who are visually impaired. The first seminar presented on November 1, 2012 included sessions on technology, job readiness, a panel discussion on inspiring stories and a round table discussion. The second seminar included a panel discussion on overcoming difficulties, Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, client driven interest groups, low vision and self-advocacy. As a result of these seminars, client driven interest groups have been formed to address technology support, social needs, vocational support, and public education. These seminars will continue into next year.

A variety of other trainings were attended by staff to enhance skills. Staff attended:

- Harnessing Mindfulness-Tailoring the Practice
- Ethics in VR
- Management and Conflict Resolution
- Domestic Abuse
- Microsoft Office 2010 and Windows 7
- How to Communicate with Tact and Professionalism
- Rehab Associate Training Modules
- Deaf/Blind Training with VABVI
- Knowledge Wave for new Windows

DBVI staff will continue to participate in trainings on relevant assessments needed for persons with visual impairment. These trainings will be presented by qualified vision professionals. Training will address new and relevant assistive technology for people who are blind and visually impaired and job analysis used to determine the need for a technology assessment and training. Ongoing consultation is available for the staffs overall basic understanding of adaptive technology and how it can enhance an individual's job performance. Coordination and communication with low vision optometrists to enhance visual function in an employment situation is ongoing.

DBVI will consult with the VR HR Manager to plan relevant trainings. The HR manager is working with Neil McNeil from TACE to arrange for trainings that will meet 1X per month for 2-3 hours. Training will addresses multiple disabilities (i.e., deaf/blindness), maintaining good case management skills, review of standards and ethics for rehabilitation, coaching skills, motivational interviewing, personality disorders and medical and psychological disorders.

DBVI's principals are aimed at a staff development plan that will enhance job skills, job satisfaction and the development of job opportunities for Vermonters with impaired vision. The strategies that will direct our focus over the next year are:

- Collaboration with other agencies, especially the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Vermont Association for the Blind and visually Impaired.
- Cultural Diversity outreach to underserved populations and increased access to services by all eligible individuals.
- Increase the use of distance education.
- Informed Consumer Choice- offering consumer's resources and information so that they may direct their vocational rehabilitation plan.
- Early Intervention- Offering individual's services and adjustment counseling at an early phase to improve success rates.
- Counselor autonomy- Allowing professionals to have local decision-making power to allow for a much faster rehabilitation process.
- A "Customer Centered Culture"-That will increase clarity of services and decrease ambiguity for consumers, staff and our partners in rehabilitation.

DBVI staff receives ongoing training through local and regional in-state programs to stay current on: The National Library Services, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resources, Diversity and numerous others. DBVI staff is especially diligent about perusing pertinent journals and research and disseminating relevant articles and information via the internet, at monthly staff meetings and through in-person collaborations. The DBVI central office maintains subscriptions to several noted journals in the field (e.g., Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness).

Through attendance at combined meetings, in-service training, and direct staff contact DBVI continues to seek ways to improve and enhance collaboration with other agencies. Many DBVI trainings are in collaboration with the general Vocational Rehabilitation agency in the Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living (DAIL). DBVI has greatly enhanced its collaboration with other organizations to the benefit of this division, In particular, the LEAP program for summer youth employment is a model of cooperation. This involves DBVI (provider of consumers, funding), Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (infrastructure, staff), Resource (jobs, staff), Linking Learning to Life (follow-up, e-mentoring), VT Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IL training, transition staff) and the Gibney Family Foundation (funding). This is a unique residential program providing youth with vision impairments a summer employment opportunity, a community service experience and an independent living experience in an urban setting and a new option for a wilderness setting. DBVI's director is on the Governor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities, staff members belong to local Chambers of Commerce as well as other organizations where collaboration has provided opportunities for information sharing and dissemination.

DBVI will continue to implement tools used in Franklin Covey's the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Interactive Edition. This is a three hour on-line training and multi rater assessment that allows team members to provide input on work skills. These tools help individuals to enhance team building skills.

DBVI is active with the Job Development Coalitions throughout the State of Vermont because of our work with Vermont Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR). Recently VABIR hired Business Account Managers. Their job is to improve relationships with employers in each community. VABIR staff set up trial work experiences and on the job trainings. They explain financial incentives and ADA information. This program helps to provide a service to employers for long lasting job matches.

Other organizations that DBVI works in close cooperation with are: The LEAP program for summer youth employment, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Resource Vermont, Linking Learning to Life e-mentoring, VT Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Vermont Center for Independent Living, and the Gibney Family Foundation. DBVI's director is a member of the Governor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

The Division for the Blind operates under the State of Vermont Agency of Human Services. The Agency of Human Services has clear policy regarding access to programs as needed to ensure meaningful access to persons with limited English proficiency. Information regarding policy can be accessed at:

<http://www.intra.ahs.state.vt.us/limited-english-proficiency>

This policy applies to all Agency Departments, offices and employees. It is the policy of the Agency of Human Services to provide language assistance as may be needed to ensure meaningful access to our programs. Each department and offices will take steps to provide assistance so that persons seeking services may communicate effectively with program providers and with Agency and department staff.

Departments must take steps to ensure persons seeking services are able to understand which services and benefits are available to them, and how they may best receive them.

The LEP information provides resources and links to resources dealing with written, face-to-face and over the phone communication with individuals for whom English is not the primary language. DBVI is also able to use an agency contract for phone and written translation of almost any language in the world. DBVI makes use of an on-line contact for interpreters of ASL for those consumers who are deaf.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

At this time DBVI is working to update a cooperative agreement with the new Agency of Education. DBVI has maintained cooperative agreements with the Department of Education, VABVI and the Department of Labor. These agreements are meant to work toward a system of comprehensive and unduplicated services for youth and adults with vision impairments in Vermont. These agreements also provide for cross training among the staffs of the various organizations. Areas covered include employment, education and disability. In this way DBVI and the other partners work to ensure that all partner programs are accessible and available to DBVI consumers. DBVI is in constant contact with the staff of VABVI who has been working with a contract from the Vermont Department of Education to provide services under IDEA. DBVI counselors are in close communication with VR transition counselors. Together DBVI and VR collaborate in training and outreach for disabled students.

Attachment 4-11 (e)(2) Evaluation and Report of Progress

DBVI Goals and Strategies 2013

FFY 2013 Goals and Priorities	FFY 2013 Measures	FFY 2013 Targets
1. Consumer satisfaction with DBVI services will increase. Continue to create a Customer-Centered Culture.	Triennial consumer satisfaction survey.	DBVI will maintain overall consumer satisfaction at or above the 92% level in 2011 survey in the 2014 survey.

<p>2. Consumer earnings will increase beyond the rate of inflation.</p>	<p>RSA Performance Indicator 1.5: DBVI wages compared to state average, and 1.6: own income as primary source of support.</p>	<p>1.5: DBVI consumer wages will increase from 80% in 2010 of state average to 82% of state average in 2013.</p> <p>***2011--increased to 82% of the state average***</p> <p>1.6: DBVI will increase the difference between percent self-supporting at closure and application from 16% in 2010 to 20% in 2013.</p> <p>***2011--increased to a difference of 18% self-supporting at closure***</p>
<p>3. More customers will be employed.</p>	<p>RSA Performance Indicator 1.2: Percentage of DBVI consumers achieving an employment outcome.</p> <p>Increase rehab rate.</p>	<p>1.2: DBVI consumers achieving an employment outcome will increase from 71% in 2010 to 73% in 2013.</p> <p>***2011—increased to 75%***</p> <p>DBVI rehab rate will increase from 73% in 2010 to 77% in 2013.</p> <p>***2011—increased to 77%***</p>
<p>4. Serve more transition age students.</p>	<p>Percentage of DBVI caseload</p>	<p>DBVI will increase the transition age population served from 9% in 2010 to 14% in 2013.</p> <p>***2011—increased to 15%***</p>
<p>5. DBVI employees will be satisfied with their jobs.</p>	<p>Results from biennial DAIL/DBVI staff satisfaction survey.</p>	<p>DBVI staff satisfaction will be maintained at (2011 rating) or higher.</p>
<p>6. All DBVI staff will have the skills and competencies to do their jobs.</p>	<p>Feedback from staff on biennial DBVI staff satisfaction survey.</p>	<p>In 2011 90% of staff said they had enough information to do their jobs. This will be maintained at (2011 rating) or higher.</p>

7. Increase capacity to serve un-served or underserved populations; specifically:

- Deaf-Blind
- Minority
- Individuals who are transition age (14-24).

Implementation of services targeted at underserved populations.

Partner with the Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to establish a Support Service Provider (SSP) program in Vermont.

2011--DBVI provided a grant to VCDHH to provide training to build the capacity to provide SSP services in Vermont. The VT Coalition for Disability Rights made this a platform item to request state general fund to pay for this service.

Increase the % of transition age youth served to 14%.

2011—increased to 15%

Increase the number of individuals served who are minorities from 5 in FFY 2011 to 10 in FFY 2013.

2012—the number of individuals served was 4. The minority service rate was 80%

8. DBVI will work in collaboration with Creative Workforce Solutions and the DOL to ensure people who are blind or visually impaired have access to services through progressive employment opportunities and the state workforce investment system.

As indicated on the DBVI tracking database (105-R)

By the end of FFY 2013 DBVI will have a total of 8 customers who are served by DBVI and DOL together.

9. DBVI will work to improve the outcomes of community supported employment providers serving individuals with developmental disabilities.	Number of 26 closures achieved through the supported employment programs. Total number of people who are blind or visually impaired and have developmental disabilities employed with supports.	In Federal Fiscal Year 2011 DBVI served or collaborated with General VR for a total of 4 people who were working in supported employment programs. This will increase to 6 by Federal Fiscal Year 2013. ***2012—Four individuals received supported employment services through a designated agency***
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10. DBVI will work to improve the outcomes of community providers serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired.	Number of 26 closures achieved with assistance of VABIR and VABVI services. Number of 26 closures achieved with assistance of VABIR and VABVI services.	In Federal Fiscal Year 2011 a total of 50 people received services from VABIR and 20 successfully achieved a 26 closure (Rehab Rate=40%). This will increase to a rehab rate of 50% by Federal Fiscal Year 2013. ***2012-- a total of 27 cases closed where the individual had received services from VABIR, and 22 of these cases successfully achieved a 26 closure (Rehab Rate= 81 %)*** In State Fiscal Year 2011 a total of 100 people received services from VABVI and 40 successfully achieved a 26 closure (Rehab Rate=40%). This will increase to a rehab rate of 50% by Federal Fiscal Year 2013. ***2012--a total of 52 cases closed where the individual had received services from VABVI, and 40 of these cases successfully achieved a 26 closure (Rehab Rate= 84 %)***
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Strategy 1: DBVI will collaborate with Creative Workforce Solutions to find employment in accordance with the customer's interests and qualifications.

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 3 and 8

Actions:

- Establish clear goals with VABIR staff to increase the number of Employment Outcomes, Work Experiences, OJT, and Volunteer Opportunities as tracked in the CWS database.
- Expand opportunities in the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program.
- Work with State to hire more people who are blind or visually impaired.

Strategy 2: DBVI will promote employment by educating employers and providing opportunities for increased exposure to people who are blind or visually impaired. This will address "Societies reaction to blindness."

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 3

Actions:

- Create a video of people working at their job.
- Find opportunities to show the film "Going Blind" to employer groups at Chambers, Rotary's, and public libraries.

***Update: The film was shown at Putney and Brattleboro Public Library, and Brattleboro Arts Museum.

- Find opportunities to teach employer groups about assistive technology.

Update: The DBVI assistive technology trainer made a power point presentation to the Rutland Rotary Club about ways people use technology to succeed in the workplace.

***Update: June 11th, 2013 - Springfield event for Employers.

- Encourage employers to visit the DBVI website.

***Update: Table at Employment Fair at Elks in Montpelier in April 2013.

- Explore the idea of connecting employers through discussion group.
- Work closely with GCEPD to promote employment of people with disabilities.
- Create educational activities for White Cane Day and Disability Awareness Month in October.

***Update: Peg TV in Rutland

***Update: Radio show on WTSA in Brattleboro

- Create a PSA from employed individual and company.
- Offer Simulations to demonstrate—"what is it like to be blind?"

***Update: Lamoille County Annual Career and Job Fair

Sept 20, 2012 and Green Mt Tech Center

(307 attendees, 125 youth) where local businesses set-up information tables.

DBVI set up an information table with examples of adaptive equipment, simulators and information about our program.

***Update: Central Vermont Job Fair April 4, 2013 at the Montpelier Elks Club which included 40 vendors from the business community and 800 attendees/Clients. DBVI set up an information table with examples of adaptive equipment, simulators, information about program.

***Update: Rutland presentations to several community groups.

***Update: Recognition breakfast in Rutland in April. The Ann Clark Inc. Cookie Company were recognized as an exemplary employer.

Strategy 3: DBVI will create Consumer Driven Events to assist individuals as they prepare for employment.

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 1, 2, and 3

Actions:

- Create networking events.

***Update: Great Expectations (Two Main Events and many sub group meetings)

- Opportunities to practice interview and job readiness skills.

***Update: Regularly through CWS.

- Create peer mentoring opportunities for adjustment to blindness and technology.

***Update: Great Expectations Technology Group

- Create opportunities for youth to have adult mentors.

***Update: Great Expectations

***Update: Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports - formally and informally

- Peer support through groups for employment focus.

***Update: Great Expectations.

- Create a job club.

***Update: Great Expectations signed-up for it

Strategy 4: DBVI will create opportunities for access to information.

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 2 and 3

Actions:

- DBVI will continue to expand the information on the website and will work with the SRC for ideas.

***Update: Hired consultants to update for new features.

- Use Customer-Centered Culture to determine “what types of information customers really want”?

Strategy 5: DBVI will address transportation challenges.

Goal and Priority Area Addressed: 3

Actions:

- Participate in system level planning.
- Assist VABVI to increase the number of volunteer drivers—build data base.
- Promote the option for DBVI to pay for the first 60 days of a ride to the job.

Strategy 6: DBVI will improve communication with customers regarding expectations for DBVI services.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 1

Actions:

- DBVI will develop a consistent statewide orientation to DBVI services which will be implemented in all four regional offices.
- Welcome Packet
- DBVI will work within the principles of Customer-Centered Culture to make sure we are answering the question: “What do they really want?”
- DBVI will continually evaluate timeliness, accuracy, and ease of obtaining services. DBVI will establish an ongoing closure survey. Results will be shared and evaluated with the SRC on an ongoing basis.
- Ask customers to evaluate DBVI products using the Customer-Centered Culture model.
- Implement a closure survey that can be sent to all closed cases in FFY 13.

***Update: DBVI has contracted with a provider to conduct the surveys.

Strategy 7: DBVI will increase communication within DBVI through implementation of videoconferencing in all four regions and central office.

Goal and Priority Areas Addressed: 5 and 6

Actions:

- DBVI will implement videoconferencing technology in all four DBVI district offices and central office. This technology will be used for staff meetings and trainings.

Strategy 8: DBVI will increase capacity to serve underserved populations through the implementation of special projects.

Goal and Priority Area: 7

Actions:

- Create and support Deaf-Blind SSP project.
- Coordinate with VR Transition Counselors, and the Teachers of the Visually Impaired to increase the number of transition students served. Create some documents that explain what DBVI can offer.
- Create a statewide system to track all visually impaired students as they graduate high school.
- Add 5-hours/week to the job developer position in Burlington to expand outreach efforts.

Strategy 9: DBVI will continue to become an administratively efficient organization by finding efficient and user friendly ways to complete paperwork for staff and customers.

Goal and Priority Areas: All

Actions:

- DBVI and DVR will continue efforts to create an automated case management system to be completed in FFY 2013.

Strategy 10: DBVI will systematically recognize exemplary staff performance using an evaluation system based on core competencies and development of SMART goals.

Goal and Priority Areas: 5 & 6

Actions:

- DBVI supervisors will work with each staff member to create SMART goals connected to the DBVI strategic plan.
- DBVI supervisors will work with each staff member to establish development opportunities for the 5 DBVI Core Competencies.

***Update: Working on IDP for every staff - contributions to the Division and strengths and weaknesses.

Strategy 11: DBVI will explore outreach strategies to increase applicants and diversify the DBVI caseload.

Goal and Priority Areas: 3 and 7

Actions:

- Each DBVI region will create an outreach plan for the year.

***Update: Rutland has a plan. Use Rutland model. Seizing opportunities.

- The job developer in Burlington will use an additional 5-hours/week to build relationships with community groups of minority populations.

Strategy 12: DBVI staff will have the tools to deliver services quickly to DBVI customers.

Goal and Priority Areas: 1

Actions:

- DBVI will explore the use of purchasing laptops for staff to do their job more efficiently.
- DBVI will explore professional development opportunities with the TACE Center.

Strategy 13: DBVI will implement strategies designed to enable DBVI customers to access higher wage employment through short-term training.

Goal and Priority Areas: 1, 2, 3, & 8

Actions:

- Evaluate the impact of progressive employment on outcomes.
- Track education and training opportunities that lead to degrees or credentials.
- Establish working relationships with Vocational Tech Centers and track participation.

***Update: Montpelier had a client get a nursing certificate thorough Lamoille Voc Center.

***Update: We will set-up database of people who obtain certificates.

Strategy 14: DBVI will implement activities designed to reduce the number of individuals who are closed in a status 28 (not employed).

Goal and Priority Areas: 1, and 3

Actions:

- DBVI will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of status 28 closures to identify any specific trends or issues that DBVI needs to address.

Strategy 15: DBVI will partner with the Vermont Department of Labor to provide employment training options for dual DBVI/DOL customers.

Goal and Priority Areas: 3 & 8

Actions:

- DBVI will establish a system for tracking participation of DBVI customers who utilize DOL services and training.
- DBVI will work with CWS local teams and DOL to obtain employment needs of companies and then match DBVI customers with specific training.

***Update: CWS meets regularly with DOL.

- DBVI will invite DOL to a staff meeting to discuss collaboration ideas.

Strategy 16: DBVI will provide technology training for people who need to prepare for a job or succeed at a current job.

Goal and Priority Areas: 2 & 3

Actions:

- DBVI will problem solve to make job sites accessible through technology training. Use a team approach for a given situation including customer, job developer, counselor, job site technology evaluation, and training.
- DBVI will increase the number of people who use the training service to make the crossover to Windows 7 and Office 2010 using Tandem and Go-To-Manage as a training tool.
- DBVI will educate customers about Tandem and Go-To-Manage by putting training examples on the website including mp3 recordings and success stories.
- DBVI will assist customers to continuously improve work related technology skills like using the internet, Microsoft Office, M312, and Adobe documents so they can do their job in the most efficient way.
- DBVI will create a system for establishing technology training goals that are adjusted quarterly as necessary.

Attachment 4.11 (b): Annual Estimate of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Service -- DBVI

Working Age Adults

Using numbers from the 2010 Prevalence report from the American Foundation for the Blind, DBVI estimates that there are approximately 6,024 Vermonters of working age (18-64) who are blind or severely visually impaired (meaning even with correction they are not able to easily read the newspaper). DBVI provides RSA defined services to approximately 6.4 % of these individuals annually (384 in FFY11).

Caseload Activity and Cost of Services

Total number of Individuals and Expenditures for Services (from RSA 2):

FFY 2011—373 individuals received purchased services for cost of \$556,959 (Excludes Post Employment)

FFY 2012--384 individuals received purchased services for cost of \$692,733 (Excludes Post Employment)

FFY 2013--

New Applications (RSA 113):

FFY 2011—88

FFY 2012—111

FFY 2013—106 (76 through 6-6-13)

Services Provided by DBVI Personnel (from RSA 2):

Assessment, Counseling, Guidance, and Placement

FFY 2011--\$784,571

FFY 2012--\$805,115

FFY 2013—

Number of Employment Plans Developed (RSA 113):

FFY 2011—83

FFY 2012—106

FFY 2013—100 (estimate)

Achieve Employment Outcome (RSA 113)

FFY 2011—69

FFY 2012—68

FFY 2013—70 (estimate)

Competitively Employed:

FFY 2011—49

FFY 2012—53

FFY 2013—54 (estimate)

Supported Employment

FFY 2011—4

FFY 2012—10

FFY 2013—10 (estimate)

Total Section 110 Funds Expended on Service (RSA 2):

FFY 2011—\$561,317

FFY 2012—\$630,236

FFY 2013—\$