

Illinois Department of Human Services

Division of Rehabilitation Services

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program  
and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment  
Services Program

DRAFT DOCUMENT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

June 6, 2011

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DHS Secretary

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**NOTE: Comments on this plan may be directed to [russ.patterson@illinois.gov](mailto:russ.patterson@illinois.gov) prior to close of business on June 28, 2011.**

## **Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services maintains a considerable number of Third Party Agreements with other units of government, primarily school districts. These Third Party Agreements are designed to increase the availability of vocational rehabilitation services to specific populations of people with disabilities. DRS has a contract with each entity that is consistent with Federal regulations (34CFR361.26) and includes the following provisions: (a) the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided are identified; (b) the local agency assures that non-Federal funds are made available to DRS; (c) the local agency assures that DRS approval is required before services are provided; and (d) the local agency assures that all other State plan requirements, including the Order of Selection policy, are applied to persons receiving services through the agreement.

The following is a list of the Third Party Agreements now in place.

### 1. William Rainey Harper College

The purpose of this agreement is to provide post-secondary training to students in northern Cook County with hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and other disabilities who are eligible for VR program services. The college is a two-year community college, which serves the northern part of Cook County. It is located in Palatine, Illinois.

### 2. The Evaluation and Development Center

The purpose of this agreement with the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is to provide a continuing program of rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in Southern Illinois. This agreement provides evaluation and placement, independent living, residential, information and referral, and rehabilitation engineering services to customers eligible for services from the VR program. This program primarily serves the Illinois counties of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Perry, Saline, Williamson, and Union.

### 3. Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP)

The purpose of this program is to provide rehabilitation services for customers who are still in secondary school. DRS has 146 contractual arrangements with school districts and cooperatives throughout the state. Of that number 136 are third-party contracts and 10 are not. These arrangements resulted in VR services being provided to approximately 15,500 students during FY2011. STEP services typically include: classroom instruction that provides opportunities for career exploration and the development of job readiness skills; independent living and community mobility skills training; and multiple work experiences in both school and community-based work sites. DRS anticipates that approximately 16,000 students will be served in the STEP program in FY2012.

List of School Districts and Cooperatives with  
Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) Contracts

**Third-Party STEP Contracts**

Alton Community School District #11  
Alton, IL

Anna Jonesboro Community High School  
Anna, IL

Belleville Township High School District 201  
Belleville, IL

Bethalto Community Unit #8 Schools  
Bethalto, IL

Carlyle Community Unit #1  
Carlyle, IL

Collinsville Unit #10  
Collinsville, IL

East Alton - Wood River High School  
Wood River, IL

East St. Louis District #189  
East St. Louis, IL

Edwardsville Community Unit #7  
Edwardsville, IL

Frankfort Community High School  
West Frankfort, IL

Granite City School District #9  
Granite City, IL

Highland Community Schools District #5  
Highland, IL

JAMP Special Education Services  
Grand Chain, IL

Jersey Community Schools District #100  
Jerseyville, IL

Regional Office of Education - Madison County  
Edwardsville, IL

Mascoutah Community School District #19  
Mascoutah, IL

Mt. Vernon Township High School  
Mt. Vernon, IL

Nashville High School #99  
Nashville, IL

O'Fallon High School  
O'Fallon, IL

Perandoe Special Education District  
Red Bud, IL

South Eastern Special Education  
Ste. Marie, IL

Education Development Center of St. Clair County  
Belleville, IL

Triad Community Unit School District #2 (Educational Dev. Ctr)  
Troy, IL

Tri-County Special Education District  
Murphysboro, IL

Wabash & Ohio Valley Special Education District  
Carmi, IL

Williamson County Special Education District  
Marion, IL

Belvidere Community Unit School District #100  
Belvidere, IL

Bi-County Special Education Cooperative.  
Sterling, IL

Black Hawk Area Special Education District  
East Moline, IL

Bradley-Bourbonnais Community HS  
Bradley, IL

Canton Union School District #66  
Canton, IL

Community Unit School District #2 (Serena HS)  
Serena, IL

Dixon Unit School District #170, LCSEA  
Dixon, IL

Freeport School District #145  
Freeport, IL

Galesburg Community Unit School District 205 (Knox Warren)  
Galesburg, IL

Harlem Community Unit School District #122  
Machesney Park, IL

Henry-Senachwine Community Unit School District #5  
Henry, IL

Henry-Stark Special Education District c/o Kewanee HS  
Kewanee, IL

Kankakee School District #111  
Kankakee, IL

Kankakee Area Special Education Cooperative.  
Kankakee, IL

LaSalle County School District #160 (Seneca High School)  
Seneca, IL

LaSalle-Peru Township High School  
LaSalle, IL

Northwest Special Education Cooperative  
Freeport, IL

Ogle County Educational Cooperative  
Byron, IL

Ottawa Township High School District 140

Ottawa, IL

Peoria Public School District #150  
Peoria, IL

Princeton Township High School  
Princeton, IL

Putnam County Unit District 535  
Granville, IL

Rockford Public School. District #205  
Rockford, IL

Special Education Association of Peoria County  
Bartonville, IL

Special Education District of McHenry County  
Woodstock, IL

Streator Township High School  
Streator, IL

Sycamore Community Unit School District - Northwestern Illinois Association  
Sycamore, IL

Tazewell Mason County Special Education Association  
Pekin, IL

West Central Community Unit School District #235  
Biggsville, IL

Winnebago County Special Education Cooperative  
Rockton, IL

Woodford County Special Education Association  
Metamora, IL

Board of Education District U-46  
Elgin, IL

Community High School District 99  
Downers Grove, IL

Community Unit School District #155  
Crystal Lake, IL

Community School District 200  
Wheaton, IL

Community Unit School District #300  
Algonquin, IL

Community Unit School District 303 Mid-Valley Joint Agreement  
St. Charles, IL

DeKalb Community Unit District #428  
DeKalb, IL

DeKalb County Sp Ed Association  
DeKalb, IL

DuPage High School District #88  
Villa Park, IL

Easter Seals Therapeutic Day School  
Tinley Park, IL

Aurora East High School District #131  
Aurora, IL

Elmhurst Community Unit School District #205  
Elmhurst, IL

Fenton High School District #100  
Bensenville, IL

Glenbard Township H S District #87  
Glen Ellyn, IL

Indian Prairie Community Unit School District 204  
Aurora, IL

J. Sterling Morton High School  
Berwyn, IL

Joliet Township High School District 204  
Joliet, IL

Kendall County Sp Ed Cooperative  
Yorkville, IL

LaGrange Area Dept. of Special Ed  
LaGrange, IL

Lake Park High School  
Roselle, IL

Lincoln-Way Community High School  
New Lenox, IL

Lockport Area Special Education  
Lockport, IL

Marengo Community H S Dist #154  
Marengo, IL

Naperville Community Unit School District 203  
Naperville, IL

Peotone Community Unit School  
Peotone, IL

Plainfield Community Community School District 202  
Plainfield, IL

School Association for Special Education DuPage County  
Naperville, IL

Southern Will County Cooperative for Special Education  
Wilmington, IL

Sycamore Community School District 427  
Sycamore, IL

Valley View School District 365U  
Romeoville, IL

West Aurora School District #129  
Aurora, IL

AERO Special Education Cooperative  
Burbank, IL

Board of Education of City of Chicago  
Chicago, IL



Community High School District 218  
Oak Lawn, IL

Lansing School (ECHO/TIE Joint Agreement)  
South Holland, IL

Elmwood Park Community Unit School District 401  
Franklin Park, IL

Evanston Township High School  
Evanston, IL

Northfield Twp District #225 Glenbrook High School  
Glenview, IL

Lake Forest High School  
Lake Forest, IL

Leyden HS - Martin Enger School  
Northlake, IL

Maine Township High School District #207 TS 3<sup>rd</sup> party also has SEP contract  
Park Ridge, IL

Mannheim School District 83  
Franklin Park, IL

New Trier Township High School  
Winneka, IL

Niles Township District Special Education # 807  
Morton Grove, IL

Northern Suburban Special Education District  
Highland Park, IL

Northwest Suburban Special Education Org.  
Mount Prospect, IL

Oak Park River Forest High School  
Oak Park, IL

Proviso Township High School  
Maywood, IL

Ridgewood Community High School District 234 - Maple Park Academy  
Norridge, IL

Southwest Cook County Cooperative. Assoc. Special Education  
Oak Forest, IL

Special Education District of Lake County  
Gages Lake, IL

SPEED Special Education Joint Agreement #802  
Chicago Heights, IL

Thornton Twp High School District #205  
Harvey, IL

Township High School #113  
Highland Park, IL

Waukegan Community School District #60  
Waukegan, IL

Decatur Public Schools District #61  
Decatur, IL

Eastern IL Area Special Education (Matton)  
Charleston, IL

Educational SVC Reg. Office Champaign and Ford Counties  
Rantoul, IL

Ford County Special Education Cooperative  
Gibson City, IL

Franklin Community High School  
Franklin, IL

Iroquois Special Education Association  
Gilman, IL

Jacksonville High School  
Jacksonville, IL

Livingston Co. Special Services  
Pontiac, IL

Mid-State Special Education

Taylorville, IL

Quincy Public Schools (Special Education Adams County)  
Quincy, IL

Regional Office of Education (McLean-Dewitt)  
Normal, IL

Sangamon Area Special Education District  
Springfield, IL

Schulyer County Community Unit District 1  
Rushville, IL

Scott County Unit District 1  
Winchester, IL

Springfield School District 186  
Springfield, IL

Staunton Unit District 6  
Staunton, IL

Vermillion Association for Special Education  
Danville, IL

Villa Grove Community Unit 302  
Villa Grove, IL

West Central II Special Education Cooperative.  
Macomb, IL

**Non-Third Party STEP Contracts**

South Central Community Services  
Chicago, IL

The Cove School  
Northbrook, IL

Allendale Association  
Lake Villa, IL

Arlyn Day School  
Wilmette, IL

Beacon Therapeutic & Treatment Center  
Chicago, IL

Summit School  
East Dundee, IL

Larkin Center  
Elgin, IL

Nexus (Indian Oaks Academy)  
Manteno, IL

Bartlett Learning Center  
Bartlett, IL

Children's Home Association of Illinois  
Peoria, IL

## **Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System**

### General Information on Interagency Cooperation

Illinois DRS maintains cooperative agreements and working relationships with a wide variety of state, local and education entities that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DRS presently has over 25 interagency agreements in effect with other state agencies. DRS has a long-standing agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the provision of transition services to students with disabilities age 14 and older. This agreement is currently under review for the purposes of making extensive revisions in FY2012. Presently DRS provides VR services to over 15,000 students with disabilities each year through contracts with 146 school systems. DRS provides vocational rehabilitation services to another 3,000 high school students with disabilities outside of the contractual system. DRS also has agreements with 12 state universities and 36 community colleges in Illinois regarding funding for services to students who are VR customers.

DRS has contracts and working agreements with over 130 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve over 5,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services.

Illinois does not have an agency receiving a grant under part C of Title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians. Also, Illinois does not have a separate VR agency for individuals who are blind.

### State Use and Rural Development Programs

DRS does not presently have formal interagency agreements with state use programs operated within Illinois. The Department of Human Services Procurement Office, which coordinates purchasing activities, maintains procedures for purchasing from designated state use sources on behalf of the Department. DRS does not have formal interagency agreements with Rural Development Programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### Agreements with Components of the Workforce Investment System

Each DRS local office has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local one-stop workforce centers in their service area. The MOU process has been in place since 2001 and is well understood by all parties. The local office supervisor takes an active role in representing the VR program in the one-stop system, and is responsible for updating the MOU each year. The MOU detailed information on referral procedures when there is no physical VR program

presence at the one-stop center. When there is a VR presence at the center, the MOU describes the funding arrangements regarding utilization of the space and infrastructure costs. To the greatest extent possible, DRS prefers to make in-kind contributions to the one-stop center.

## **Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials**

### Cooperation with Education Officials

The DRS interagency agreement with the State Board of Education identifies financial roles and responsibilities for transition services. The overall responsibility for funding a student's educational program lies with the local education authority, with support from the State Board of Education. DRS provides funding for vocational rehabilitation services, both through the STEP program and through general VR caseloads. DRS has contracts with 146 school districts, of which 136 involve the use of school funds as VR matching funds. DRS coordinates and provides support for operational costs of regional Transition Planning Councils. DRS establishes qualifications for personnel it employs, and the State Board establishes qualifications for personnel working for school districts

In 2009 DRS developed a contract addendum for each school with a third-party contract. This addendum specified requirements relating to federal VR regulations that were not otherwise listed in the existing contract. This included language regarding compliance with the DRS order of selection policy, verification that only individuals who were applicants to or eligible for the VR program would be served, and a clarification of roles and responsibilities for school and DRS staff. While these addendums continue to remain in force for the 2011-2012 school year, a revised addendum will be developed for the 2012 school year to provide additional information on the responsibilities of each party.

DRS provides consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This is accomplished through a number of mechanisms. DRS has assigned qualified rehabilitation counselors to act as liaison to every high school in Illinois. A fundamental part of the liaison role is to provide consultation and technical assistance to educators involved in the transition process.

Transition Planning Councils in each area of the state work with school districts to identify students with disabilities needing transition services. Aggregate services needs are reported annually to the State Transition Council. Through the counselor liaison relationships, students with disabilities have ready access to the VR program. DRS counselors provide consultation regarding vocational services and provide general information on disability services available in the community. DRS also sponsors the Next Steps parent-training program to assist families in understanding their children's needs regarding transition services.

Illinois has a committee dedicated to transition issues, the Interagency Coordinating Council, that develops policy and establishes roles and responsibilities. DRS participates on the Council along with the State Board of Education and other state agencies involved in serving youth with disabilities. DRS also coordinates regional Transition Planning Councils, with school and community rehabilitation programs also participating. State law requires that transition planning begin at age 14 ½. DRS assists local schools in building a vocational focus as the student progresses through the school system. The Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP) is

funded by DRS and provides financial support for students with disabilities during the high school years. Participation in DRS services -- either through STEP or directly with a DRS VR counselor-- is included in the student's IEP, with most services provided by school personnel. After finishing school, most students are transferred to a regular DRS VR caseload, to pursue a vocational goal or post-secondary education

In 2005 DRS adopted a rule (89 Ill. Admin. Code 572.50 (c)) which states that all transition students served by the DRS vocational rehabilitation program must have an IPE developed as soon as possible, but no later than the last semester the student is expected to be in high school.

### Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education

In Illinois there is no single government agency responsible for the administration of higher education in the state. There are two agencies with regulatory responsibility for higher education in Illinois. The Illinois Board of Higher Education is responsible for regulating the activities of public and private colleges and universities in the state that offer four-year programs and graduate programs. The Illinois Community College Board has a similar role for two-year community colleges throughout the state. Because there is no single administrative entity, DRS must initiate individual agreements with each institution.

Since 2001 DRS has worked to develop cooperative working agreements with institutions of higher education that serve vocational rehabilitation program customers. The primary focus of the agreements has been arrangements for payment of auxiliary services and supports provided to students who are VR customers. In particular, the agreements have focused on payment for sign language interpreter services and computer-assisted real time captioning services for students who are deaf. While there are many other types of services involved in the agreements, these represent the highest cost services.

Consequently, DRS has pursued a strategy of a gradual reduction in financial support for auxiliary services to students with disabilities. In 2001 DRS developed a plan to reduce the VR share of auxiliary services to a maximum of 50 percent by 2004. DRS announced a statewide schedule in its 2007 State Plan that has not reached its conclusion, with DRS contributing no funds to pay for auxiliary services for students with disabilities in Illinois colleges and universities.

In 2009 DRS distributed agreements to each public institution of higher education in Illinois which reiterated the new policy, and which also specified the general categories of services VR will pay for, and provided a mechanism for dispute resolution. These agreements will continue to be in effect throughout the 2011-2012 school year.

It should be noted that there have been few disputes about payment for auxiliary aids and services since DRS began this process six years ago. It is DRS policy that no student be denied services due to a dispute between DRS and an institution of higher education. In such circumstances, DRS will pay for the auxiliary services and seek reimbursement from the institution at a later date.



## **Attachment 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

### **Non-Profit Rehabilitation Providers**

DRS has contractual agreements with non-profit rehabilitation providers to provide services to VR customers. DRS works with the Facilities Advisory Council consisting of provider representatives to discuss issues and identify service needs in an ongoing manner. Cooperative agreements with non-profit rehabilitation service providers are developed when necessary to specify responsibilities relating to a project. Development of such cooperative agreements are initiated by local office supervisor and completed with approval from the community resources division of DRS.

DRS has contracts and working agreements with over 130 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve over 5,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services.

## **Attachment 4.8(b)(4) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

### General Information

DRS has contracts and working agreements with not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve over 5,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS also has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services. DRS believes that supported employment services are generally available when needed for individuals with most significant disabilities.

### Supported Employment and Extended Services

DRS has a number of cooperative working agreements with community provider agencies to provide both supported employment and extended services to individuals with most significant disabilities. DRS has a standing committee of community rehabilitation programs known as the Facility Advisory Committee which meets regularly to discuss service arrangements, including but not limited to, supported employment and extended services. DRS believes that this group is the best mechanism for communicating with provider agencies and maintaining a grasp of the demand for these services. DRS also has an interagency cooperative team that involves the DHS Division of Mental Health to provide ongoing support services to individuals with serious mental illness.

In FY2012 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment activities. Supported employment services provided with Title VI-B funds: approximately 200 individuals, total funding \$1.1 million, approximately 25 provider agencies.. Supported employment provided with Title I funds: approximately 2,250 individuals, total funding \$4.5 million, approximately 40 provider agencies.

DRS will not be able to provide the same level of extended services as in the past, due to an elimination of state general revenue funding for this program. In state fiscal year 2011 \$1.04 million in state funds were used for extended services, with 47 provider agencies receiving contracts. In state fiscal year 2012 no state funds will be available for extended services.

DRS is working to identify other sources of funding for extended services. One possible source is Social Security funds which are designated as program income to DRS. It is unknown at this time what level of such funds will be available. DRS also intends to pursue funding arrangements with the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Mental Health. DRS will also work with community provider agencies to further emphasize the use of natural supports as an alternative to paid extended services.

DRS also intends to pursue ongoing changes in its supported employment program. In 2010 DRS issued a notice of changes to supported employment policy, emphasizing the need to limit the amount of time spent on pre-employment activities (known collectively as “job development”) and focus on gradual reduction in worksite support services through use of the support reduction plan portion of the IPE. It is expected that these changes will reduce the number of individuals expected to require paid extended services during the next two years, with a corresponding increase in the utilization of natural supports.

## **Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is dedicated to ensuring an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals are available. This is accomplished through the strong commitment to providing and making available training programs to all staff especially staff who provide direct services to individuals with disabilities

### **Personnel Data**

#### **Sufficiency of Current Staffing Levels**

DRS believes it has sufficient staff on hand to staff the VR program. Each staff category has a normal number of vacant positions, and DRS works aggressively to fill vacancies as soon as possible, in conjunction with DHS personnel managers. There has been little growth in the overall VR caseload in the last several years, which means that DRS has sufficient staff available to serve people with disabilities meeting its order of selection policy, and has the capacity to fill vacant positions to continue to meet that level of need.

DRS has 223 VR counselors with 14 vacant positions, and 25 rehabilitation and mobility instructors, with one vacant position. These staff are supported by rehabilitation case coordinators, of which DRS has 141 on hand with 12 vacant positions. Therefore of these key positions only about seven percent are vacant, which is a manageable level that does not present a significant challenge to identify replacement staff.

Specialty counselor positions have a slightly higher vacancy rate, but one that still allows DRS to provide services to select populations. DRS has 25 counselors certified to communicate in sign language and four vacancies in this category, as well as 27 counselors fluent in Spanish, and three vacancies in that category.

Remaining positions in the VR system have very few vacancies. The job titles of field office supervisor, field support unit staff, business enterprise for the blind program staff, central office staff and management personnel (bureau chiefs and assistant bureau chiefs) have only one or no vacancies in each title.

### **Caseload Data**

The 223 VR counselors on staff had an average caseload of 129 individuals as of May 31, 2011, with a statewide total of 28,816 active cases and a total of 40,135 served during the preceding 11 months. The 24 rehabilitation and mobility instructors on staff had an average caseload of 27 individuals and a statewide total of 649 active cases and a total of 987 served during the preceding 11 months. This is consistent with historical patterns and represents a manageable number of cases given the number of staff on hand.

### **Projected Number of Replacement Staff in Next Five Years**

DRS does not anticipate an retirement incentives or other circumstances that would result in increased staff departures during the next five years. The average age of counseling staff is much lower than it was prior to the last retirement incentive program in 2002, so it is expected that there will be a fairly regular replacement rate for staff during the next five years.

The number of staff on hand and projected annual number of replacements by title are: rehabilitation counselors 223 (15 projected replacements); rehabilitation case coordinators 124 (10) ; rehabilitation and mobility instructors 24 (2); field office supervisors 38 (4); field office administrative support 14 (2); field support unit staff 22 (2); business enterprise program for the blind staff 12 (1); central office staff 62 (5); bureau chiefs 2 (0); assistant bureau chiefs 5 (1).

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Rehabilitation counselors	238	15	75
2	Rehabilitation case coordinators	136	12	50
3	Rehabilitation and mobility instructions	27	3	10
4	Field office supervisors	41	3	20
5	Field office administrative support	17	3	10
6	Field support unit staff	25	3	10
7	Business enterprise program for the blind staff	12	0	5
8	Central office staff	66	4	25
9	Bureau chiefs	2	1	1
10	Assistant bureau chiefs	7	3	3

#### University Training Program Data

#### Illinois Rehabilitation Education Programs

The five CORE accredited counselor education programs located in Illinois are:

Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; Northern

Illinois University, DeKalb; Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; University of Illinois, Champaign

### Enrollment and Expected Graduates

The total enrollment in the MA programs in rehabilitation counseling at the five universities for the 2010-2011 academic year was 167. This represents a small increase from 162 in the previous school year.. The number of graduates decreased markedly from 59 in the 2009-2010 school year to 37 for the 2010-2011 school year. The estimated replacement rate for DRS counselors is 15 per year. While many of these graduates will choose not to work for DRS, DRS believes that these programs make a significant contribution to its ability to hire new staff and replace staff who leave DRS. In Illinois graduates with an MA in rehabilitation counseling who pursue CRC certification are eligible to become licensed as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) through the State of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	University of Illinois	6	0	0	1
2	Southern Illinois University	66	0	0	11
3	Northern Illinois University	25	4	0	7
4	Northeastern Illinois University	23	0	0	6
5	Illinois Institute of Technology	47	0	0	12

## Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

### Recruitment and Retention

Each year DRS estimates the number of staff needed to operate the VR program, particularly the number of rehabilitation counselors needed. In addition, DRS works with university programs to estimate the number of students graduating from the programs. DRS has strengthened its relationships with the five university programs providing master's degree training for rehabilitation counselors, through formation of the University Coordinator's Meeting which currently meets twice a year to discuss educational needs, hiring practices and internships.

DRS has surveyed the five university programs and has information on the expected number of graduates each year. This information is analyzed in relation to administration estimates of the

number of rehabilitation counselor positions that will need to be filled in the next year. In the last 12 months DRS has hired 14 new VR counselors.

Based on the information available from the university programs and the number of applications for posted vacancies, DRS believes that there are adequate numbers of qualified personnel available to fill all needed rehabilitation counselor positions.

The newest counselor-training program was established in 2005 at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). The program is available to all students but especially focuses on Hispanic enrollments. DRS administration has been in frequent communication with the new NEIU program, and has arranged for a presentation to the faculty and students. DRS has made several presentations to program staff and students regarding employment with our agency.

DRS actively recruits minority individuals and individuals with disabilities for rehabilitation counselor and other positions. The Department of Human Services personnel unit works with DRS to publicize available positions in DRS, attending numerous job fairs likely focusing on minority students and students with disabilities. The State of Illinois has recruiting policies, which assist minority individuals in obtaining employment in key positions, and also encourages training and education for current employees. State policy also encourages the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DRS worked with the state personnel agency to create a position dedicated to monitoring and assisting with the hiring of persons with disabilities in state jobs.

In addition to recruitment, DRS works actively to promote the retention of individuals with disabilities and individuals from minority backgrounds. These efforts include those sponsored by the Department of Human Services, of which DRS is a part, as well as through other state government organizations and membership associations. The purpose of these activities is to facilitate the training and professional development of staff from these populations, to promote understanding of the need for a diverse workforce, and to encourage the participation of staff in a variety of cooperative efforts aimed at making a contribution to the organization.

These efforts include: (a) the Upward Mobility program, which is designed to further the careers of state employees from minority backgrounds as well as individuals with disabilities. This program provides support for a variety of training and educational opportunities for staff during the course of their employment with the state. (b) the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, which engages state employees with disabilities in activities related to promoting the hiring and career advancement of people with disabilities. DRS administration is closely involved in the operations of the ICED. (c) The Illinois Association of Minorities in Government sponsors an annual conference addressing issues of concern to state employees from minority backgrounds. Each year DRS sponsors the attendance of staff to attend the IAMG conference. (d) the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees also holds an annual conference, which focuses on state employees from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. DRS sponsors staff to attend this conference each year. DRS believes that its sponsorship of attendance at these conferences and encouragement of membership in these organizations is a positive step in promoting a diverse workforce and a means of ensuring a high rate of job retention among its employees with disabilities and employees from minority backgrounds.

## Internships

DRS has informal agreements with the five rehabilitation counselor training programs in the state to provide internship and practicum placement options for graduate students. At present DRS is not able to offer paid internships to counseling students. We continue to provide unpaid internships whenever possible, both to support the universities and students as well as to provide a job preview to students interested in working for DRS when they complete their training.

## Strategies for Retaining, Recruiting and Hiring Personnel

DRS uses several strategies to recruit, hire and retain rehabilitation personnel. Key elements are promotion and publicizing the VR program, locating job candidates, monitoring the state hiring process, and identifying methods to encourage retention of staff.

The University Coordinator Committee is composed of representatives from the five rehabilitation education programs in the state. DRS administrators meet twice a year with this committee to develop an understanding of the current training capacity of the programs, and to facilitate communication about DRS hiring practices and vacancies. DRS works with the DHS personnel unit to conduct outreach activities to individuals who may be interested in state employment. DHS maintains a regular schedule of job fairs, community events and recruitment initiatives that include a focus on hiring minority individuals.

DRS offers unpaid internship and practicum opportunities in its field offices to graduate students from the five rehabilitation education programs. These are arranged with the university faculty and DRS administrators as needed. DRS also has begun making presentations to undergraduate students to expose them to the field of vocational rehabilitation and provide them with information on graduate rehabilitation education programs.

DRS has an ongoing team composed of staff and administrators that focuses on issues related to hiring and retention of qualified staff. This group attempts to identify strategies that motivate staff to continue their employment, including rewards and recognition for high-level performance.

## **Personnel Standards**

State Degree Standard. For several years, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has had the requirement for all new counselors of a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. The Master's degree requirement for DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors is supported by state licensing categories as well. The applicable licensing requirement in the state is for a "Licensed Professional Counselor" license, which is issued by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. This license is a generic counseling license and is not specifically for vocational rehabilitation counselors. The license requires a Master's degree in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, psychology or related field. For purposes of the



Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), the requirement of a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field will be considered the state standard.

Completion of 1998 Goal. On October 1, 2008 DRS completed its 10-year plan to implement its degree standard for all rehabilitation counselors employed by the agency. All counselors now meet the standard.

Counselor Participation in Graduate Education. DRS no longer is involved in providing graduate training for rehabilitation counselors. DRS does assist staff hired as social service career trainees (SSCT) with the cost of graduate training to reach the state degree standard. These individuals are employed to serve specialty caseloads and must demonstrate fluency in either Spanish or American Sign Language. They are hired as trainees without meeting the state standard and are allowed four years to complete a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. During that time they do not perform any of the non-delegable functions of a qualified rehabilitation counselor.

DRS uses a computer data base for tracking the progress of each staff person employed as a SSCT. The DRS personnel unit maintains ongoing contact with each SSCT and keeps a record of all courses taken and credits earned in his or her graduate training program. Individuals must make progress that will enable them to complete their MA degree in 48 months, and are terminated if it is determined that they cannot complete course requirements in the remaining time. SSCT staff must also obtain positive performance reviews from the field office supervisor and participate in required inservice training throughout their term of training.

#### Hiring of Individuals Not Meeting the State Standard

DRS hires individuals who do not meet the state degree standard only when the individual has a language skill that will meet the needs of VR customers and when an individual with such skills who also meets the degree standard is not available. DRS hires Social Service Career Trainees who have a bachelor's degree in counseling or social services and who can demonstrate fluency in Spanish or in American Sign Language. DRS has experienced ongoing difficulties in hiring individuals with Master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling who also possess these language skills. Therefore, DRS has chosen to hire trainees with language skills who can work effectively with VR customers while pursuing a Master's degree.

Individuals hired as Social Service Career Trainees attend graduate school at DRS expense and are required to obtain a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling within 48 months of the date they are hired. DRS provides assistance in identifying a graduate program and allows for flexible work hours to attend classes.

#### Counselor Data by Degree Status and Trainee Status

DRS employs 74 individuals with a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling: 65 of these are certified rehabilitation counselors and nine are counselor trainees. DRS employs 146 individuals with Master's degrees in a field closely related to rehabilitation counseling: 141 of these are certified rehabilitation counselors and five are counselor trainees. DRS employs three individuals

as social service career trainees who do not have a Master's degree and are currently in graduate training. SSCT staff are not qualified rehabilitation counselors. Their work must be signed off by the office supervisor who meets the qualifications of the CSPD.

## **Staff Development**

The DRS Staff Development Section (SDS) oversees the needs assessment, development, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all training programs offered within DRS. SDS has three full-time trainers and a manager position that is currently vacant, in addition to three support staff. SDS is responsible for providing training to DRS VR staff as well as coordinating training from other sources and maintaining the training data base which tracks the number of training hours for each staff person.

Training Requirements. All DRS staff are expected to participate in training events annually. Annual employee performance evaluations are designed to include training needs and expectations as identified by both the employee and the supervisor. Certain train events sponsored by DRS are mandated for attendance by staff in particular titles, such as rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators.

SDS both initiates new training activities and responds to specific requests for training from DRS administrators and field office supervisors. SDS coordinates the New Employee Orientation (NEO) training in which each new DRS staff person participates in the first months of his or her employment. This includes an overview of agency policies as well as a review of how the VR program operates in Illinois.

While the NEO training is conducted centrally, nearly all other training is conducted in local offices or at convenient locations around the state to save on travel costs. In many cases, training events are provided at the initiation of field office supervisors or regional administrators in response to local concerns. DRS has initiated a proposal to secure funding for additional distance learning opportunities, both for staff convenience and to reduce travel expenses.

The training courses provided in the last year include:

- Eligibility, Assessment and Plan (EAP) training.
- VR Appeals Process Training
- VR College Case Policy Training
- Case Note training
- Interviewing the VR Customer
- Individual Placement and Support Service Model
- On-the-Job Training and Evaluation
- Managing Diversity
- Platinum Customer Service (World Class Customer Service)
- Informed Choice in VR
- Supported Employment
- Intensive Job Development and Job Placement Training (required of all counselors)

## Ongoing Staff Development

DRS provides ongoing training to staff in all areas of counseling, including counseling and guidance. All staff are required to take a five-day New Employee Orientation training course that focuses on the role of the counselor in the counseling relationship. A major emphasis is placed on role-playing various situations where counseling and guidance skills are used. Another major emphasis is on assessment of the individual's rehabilitation needs, beginning with the initial interview.

Placement skills are emphasized in training activities including regional meetings held annually, as well as on-site training in field offices. Training focuses on job development skills, communication with employers and preparing customers for job interviews. Job placement assistance is also provided to counselors through relationships with Employment Resource Specialist (ERS) staff located around the state. Each field office has an ERS assigned to assist counselors with job placement concerns. ERS staff can also act as a companion to the counselor on the computerized case management system, sharing information and making case notes to promote effective job placement.

DRS makes training available in rehabilitation technology to all staff. DRS employs rehabilitation technology specialists who provide on-site consultation to counselors and assist them in developing plans for provision of rehabilitation technology to VR customers. DRS also has contractual staff who focus on rehabilitation technology issues and provide on-site training and consultation. DRS works in conjunction with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project, the state's AT grant recipient, to promote understanding of rehabilitation technology needs and identification of technology resources. DRS makes use of the rehabilitation technology program at the University of Illinois at Chicago as both a training resource and a service provider for VR customers.

Dissemination of Research Materials to Staff. DRS makes use of its intranet system to provide linkages to research sources and other new information relating to the field of rehabilitation. DRS also maintains a close relationship with the Illinois Rehabilitation Association (IRA) including providing assistance in sponsoring the IRA annual conference. The IRA conference features presentations on new developments in the rehabilitation field including presentations on research from university professionals as well as rehabilitation practitioners. Staff are encouraged to become members of the IRA and NRA and therefore receive the NRA's professional publication Journal of Rehabilitation. In addition, key categories of staff such as rehabilitation counselors for the deaf and mental health specialist counselors, participate in regional and statewide groups that share current research relevant to their fields of study. The DRS initiative in evidenced-based services for persons with mental illness (also known as individual placement and support services) involves sharing research findings in a structured way with staff.

## Training Technology

In 2006 DRS received a five-year training grant from RSA to support staff development in terms of leadership, casework procedures, and World Class Customer Service. Total funding for the

grant is approximately \$600,000. In addition application was made to RSA for a Quality Project, which outlines a program for new employee orientation and veteran employee refresher to casework policy and procedure. As a part of the Quality Project a Checkpoint procedure has been developed which includes a modular, self-paced format (to be concluded within one year) to monitor employee progress and understanding of policies and procedures. In addition, DRS has applied for funds to facilitate use of distance learning technology in conjunction with the community college network. This will enable DRS to provide training around the state while reducing travel expenses and increasing access to training for staff in more remote locations.

## **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.

### **Communication with Diverse Populations**

DRS maintains rehabilitation counseling staff with expertise in communicating with diverse populations. A group of Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) are employed throughout the state. These individuals are fluent in sign language and conversant with deaf culture, and provide the full range of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are deaf. The Bureau of Blind Services employs rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation instructors who are professionally qualified to provide rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. DRS strongly encourages the use of Braille as part of training for individuals who are blind. In addition, rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators are employed who are qualified to communicate with individuals whose primary language is Spanish. Staff are tested in order to qualify for bilingual positions.

At times, DRS has difficulty locating staff who meet the degree requirements for a rehabilitation counselor and who also speak Spanish or are fluent in sign language. As noted above, DRS policy allows individuals with these skills to be employed as Social Service Career Trainees if they have the relevant communication skills and are enrolled in a graduate program that will enable them to meet the degree standard and become a rehabilitation counselor. A relatively new option for DRS is the counselor training program at Northeastern Illinois University, which was established in order to train individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English.

DRS also works with individuals whose primary language is one other than English, Spanish or sign language. While the numbers of such individuals is relatively small, it is equally important to be able to communicate effectively with them about their rehabilitation needs. The Illinois Department of Human Services maintains a computerized resource directory, which includes information on translation services for a variety of languages, including Polish, Vietnamese and Arabic among others. DRS counselors can link with these resources to provide translation services. DRS has also piloted the use of a telephone-based translation service which can provide

instant translations in over 100 languages and which requires only the use of two telephones. When professional translators are not available, DRS works with family members or volunteer translators from community or religious organizations who can assist the individual.

## **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.

### Coordination of the CSPD and Inservice Training

Relationship to IDEA DRS staff provide services annually to thousands of young people with disabilities, most of whom receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Approximately 15,00 young people participate in the Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP), which provides work experience during the high school years. The Next Steps program provides advocacy training to parents of students with disabilities. Part of the Next Steps training program includes providing information on the importance of transition planning.

DRS staff who work with high school students participate in training offered by the Illinois State Board of Education and its Transition Systems Change project. DRS maintains an administrative liaison position with the State Board to facilitate communication about transition issues, including available training options. Also, DRS has staff who serve on the Education of Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee.

There is no direct connection between DRS training efforts and the personnel development plan under IDEA. DRS staff are closely involved in the statewide network of Transition Planning Councils (TPCs), which consist of rehabilitation and education professionals, as well as employers and school administrators. The purpose of the TPCs is to facilitate transition from school to work and to identify local issues that affect transition. DRS staff are involved with the schools in their communities and frequently attend training events sponsored by schools.

Relationship to Inservice Grant DRS training is based on its needs assessment and the leadership of its administration. The RSA inservice training grant is used to fund much of the training needed by DRS staff. Other grant opportunities are sought out as they become available. Two separate proposals have been submitted for training related to graduate education for targeted rehabilitation counselors, for example. In addition, state funds are requested each year based on the anticipated training needs.

The focus of the most recent inservice grant is on casework procedure with new training opportunities being offered in the following areas: state and federal VR program regulations; casework practices in the areas of assessment, IPE development, and documentation; the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance benefits system;

supported employment; and medical aspects of disability.

The in-service training grant also focuses on the necessity for the Director, key administrators and other identified presenters as determined by the needs assessment to hold semi-annual regional meetings for all staff and supervisory meetings three times per year.

#### State Rehabilitation Council

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is actively involved in DRS training. Staff Development Section staff make presentations to SRC on relevant training topics at the request of SRC. In addition, an SDS staff member serves as staff liaison to the SRC. SRC also makes recommendations to DRS regarding training issues it considers relevant. SRC staff have participated in meetings with university personnel related to graduate training issues. In this forum, the SRC representative has the opportunity to raise training issues directly with senior administrators and university program administrators.

## **Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment**

### Results of the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs

#### Comprehensive Needs Assessment Background

The DRS comprehensive needs assessment is conducted every three years. In 2010 a series of data collection activities was undertaken to provide a new focus for evaluating the needs of VR customers in the state. The comprehensive needs assessment was conducted jointly by DRS and the State Rehabilitation Council. The statewide needs assessment was completed in FY2010 and the next comprehensive needs assessment will be completed in FY2013.

#### Overview of Needs Assessment Activities

The 2010 needs assessment activities included surveys of the following groups: (a) a sample of current and former VR customers; (b) all community provider agencies with a financial agreement with DRS; (c) all school districts involved in the STEP program; (d) DRS council members and other stakeholders; and (e) DRS staff. The sample of VR customers was stratified to insure inclusion of individuals with low-incidence disabilities, individuals from minority backgrounds and individuals with most significant disabilities. Members of each of these groups has a different perspective on the service needs of people with disabilities in Illinois.

In addition, DRS held a series of four community forums around the state to solicit input on local service needs and the future direction of the Illinois VR program. In the past DRS has found the community forum format to be a productive means of engaging with stakeholders.

#### Demographic Information

DRS has analyzed demographic data from a number of sources to obtain a perspective on trends that are likely to have an impact on the operation of the VR program. Illinois is a state with low population growth, with the overall population growing by only 3.3 percent from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. In part, this is due to a negative rate of domestic migration, that is, more people move out of the state than move into the state. This has been offset by international migration, particularly in the Chicago metropolitan area. While the overall birth rate in Illinois remains around the national average, the birth rate among persons themselves born outside the U.S. is significantly higher and the source of primary population growth excluding immigration. Overall the Latino population in Illinois is the only notable source of population growth, with declines or negligible growth noted for other population groups. The very low average age of the Latino population means that the greatest impact on the adult VR services system will not be felt for several years.

The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2008 (released in 2009)

presents a problem for estimating the needs of people with disabilities. Due to a change in the questions asked of ACS respondents, the overall proportion of working age individuals with a disability declined from 9.9 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2008. For the most part this was due to eliminating a question about “employment disability”, that is, asking respondents if they had a physical or mental condition that interfered with their ability to work at a job or business. In addition, wording of other questions was changed and the overall estimate of people with disabilities was lowered.

The 2007 ACS estimate was around 830,581 individuals aged 16-64 with a disability, while the 2008 estimate was 675,300 persons in that age group with a disability, a reduction of 155,300 persons. It can be assumed that the reduced estimate would not affect the overall estimate of persons likely to need VR services, since those individuals are likely to have been counted in either survey formulation. The 2008 survey found that around 370,000 individuals reported one type of disability, while around 306,000 reported two or more types of disabilities. These individuals can be presumed to be more likely to need VR services in order to be employed.

Using the ACS disability prevalence rates and the 2010 Census population values, the number of working age individuals (18 to 64) with a disability is estimated to be 665,096, a rate of 8.22 percent with any type of reported disability. For the 16 to 64 age group, the number of persons with a disability is estimated to be 679,903. Of the number, 305,993 are estimated to have two or more disabling conditions, an indication of the significance of disability as it relates to possible participation in the vocational rehabilitation program.

The 2008 ACS survey found that only around 40 percent of working age individuals with a disability were employed, compared to 78 percent of working age individuals who do not have a disability were employed. In other words, individuals with a disability in Illinois are only half as likely to be employed as those who do not have a disability. This is consistent with previous Census surveys and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Other data sources consulted included the Cornell University disability statistics center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention risk assessment survey. These rely to a greater or lesser extent on Census surveys, including the ACS. The Cornell data is useful for comparison of Illinois to other states. Overall the rate of disability in these data sets suggests that the rate of disability in Illinois is somewhat lower than in other states.

In summary, Illinois is a state with slow growth and a population of persons with disabilities that is fairly stable in size. While this suggests that demand for service is unlikely to increase significantly in the near future, it is worrisome that the employment rate for people with disabilities is declining in Illinois, particularly the rate of year-round, full-time employment. Individuals in the latter category are most likely to achieve self-sufficiency, and persons who lose such employment would be highly likely to seek VR services in order to return to work.

#### Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

DRS collected survey data on individuals with a primary disability of intellectual disability, mental illness, and brain injury since these individuals are very likely to be classified as having a



most significant disability, and constitute the overwhelming majority of individuals who receive supported employment services. Survey results indicated that the most urgent needs were for job placement (45.4% rated as “need now”), vocational training (35.9%), job coaching or supported employment (36.7%) and on-the-job training (36.8%). There was less interest in assistive technology (12.1%) or self-employment (14.1%), and moderate interest in benefits planning services (22.9%).

In addition, an analysis was conducted of all customer responses to the needs assessment survey, with 892 individuals responding. Respondents were grouped according to the number of disabling conditions reported, comparing persons indicating only one condition to those reporting two or more. Results of this analysis were mixed. In some instances, individuals reporting one condition reported a higher level of need than did those reporting multiple conditions. For example, persons reporting a single condition indicated a more urgent need for college training services (36.2% “need now”) than did individuals reporting multiple conditions (20.04%). In most other instances, however, individuals reporting multiple conditions indicated a more urgent need. This included: vocational counseling (32.6% vs. 26.8%); job coaching (33.5% vs. 22.1%); assistive technology (27.3% vs. 15.8%); and advocacy (34.9% vs. 18.7%). This suggests that survey respondents were reporting a level of need consistent with their reported disabilities, with individuals having more disabling conditions having more urgent service needs.

DRS proposes to address these needs in several ways. First is through our ongoing efforts to maximize the availability of supported employment services. From 1998 to 2002 DRS implemented a major expansion of supported employment services, and has since maintained that level of effort. Utilizing for targeted SEP funds as well as general VR funds, DRS provided supported employment services to 2,700 individuals with most significant disabilities. While few respondents to the needs assessment surveys used the term “supported employment”, our experience suggests that this service option is the most flexible means of addressing the needs of this population. Also, the DRS Quality Assurance unit has conducted an ongoing study of supported employment service cases in order to identify patterns of successful service provision.

Another method of addressing the needs of the most significantly disabled population is the use of benefits planning services, now known as work incentives planning and assistance (WIPA) services. DRS has coordinated the provision of WIPA services in most counties in the state, and works in close cooperation with other benefits entities to assist VR customers in the management of Social Security and Medicaid benefits while they are working. This includes training for individuals with disabilities and an emphasis on the use of PASS plans to promote independence.

In addition, DRS continues to work in cooperation with the network of centers for independent living to coordinate necessary independent living services for VR customers. This includes the ongoing effort to assist individuals with most significant disabilities in moving out of nursing facilities and into their own homes in the community. This is accomplished through contractual relationships between DRS and independent living centers around the state. DRS also works to increase the number of persons in the VR program who also participate in independent living or home care programs.

## Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Who Are Minorities

Analysis of results of the 2010 needs assessment surveys show that individuals who are minorities with disabilities expressed a stronger need for services and indicated a lower availability of services, than did respondents who were not from a minority group. This resulted from a consistently higher usage of the “need now” rating category among minority respondents. This difference was statistically significant, although there were no significant differences among the various minority groups in their survey ratings. The rankings of service needs for minority and white customers were nearly identical, however, presenting a challenge for interpreting the results. Although the minority customers expressed a more urgent need, the services they indicating needing were ranked the same as for non-minority customers.

Respondents expressed a stronger need for most services compared to non-minority respondents. These include: job placement services (51.6% rated as “need now”), vocational evaluation (36.3%), vocational training (45.2%) transportation (36.5%), job coaching (34.9%), supported employment (40.1%) and on-the-job training (51.3%). Overall, minority respondents utilized the “need now” rating category for 37.4 percent of their responses, compared to 16.5 percent of responses from non-minority respondents.

Statistical data from the Census and from DRS service data indicate that the minority population is increasing at a faster rate than the general population, and therefore DRS anticipates that the proportion of minority individuals with disabilities in the VR program will increase in the near future. The growth of the Latino population is a consistent phenomenon that can be observed in all areas of the state, including less densely populated areas in the south.

DRS will address these needs in several ways. First, DRS has developed a set of monthly and quarterly data reports that provide information on employment outcomes, rehabilitation rates and average case expenditures for customers from different racial and ethnic groups. A new report in 2010 provides data at the statewide, regional and office level for the RSA service rate ratio. Second, DRS local offices will include outreach goals as part of local office plans developed for the ongoing organizational transformation effort. Finally, DRS participates in efforts coordinated by the Department of Human Services that aim to improve communication with minority individuals and communities in Illinois, including individuals who speak languages other than English and Spanish, and who may be immigrants.

The population in Illinois grew significantly for three demographic categories: persons who are Hispanic or Latino, persons of Asian backgrounds, and persons classified as multiracial. The Latino population grew 33 percent overall and 31 percent among those aged 17 or younger, while the Asian population grew by 38 percent overall and 32 percent among those aged 17 or younger. The multiracial category increased by 20 percent overall and by 44 percent among persons aged 17 or younger.

DRS intends to develop an initiative to identify additional individuals in both the Latino and Asian categories during the next two years. It is important for DRS to be able to respond to population growth in a meaningful way and make the VR program available to individuals who can benefit from services.

## Needs of Individuals Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program

The needs assessment survey attempted to identify individuals who are deaf-blind by sampling individuals classified as blind and individuals classified as deaf. Individuals from either group who subsequently identified as having a second sensory impairment were included. A total of 18 individuals were included in the deaf-blind respondent group. Most of the individuals tended to give relatively low urgency ratings. As a group they were more likely than other groups to use the rating category “may need in the future”. The greatest level of need indicated by respondents in this group was for assistive technology (52.1% indicating a need), advocacy (44.8%) and job placement (38.4%). Further investigation will be needed into the relatively low ratings of service needs by this group.

In 2011 DRS held two major training sessions for staff to increase knowledge of the deaf-blind population and increase skills in working with this population. Specialists from the Helen Keller National Center came to Illinois to conduct the training for counselors specializing in serving deaf and blind customers. DRS typically assigns deaf-blind customers to deaf specialist counselors, who consult with blind services staff in developing a service plan.

DRS will address the needs of these groups through continuing efforts that target specific disability groups. In 2006 DRS began providing an ongoing program of training in the medical aspects of rehabilitation to all counseling staff, both as a refresher course as well as an update on disability trends and current disability issues.

DRS is involved in an ongoing effort to implement a system of individual placement services (IPS) programs, formerly known as evidence-based supported employment programs, for individuals with serious mental illness. The IPS model is designed to provide employment services that are tailored to the specific needs of this population, which have traditionally been underserved by VR programs nationally. This has been a major undertaking involving extensive cooperation with the DHS Division of Mental Health, community providers, and university consultants. A number of new agencies have received placement contracts from DRS and a special evaluation process is underway.

## Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Persons responding to the DRS needs assessment surveys made few mentions of the workforce system as such. It is likely that people with disabilities have not yet come to view the one-stop centers as a focus for receiving services. DRS will continue its efforts in making use of the workforce system, but it is acknowledged that much additional work is needed to increase awareness of the services available from that system for Individuals with disabilities. DRS receives a regular data report on referrals made to and received from one-stop centers across the state. Overall patterns of referrals have changed little in the last few years.

DRS also is exploring additional opportunities to work more closely with one-stop employment centers. Memorandums of understanding are updated each year between the local DRS office

and the corresponding one-stop center. These agreements address financial and in-kind contributions towards the operation of the one-stop center, as well as methods of referral and sharing of resources and equipment. In FY2012 DRS does not anticipate any additional co-location into one-stop centers, but efforts to increase cooperation will continue. These include expanding methods of communication, including electronic and computer connections, between DRS offices and local workforce centers.

#### Community Rehabilitation Programs

DRS believes that the system of community rehabilitation programs in the state is adequate to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation program customers. Nothing in the needs assessment process suggests a need to establish or expand the CRP system. DRS meets regularly with a statewide committee of CRP representatives (the Facility Advisory Council) to improve services provided by CRPs in Illinois.

## **Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services**

This section provides the estimates for Illinois of the number of individuals eligible for the VR program under Title I and Title VI B, including the number likely to meet the order of selection, the number to be served by the VR program, as well as the costs of the services to be provided during Fiscal Year 2012, defined as the period beginning October 1, 2011 and ending September 30, 2012.

### **Population Estimate**

Based on Census data, DRS estimates that there are 679,900 individuals with disabilities in Illinois who are potentially eligible for VR services under Title I, Part B, of which an estimated 374,000 are unlikely to meet the DRS order of selection policy. In addition, DRS estimates that there are 76,500 individuals with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services under Title VI, Part B.

### **Service Estimates**

DRS estimates that there are 305,900 individuals who are potentially eligible and likely to meet the DRS order of selection policy, with 43,000 being served under Title I, Part B and 200 served under Title VI, Part B, for a total of 43,200 persons to be served in FY2012.

Of that number, DRS estimates that 27,520 will be classified in the most significant disability category and 15,250 in the very significant disability category. DRS estimates that 430 individuals previously certified in the significant category will be served although that category has been closed since FY2005.

DRS estimates that there will be about 12,500 new cases in FY2012, of which one-third will be in the very significant category and two-thirds in the most significant category.

DRS changed its order of selection policy in 2005. Individuals who were receiving services prior to that time constitute the individuals in the significant disability category. DRS does not anticipate opening that category of the order of selection at any time in the future. The number of individuals in the significant disability category will continue to decrease as those individuals now receiving service are closed from the system.

### **Projected Outcomes**

DRS projects that it will achieve a total of 5,320 employment outcomes in FY2012. Of that number, 2,925 are projected to be in the most significant disability category, while 2,340 will be in the very significant disability category and 55 will be in the significant disability category.

### **Projected Spending**

DRS estimates that total spending for FY2012 will be \$144,000,000, of which \$113,000,000 will

be VR funds and \$31,000,000 will be state funds. The estimated average spending per customer is \$3,333, of which \$2,615 will be VR funds and \$718 will be non-federal funds.

DRS estimates that \$10,800,000 of the total will be administrative costs while the remainder will go toward provision of rehabilitation services. In addition, DRS estimates that the cost of serving individuals not meeting the order of selection policy would be prohibitive. DRS projects that about 15 percent of individuals estimated to be eligible will be served in FY2011. If only five percent (18,700) of the estimated 374,000 individuals were to be served, the projected cost using the average cost of \$3,333 per person would be \$62,327,000. This is clearly not possible given the program budget

Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Most significant disability	\$93,600,000	27,520	\$3,401
Very significant disability	\$49,320,000	15,250	\$3,095
Significant disability	\$1,080,000	430	\$2,512
Non-significant disability	\$0	0	—
Totals	\$144,000,000	43,200	\$3,333

## **Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities**

### Goals and Priorities

The major goals for DRS for FY2012 are listed below. They are based on the needs assessment process described elsewhere in the state plan, an internal staff and administrative process, and surveys of stakeholder groups. The goals and priorities in this Plan were jointly developed and agreed to by DRS and the State Rehabilitation Council. Any revisions to the goals and priorities were jointly reviewed and agreed to by DRS and the SRC. Many of the goals included in this plan are also incorporated into the DHS Strategic Plan. DRS intends that the goals established here will be for a two-year period of FY2012 and FY2013.

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRSs performance on the RSA standards and indicators, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act.

DRS conducted a Future Direction Survey of stakeholders and staffing early 2011 that consisted of both goal ratings as well as open ended responses to questions about expansion of VR services and key priority areas. Survey responses were used extensively in development of the goals.

The Illinois VR program has identified five goal areas for FY2012 (from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012).

### Performance Goals

#### Employment Outcomes

DRS will increase the number of competitive employment outcomes by 10 percent in each of the next two fiscal years, from 4,450 in FY2011 to 4,895 in FY2012 and 5,385 in FY2013.

#### Average Wages

DRS will increase the average hourly wage earned by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome from \$ 10.20 in FY2011 to \$ 10.45 in FY2012 and \$ 10.65 in FY2013.

#### Average Hours Worked

DRS will increase the average hours worked per week by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome from 27.5 in FY2011 to 28.3 in FY2012 and 29.0 in FY2013.

#### Timely IPE Development

DRS will increase the percentage of IPEs developed on time from 91 percent in FY2011 to 92 percent in FY2012 and 93 percent in FY2013.

#### Timely Certification of Eligibility

DRS will increase the percentage of eligibility certifications completed on time from 89.5 percent in FY2011 to 90 percent in FY2012 and 91 percent in FY2013.

#### BBS Independent Living Closures

The DRS Bureau of Blind Services will increase the number of individuals achieving an independent living outcome from 340 in FY2011 to 360 in FY2012 and 385 in FY2013.

#### Casework Quality

DRS will achieve and maintain a 90 percent casework quality rating in FY2012 and FY2013 as determined by Quality Assurance reviews of a statewide sample of cases.

#### Customer Satisfaction

DRS will achieve and maintain an 85 percent overall customer satisfaction rating in FY2012 and FY2013 as determined by a survey of a random sample of VR program customers.

#### Employer Satisfaction

DRS will achieve and maintain an 80 percent overall employer satisfaction rating in FY2012 and FY2013 based on a survey of a random sample of businesses employing VR program customers.

#### Program Initiatives

Based on responses to the Future Direction Survey, DRS has developed the following initiatives for the next two fiscal years.

##### Transition Momentum Initiative

Survey respondents expressed a concern that more needed to be done to assist transition age youth with disabilities beyond the STEP program and other traditional approaches. There was a sense that any momentum established during the high school period was lost during the time immediately following graduation.

DRS will establish transition initiative projects in selected offices across the state. Each office will develop a plan designed to maintain skills and work habits gained during the high school years. Emphasis will be placed on making improvements in IPE development, case tracking and ongoing support services.



The goal of the transition initiative projects is to have 90 percent of transition students exiting school be gainfully occupied in employment, postsecondary education or vocational training by 2013.

#### Outreach to Underserved Populations

There were many comments on the Future Direction Survey that DRS needed to improve services to minority customers from various groups, specifically Latinos and Asian groups. Data from the 2010 Census demonstrated that these are the two fastest growing groups in Illinois. In addition to assuring that communication is available in a customer's preferred language, there is a need to provide services in a culturally sensitive manner.

DRS will develop outreach initiative projects in selected offices across the state. These offices will be selected based in part on Census data indicating a higher need for outreach. Each office will develop a plan designed to increase the number of service applications made by individuals in the targeted groups.

The goal of the outreach initiative projects is to increase the number of individuals receiving VR services in the targeted groups by 15 percent by 2013.

#### Business Partnership Initiatives

DRS received a wide variety of suggestions from the survey, with the general notion that DRS could do a better job relating to employers.

In this initiative, targeted offices will develop partnerships with at least three new employers in their communities. A particular focus will be on employers with several different types of jobs available, opening up job possibilities for a wider range of VR customers.

The goal of the business partnership initiative is to achieve 150 employment outcomes directly traceable to newly-established partnerships in FY2012 and an additional 200 employment outcomes in FY2013.

#### Policy Review Goal

DRS intends to conduct an extensive policy review in FY2012 relating to services purchased from community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). This is part of an ongoing process in recent years which has focused on obtaining the greatest value for funds spent on purchased services, while maintaining an effective service provider network across the state.

DRS will be contracting with a consulting firm to conduct an impartial review of the rates paid for CRP services. These rates have not been changed in several years and do not reflect current costs associated with providing services.

In addition, DRS will be reviewing its supported employment program policies. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the \$4.5 million in VR basic grant funds currently used for supported employment services is the most effective means of serving individuals who require a higher level of assistance in becoming employed, but who may not require the level of support associated with supported employment.

The goal of the policy review is to establish a new rate structure for CRP services by the beginning of FY2013.

## **Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection**

### **Justification for order of selection**

#### Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection Policy

Illinois DRS has operated under an order of selection since 1979. Illinois last made a major change to its Order of Selection process in June 2005. That policy was modified in 2009 as described in this plan. The overall purpose of the policy is to reflect the priorities of the agency and provide for an equitable distribution of resources to individuals with most significant disabilities.

The 2005 policy changes included: (a) an addition of a fourth category, known as very significant disability, which is in between the significant disability and most significant disability categories; and (b) an increase in the number of serious functional limitations and the number of required services in order to be placed into the most significant disability category,

The category of significant disability was closed for two reasons. First, rising costs and budget pressures meant that DRS believed there was a probability that funds would not be sufficient to serve individuals in open order of selection categories. Second, a policy decision was made to target individuals with most significant disabilities, and to re-define that category to include individuals with a higher number of functional limitations. DRS continues to serve individuals who were receiving VR services in the significant disability category prior to the policy change.

#### Funding Considerations

All funding arrangements for providing services will be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are determined inconsistent with the order of selection, DRS will renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the Order of Selection.

#### Estimated Spending

DRS estimates that total spending for the VR program in FY2012 will be \$144,000,000. Of that amount, an estimated \$113,000,000 will be VR funds, while \$31,00,000 will be non-federal matching funds. This is equivalent to the required non-federal match for FY2012 and therefore there is no projected surplus match for the fiscal year.

#### Average Spending per Person

DRS estimates that average spending per person served in the VR program in FY2012 will be approximately \$3,333, of which \$2,615 are VR funds and \$718 are non-federal match funds.

## **Description of Priority categories**

The priority categories established under this rule are based solely on the definition of “individual with a significant disability” defined in the Rehabilitation Act (section 7 (21) (A) ) and in regulations (34CFR361.36(d)(2) and 34CFR361.5(b)(31)).

### **Policy Change**

DRS changed its Order of Selection policy in 2009. This policy places individuals receiving SSI or SSDI into the category of individual with a significant disability, unless the analysis of functional limitations and service needs places them into the category of very significant disability or most significant disability. Under the DRS policy, the category of significant disability is not an open category. However there have been very few instances to date of individuals receiving SSI or SSDI benefits being placed in that category.

### **Waiting List**

Individuals certified as eligible for VR services but who do not meet the order of selection policy are offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. Individuals who choose to be placed on a waiting list are informed that the probability is very low that DRS will open the order of selection, based on the history of the OOS policy. The computerized case management system reminds the counselor once a year to send a letter to the individual asking if they wish to continue having his or her name on the list. Individuals on the waiting list are entitled to receive information and referral services, as well as guidance and counseling services, and are encouraged to make use of other elements of the state’s workforce investment system.

### **Funding Considerations**

All funding arrangements for providing services will be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are determined inconsistent with the order of selection, DRS will renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the Order of Selection

### **Description of the Order of Selection Policy**

There are three key elements to the order of selection policy: Categories of Eligible Individuals; Criteria for Significant Disability, Very Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability; and Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities. Together these elements define the relevant concepts and methods used to evaluate individuals and place them into a category under the policy. Each of these elements is described in detail in the following section.

### **Categories of Eligible Individuals**

a) Pursuant to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 USC 701 et seq.), DHS-DRS has established the following Order of Selection for the priority of provision of services to eligible individuals which counselors must follow when purchasing services for customers:

- 1) those individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;
- 2) those individuals determined to have very significant disabilities;
- 3) those individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and
- 4) individuals determined to have disabilities.

b) For the purposes of administering services under the Order of Selection, the Director of DHS-DRS will determine at the beginning of each fiscal year, or more often as necessary, which of the categories under subsection (a) will be open for service.

c) Eligible individuals in a closed category under subsection (a) may choose to be placed on a waiting list for services.

#### Criteria for Significant Disability, Very Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability

Documentation of the determination that an individual has a most significant disability, a very significant disability, or a significant disability must be in the individual's VR case file, as well as documentation concerning the evaluation of his or her rehabilitation potential.

a) Prior to determining the significance of an individual's disability, it must be determined that he or she:

1) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that causes a substantial physical or mental impairment that is similar, but not limited to, the following list of disabilities:

- A) amputation,
- B) arthritis,
- C) autism,
- D) blindness,
- E) burn injury,
- F) cancer,
- G) cerebral palsy,
- H) cystic fibrosis,
- I) deafness,
- J) head injury,
- K) heart disease,
- L) hemiplegia,
- M) hemophilia,
- N) respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction,
- O) mental retardation,
- P) mental illness,
- Q) multiple sclerosis,
- R) muscular dystrophy,

- S) musculo-skeletal disorders,
- T) neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy),
- U) paraplegia,
- V) quadriplegia (and other spinal cord conditions),
- W) sickle cell anemia,
- X) specific learning disabilities, or
- Y) end stage renal failure disease;

2) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that seriously limits his or her functional capacities, as listed in Section 553.150 of this Part; and

3) requires VR services over an extended period of time at least six months or longer.

b) If an individual meets the requirements of Section 553.140(a), then the following criteria must be met to determine the significance of his or her disability:

1) To be considered an individual with a most significant disability, he or she must be an individual who has a disability that seriously limits three or more of his or her functional capacities and who requires two or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

2) To be considered an individual with a very significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits two of his or her functional capacities, and must require one or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

3) To be considered an individual with a significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits one of his or her functional capacities and must require one or more substantial VR services, in addition to the routine services of counseling and guidance, and information and referral to ensure a successful employment outcome.

c) An individual who has been determined eligible for disability benefits pursuant to Title II (SSDI) or Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act is considered to be an individual with a significant disability, unless the analysis of his or her functional limitations and service needs, as described above, place the individual into a higher category of the order of selection.

#### Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities

a) For the purpose of determination of the degree of significance of disability, functional capacities shall include:

1. mobility - the physical ability of an individual to move from place to place and move the body into certain positions. This includes such activities as: walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, sitting, standing, and similar activities;

2. self-care - the ability of an individual to perform activities related to his or her health and hygiene. This includes such activities as: grooming, bathing, eating, house keeping, medical management, and money management;

3. self-direction - the ability of an individual to organize, control and regulate his or her own personal, social, and work life. This includes such activities as: maintaining schedules and routines, following directions and established rules, organizing activities for oneself, and adjusting to changing circumstances;

4. work skills - the ability of an individual to demonstrate skills necessary to perform jobs that exist in the current employment market, regardless of demand for the particular occupation or the individual's prior work experience. This includes such activities as: learning and maintaining work skills, cooperating with others in a work setting, using adequate decision making and problem solving skills, and using academic skills commonly required in the workplace;

5. work tolerance - the ability of an individual to consistently and adequately perform a job based on the physical, emotional, environmental, and psychological demands of a specific work environment. This includes such activities as: maintaining performance on the job regardless of changes in environment such as cold and heat, demonstrating the strength and endurance to perform the job in question, and working the schedule typical of other employees in the same job;

6. interpersonal skills - the ability of an individual to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with other individuals in the work place. This includes such activities as: engaging in necessary work-related communications, demonstrating behavior that is appropriate and acceptable in the work environment, cooperating with others in a team setting, and showing understanding and tact in dealing with others; and

7. communication - the ability to convey and receive information efficiently and effectively. This includes such activities as: hearing and understanding ordinary spoken language; making one's self understood in ordinary conversation; writing or printing short notes and communications; and reading and correctly interpreting short notes, signs, and instructions.

b) A serious limitation to a functional capacity shall exist when the rehabilitation counselor determines it or instructor that the customer, because of his or her disability, has functional limitations in performing the major components of the activity or activities listed in subsections (a)(1) through (7) or needs accommodation to perform the activity.

c) The rehabilitation counselor or instructor shall use the criteria of consistency and substantiality when evaluating the degree of limitation to functional capacity. Consistency means that the individual's disability always or almost always limits the individual's functioning. Substantiality means the individual's disability has a major, significant impact on functioning and that the individual cannot perform the activity or finds it very difficult to perform the activity.

## **Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order**

The priority of categories to receive VR services under the DRS order of selection policy are:

1. Individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;
2. Individuals determined to have very significant disabilities;
3. Individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and
4. Individuals determined to have disabilities.

For FY2012 the categories of most significant disability and very significant disability will be open to services, unless a determination is made by the DRS Director that circumstances allow for a change in the categories open to service.

## **Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved**

Service Projections for FY2012

Projections for services to be provided and expected outcomes are listed below, as well as in the table on the following page.

Persons Served

DRS estimates that 43,200 persons will be served in the VR program in FY2012, of which 430 will be persons with significant disabilities, 15,250 will be persons with very significant disabilities, and 27,520 will be persons with most significant disabilities. FY2012 is defined as the period from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012.

Persons Rehabilitated

DRS estimates that 5,230 persons will be rehabilitated by the VR program in FY2012 (October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012), of which 55 will be persons with significant disabilities, 2,340 will be persons with very significant disabilities, and 2,925 will be persons with most significant disabilities. The same time period applies to all categories listed above, as reflected in the data table below.

Estimated Spending

DRS estimates that total spending for FY2012 will be \$144,000,000, of which \$113,000,000 will be VR funds and \$31,000,000 will be non-federal matching funds. This is equivalent to the required non-federal match for FY2012 and therefore there is no projected surplus match for the fiscal year.



### Average Spending per Person

DRS estimates that average spending per person served in the VR program in FY2012 will be \$3,333, of which \$2,615 will be VR funds and \$718 will be non-federal funds.

### Justification for the Order of Selection Policy

Based on many years experience working with an order of selection policy, DRS maintains that only individuals in the most significant and very significant categories can be served under the program budget. The average cost per person served continues to rise each year. The cost to serve only five percent of the estimated population of potentially eligible persons not expected to meet the existing order of selection policy is approximately \$60 million. DRS believes that the potential demand for services, particularly for college training services, is significant and that opening additional categories would result in a higher average cost per person served.

DRS estimates that there will be no excess matching funds for FY2012. Due to technical changes in the state's budgeting process, DRS no longer is assigned a level of matching funds higher than the expected requirement for the year. In the DRS budget a significant portion of matching funds are provided by entities with third-party contracts, and cannot be estimated with great precision.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Outcome goals 26s	Outcome goals 28s	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
	127,520	2,925	2,160	Oct 1 2011 to Sept 30 2012	\$93,600,000
	215,250	2,340	1,730	Oct 1 2011 to Sept 30 2012	\$49,320,000
	3430	55	40	Oct 1 2011 to Sept 30 2012	\$1,080,000
	40	0	0	Oct 1 2011 to Sept 30 2012	

## **Attachment 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**

### **A. Goals**

During FY2012, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.

1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment in a manner consistent with federal regulations, with an emphasis on moving as many individuals as possible into natural supports at the conclusion of ongoing support services.
2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf-blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities.
3. Develop new mechanisms for funding paid extended services, including cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local units of government.
4. Evaluate the most effective means of achieving employment outcomes for individuals traditionally served in supported employment services.
5. Evaluate the rates paid to providers for supported employment services and adjust rates as necessary to ensure the availability of supported employment services.

For FY2012, DRS will serve and employ 200 persons in supported employment. In FY2010 DRS served 221 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 2,504 using other funds.

### **B. Utilization and Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**

Title VI, Part B funds are used to purchase SEP services for customers. The Department administers its Supported Employment Program using two mechanisms: contracting with community organizations to provide supported employment services or arranging individual placements through DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors in local offices (case services). Contracts have been established with 25 entities throughout Illinois to provide services to eligible customers.

DRS has maintained a system of negotiated rates with individual service provider agencies. The policy review of the CRP rate structure will determine whether this practice continues after FY2012.

## **Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress**

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals**

#### **A. Evaluation Findings**

DRS actively evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program on an ongoing basis. This section provides an annual update regarding developments in the evaluation process.

#### **Achievement of State Goals**

The following section discusses each of the current DRS goals for the VR program, the progress made in achieving the goal. Data are reported for federal fiscal year 2010 (October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010).

The Illinois VR program has identified five goal areas for FY2010 (from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). The planning concept developed by DRS envisions a small number of key goals with multiple indicators for each goal. For each indicator, a target value is identified for each year.

The five goal areas are: Independence, Productivity, Job Quality, Service Quality and Customer and Staff Experience.

#### **Goal Area: Independence**

**Goal :** Provide services that will enable DRS customers to achieve the highest level of independence

**Indicator 1:** Number of persons moved from nursing homes into the community through the reintegration project in conjunction with independent living centers and who are referred for VR services.

**Target:** Serve 25 individuals in the VR program in FY2010 who are enrolled in the community reintegration program

**Results:** For FY2010 162 individuals were reintegrated, more than double the number in the previous year. Of that number 12 individuals were enrolled in VR during FY2010.

**Indicator 2:** Number of Bureau of Blind Services customers completing independent living rehabilitation plans through the VR program

**Target:** Achieve 235 non-competitive rehabilitated closures in BBS.

**Results:** For FY2010 341 BBS customers completed independent living plans.

**Indicator 3:** Number of persons receiving core independent living services through independent living centers who are concurrently served in the VR program

Target: Jointly serve 100 individuals in the VR and IL programs

Results: For FY2010 DRS provided independent living services to 7,917 individuals. Of the number, 75 also participated in vocational rehabilitation services.

Indicator 4: Number of new cases concurrently served by the VR program and the Home Services Program

Target: Jointly serve 125 individuals in the VR and Home Services programs

Results: In FY2010 7,950 individuals begin receiving Home Services. A total of 1,246 HSP customers also participated in the VR program in FY2010, approximately the same number as in the previous year.

Goal Area: Productivity

Goal: Achieve a high level of productivity by efficiently serving eligible customers and helping them attain successful outcomes

Indicator 1: Index of pre employment VR measures (applications, certifications, new IPEs)

Target: Achieve a statewide score of 75,400 for FY2010

Results: The index value for FY2010 was 73,201, a decrease from the figure of 74,785 for FY2009.

Indicator 2: Number of competitive outcomes achieved by VR program customers

Target: Achieve a total of 5,620 competitive outcomes in FY2010

Results: For FY2010 4,619 competitive outcomes were achieved. The comparison figure for FY2009 was 4,812 competitive outcomes.

Indicator 3: Number of high school students completing transition plans with the assistance of the VR program

Target: Achieve a total of 650 students who graduated in 2009 and are closed as competitive outcomes by December 31, 2009.

Results: Data was not available on this measure.

Goal Area: Job Quality

Goal: Increase the quality of jobs obtained by VR program customers

Indicator 1: Average hourly wage achieved by VR program customers entering competitive employment

Target: Achieve an average hourly wage of \$10.11 for FY2010

Results: The average hourly wage for FY2010. was \$10.18, virtually unchanged from the FY2008 average of \$10.15.

Indicator 2: Average hours worked per week by VR customers in competitive employment

Indicator: Achieve an average work week of 30.3 hours in FY2010

Results: The average hours worked per week for FY2010 was 27.9, a slight decrease from the figure of 28.3 hours per week observed in FY2009.

Indicator 3: Percentage of jobs obtained by VR customers which provide health insurance coverage

Target: Achieve an average of 33 percent of workers receiving employer paid health insurance in FY2010

Results: Data for FY2010 showed a continued decline in employer-paid health insurance coverage for DRS customers, with 21.1 percent receiving coverage in FY2010, compared to 26.9 percent in the previous year.

Indicator 4: Dollars received in Social Security reimbursement for VR customers who become employed and earn above the substantial gainful activity level

Target: Achieve a total reimbursement of \$3,500,000 in FY2010

Results: Approximately \$ 1,500,000 was received in FY2010, compared to around \$ 1,900,000 which was received for FY2009. This reflects ongoing staffing shortages in the Social Security reimbursement and Ticket to Work units within DRS.

Goal Area: Service Quality

Goal: Continually improve the quality of services provided by DRS in all program areas

Indicator 1: Index of key Quality Assurance indicators

Target: Achieve a compliance rate of 90 percent in FY2008

Results: The weighted QA quality index score for FY2010 was 82.4 out of 100, compared to the FY2009 of 80.3 out of 100.

Indicator 2: Compliance with RSA timeliness requirements for eligibility and plan development

Target: Achieve a compliance rate of 90 percent in FY2008

Results: For FY2010 timely certification completion rose to 89.3 percent, compared to 88.2 percent in FY2009. In part this represents implementation of a more accurate method of calculating timeliness. For IPEs, 91.2 percent were on time in FY2010, compared to 90.1 percent in FY2009.

Goal Area: Customer & Staff Experience

Goal: Create a work environment that results in a positive experience for customers and staff.

Indicator 1: Overall customer satisfaction measure

Target: Achieve a base rate of 85 percent satisfied or very satisfied in FY2010

Results: The average VR customer satisfaction rating for FY2010 was 85.7 percent, compared to 86.3 percent in FY2009. This represents the overall positive evaluation percentage on key survey items in each year.

Indicator 2: Statewide staff morale measure

Target: Achieve a rate of 80 percent satisfied or very satisfied in FY2010

Results: The staff morale survey was not completed in FY2010.

Indicator 3: Satisfaction survey of community providers

Target: Achieve a rate of 80 percent satisfied or very satisfied in FY2010

Results: The provider satisfaction survey was not completed in FY2010.

Indicator 4: Satisfaction survey of employers hiring DRS customers

Target: Achieve a rate of 80 percent satisfied or very satisfied in FY2010

Results: The employer satisfaction survey was not completed in FY2010.

Additional Goals for FY2010:

Goal: Interagency cooperation. Through its cooperative agreement process, DRS will reduce the percentage of funding for auxiliary services to college students with disabilities to no more than ten percent in FY2010 and to zero in FY2010.

Results: This goal was achieved.

Goal: Counselor Qualifications; DRS will complete its 1998-2008 plan for counselor training so that 100 percent of rehabilitation counselors achieve the state degree standard by October 1, 2008.

Results: This goal was achieved.

Goal: Individual Placement and Support (IPS). DRS will develop one new IPS contract in each administrative region during FY2010. IPS is also known as evidenced based supported employment?, and is designed to serve individuals with serious mental illness

Results: This goal was achieved.

## B. Strategies Contributing to Success

The key factors contributing to DRS success in making progress include: a focus on measurement of performance; follow up on quality assurance findings; targeted staff training; outreach to employer and business groups; and an emphasis on serving individuals with most significant disabilities. Through use of its OneNet intranet system, DRS has provided a great deal of data on performance that is available to all staff, supervisors and administrators in DRS. This gives all DRS personnel an opportunity to focus on results and be aware of trends. DRS also makes use of a new online report distribution system for providing performance feedback to field supervisors. This makes data more readily available to supervisors who can use the information to work with staff in need of additional support.

Quality assurance findings, particularly those emphasizing a need for improvement in casework quality, are made available through training events as well as online reports. This gives staff and supervisors another element on which to focus attention and develop improvement plans. Working with business and employer groups has increased in recent years, centering on identifying employers who offer good jobs with benefits and who are willing to cooperate with VR counselors in meeting the needs of customers. While many VR counselors are not accustomed to working with business groups, the assistance of employment resource specialists have helped develop many new employment opportunities for customers.

## C. Factors Limiting Success

DRS has had made limited progress or seen declines in quality variables such as hours worked per week and the percentage of customers with employer-paid health insurance. This is part of a national trend in the work environment where fewer employers offer health insurance benefits and more jobs are of the part-time variety. Jobs in retail and food service- which are traditional areas for entry-level jobs- only magnify these trends of the larger workforce. Manufacturing jobs, which offered long hours, including overtime, and health benefits, are disappearing in Illinois and elsewhere. There is little VR can do to overcome these trends.

Another factor is the relative youth of DRS customers. DRS has a high percentage of cases who begin receiving VR services while in high school. While some go on to college, most pursue employment and face limited earning opportunities given their skills and level of education. DRS customers who attend college have earnings 45 percent higher than those who complete only high school. However, the high-school educated group makes up about a third of all competitive outcome closures for DRS, resulting in wages that rise slowly. Similarly, individuals with less education and lower wages are also less likely to receive health insurance benefits with their job.

Another factor limiting success in casework quality is the relatively low level of experience of the VR counseling staff. After two early retirement incentives in the last five years, there are fewer long-term counselors available to provide guidance to newer staff. In addition, due to changes in the state hiring process, many field office supervisors are individuals who do not have a background in the VR program and thus do not have a wealth of experience to offer. Therefore, training and remediation efforts have increased to meet the needs of staff. DRS believes that this situation will improve in time, both due to better training and increased experience. It is unlikely that such a large influx of inexperienced staff will take place in the foreseeable future.

Staff have shown performance improvements in the area of timely certification of eligibility and in timely IPE development, following extensive data reporting and training by DRS administration. The cause of the poor performance is difficult to identify, although it appears to be related to counselor experience and capacity for planning caseload activities. DRS has devoted resources to improvement of its computerized case management system to assist in effective scheduling. Also, new management information reports have been developed to help office supervisors pinpoint issues related to timeliness

## Supported Employment

Goal: For FY2010, DRS will serve and employ 200 persons in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds. This figure is lower than in previous years, due to the increased cost of providing supported employment services.

## Results

In FY2010 DRS served 221 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 2,504 using other funds. A total of 401 individuals were closed into competitive employment after having participated in supported employment services.

## Other Supported Employment Goals:

During FY2010, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.



1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment until they move to the Extended Services program or receive natural supports.

Results: All DRS customers served in supported employment are moved into either paid extended services or unpaid natural supports at the conclusion of their VR case. The DRS computerized case management system requires the counselor to enter the planned post-SEP environment when developing an IPE including supported employment.

2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf-blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities.

Results: DRS supported employment services are targeted only at individuals who are classified in the order of selection policy as having a most significant disability.

3. Continue to work on developing agreements with other state agencies to cover the cost of extended services.

Results: DRS has not been able to establish agreements with either the Division of Developmental Disabilities or the Division of Mental Health.

4. Explore and develop other means of providing job support for SEP customers after DRS closes their cases, such as development of natural supports and mentoring in the workplace, increased use of Social Security work incentive programs, as well as Work Incentives Planning and Assistance services.

Results: DRS counselors are strongly encouraged to move customers into a natural supports environment at the conclusion of a supported employment case. The availability of paid extended services remains very limited.

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2010.

#### B. Standards and Indicators

The following table shows how the Illinois VR program performed relative to the RSA evaluation standards and indicators for the most recent period reported.

#### Illinois VR Performance on Standards and Indicators Federal FY2010 Data

#### Indicators FY 2010

Description Minimum and Achieved Values

1.1 Change in number of employment outcomes +1	-257	Fail
1.2 Percent employed after receiving services 55.8:	56.25	Pass
1.3 Percent competitively employed 72.6	91.87	Pass
1.4 Percent of competitive outcomes with a significant disability 62.4	100.0	Pass
1.5 Earnings ratio compared to state average earnings 0.52	.431	Fail
1.6 Percent indicating they are self-supporting 53.0	56.90	Pass
2.1 Service rate ratio for minority customers .80	.867	Pass

As shown in the table above, Illinois passed on five of the seven indicators. Illinois failed on indicator 1.5 as it has done each year. DRS failed to increase rehabilitated closures (1.1) in FY2010 after having passed this indicator the previous year. For standard 2, DRS passed Indicator 2.1 for the second successive year.

Discussion: Indicator 1.1 The number of rehabilitated closures fell by 257 (4.9%) in FY2010 compared to FY2009. This is a smaller percentage decrease than the 6.3 percent drop noted between FY2008 and FY2009. DRS believes that this is due to the deterioration in the employment market in Illinois, as well as to having a relatively larger percentage of less experienced rehabilitation counselors. DRS has strongly encouraged development of direct job placement skills by counselors. Two mandatory training events were held in FY2010 designed to improve staff skills in working effectively with employers by marketing customer skills. Follow-up training was provided in FY2011. In addition, DRS developed an employer training initiative that gave counselors a new approach to direct job placement. DRS also established \$5.9 million in job placement contracts with community provider agencies utilizing ARRA funds. It is uncertain how long the state's unemployment situation will affect the employment options for VR program customers.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2010.

Use of Expansion and Innovation Funds

DRS used funds allotted for expansion and innovation to initiate and maintain its World Class Customer Service effort. As noted above, the World Class initiative is an organizational transformation project that is ongoing, and which is designed to make dramatic changes in organizational performance by changing business processes. Since 2007 many elements of the World Class initiative has been incorporated into DHS initiatives known as Platinum Customer Services and Going the Extra Mile. DRS played a key role in helping expand World Class concepts to the larger DHS agency. A major expense has been the training of staff. Over 900 staff participated in a three-day training process facilitated by an organization development consultant and trainer. Additional innovation expenses involved implementation of local office plans developed as part of the World Class initiative.

Each DRS local office team developed objectives designed to help achieve the agency's goals, provide services more quickly and to enhance the customer experience to the point of delighting customers. Requests for funds to implement local office plan objectives were approved on a case-by-case basis. Another significant expense has been the implementation and continuing development of a new computerized virtual case management system, which is designed to improve the efficiency of staff, reduce paperwork and eliminate duplicate data entry. In addition, this system has significantly improved our capacity to monitor the quality of services provided to customers. DRS community providers will begin entering data directly into the case management system in FY2012. DRS expects all data entry to be accomplished electronically by the end of FY2013.

### C. State Rehabilitation Council Activities

DRS works closely with the State Rehabilitation Council. Title I funds are used each year for SRC activities that include quarterly Council meetings, committee meetings, printing costs, travel and other miscellaneous expenses. Title I funding is also used to fund other SRC activities, such as community meetings. A DRS administrator serves as the Council Liaison and handles all aspects of the Council's activities. The Bureau Chiefs for Field Services and Blind Services alternate their attendance at each meeting and the Director participates in Council meetings unless a scheduling conflict prevents it. In those instances, the Bureau Chiefs and the Liaison serve as the representative. In the last two years, the SRC has made greater use of videoconferencing facilities to reduce travel for members, thereby reducing travel costs. DRS spent approximately \$10,000 on SRC expenses in the last fiscal year.

## **Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services**

### **A. Goals**

During FY2012, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.

### **A. Goals**

During FY2012, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.

1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment in a manner consistent with federal regulations, with an emphasis on moving as many individuals as possible into natural supports at the conclusion of ongoing support services.
2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf-blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities.
3. Develop new mechanisms for funding paid extended services, including cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local units of government.
4. Evaluate the most effective means of achieving employment outcomes for individuals traditionally served in supported employment services.
5. Evaluate the rates paid to providers for supported employment services and adjust rates as necessary to ensure the availability of supported employment services.

For FY2012, DRS will serve and employ 200 persons in supported employment. In FY2010 DRS served 221 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 2,504 using other funds.

### **B. Utilization and Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**

Title VI, Part B funds are used to purchase SEP services for customers. The Department administers its Supported Employment Program using two mechanisms: contracting with community organizations to provide supported employment services or arranging individual placements through DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors in local offices (case services). Contracts have been established with 25 entities throughout Illinois to provide services to eligible customers.

DRS has maintained a system of negotiated rates with individual service provider agencies. The

policy review of the CRP rate structure will determine whether this practice continues after FY2012.

#### C. Supported Employment Models to be Used During FY2012

DRS utilizes two supported employment models: (1) the individual work model; and (2) the enclave (clustered) model. With the support of DRS, supported employment services in recent years has moved more in the direction of the individual work model. Currently, over 90 percent of the models used are the individual work model and fewer than 10 percent utilize the enclave model (with up to eight persons in a group).

DRS intends to phase out the use of the enclave model over the next two fiscal years. DRS believes that this model is not consistent with achievement of competitive employment in integrated settings.

#### D. Transition to Extended Services

Due to the elimination of state funds for extended services, DRS is placing a renewed emphasis on the use of natural supports in the workplace as the best means of providing extended services at the conclusion of supported employment services. This means that providers must pay attention to the importance of maintaining a support reduction schedule during the time an individual is receiving supported employment services. DRS issued a policy directive in 2010 emphasizing the need to reduce support consistently throughout the supported employment time period.

#### E. Scope of Services

In FY2012 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment and extended services activities. Supported employment services provided with Title VI-B funds: approximately 200 individuals, total funding \$1.1 million, approximately 25 provider agencies.. Supported employment provided with Title I funds: approximately 2,250 individuals, total funding \$4.5 million, approximately 45 provider agencies.

DRS does not have a state appropriation for extended services for FY2012. Therefore the level of services maintained to date will not be able to continue. DRS is investigating additional sources of funding to support individuals who require paid extended services at the conclusion of supported employment services.

**NOTE: Comments on this plan may be directed to [russ.patterson@illinois.gov](mailto:russ.patterson@illinois.gov) prior to close of business on June 28, 2011.**

