

Strategies

This attachment will focus on the strategies that the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) will use in order to achieve its goals and priorities set forth in attachment 4.12 (c)(1). The goals and objectives will guide the program for the next five years; the following are the strategies that will be used for fiscal year 2007. Additional strategies may be added each year to meet the changing needs of the Bureau.

I. Strategies to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities

Goal 1: To provide quality services for all Bureau consumers.

- **Objective #1:** To improve the timeliness of service delivery for all consumers
 - Strategy #1: Provide training to all vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and supervisors on timely eligibility determinations and Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development.
 - Strategy #2: Implement case review procedures to ensure that the training is effective.
- **Objective #2:** To improve satisfaction ratings of VR consumers.
 - Strategy #1: Evaluate satisfaction of Bureau consumers.
 - Strategy #2: Develop an action plan to address any areas of weakness for the Bureau.
- **Objective #3:** To improve the Bureau's performance on Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Standard for serving minority populations.
 - Strategy #1: Identify best practices for providing culturally appropriate VR services.
 - Strategy #2: Provide training to disseminate best practices.
 - Strategy #3: Conduct outreach to minority populations through community organizations and faith-based organizations to improve minority access under both the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Supported Employment Program.
- **Objective #4:** To improve the service delivery system by strengthening the services available through Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs).
 - Strategy #1: Continue to support the activities of the Bureau's CRP committee that includes Bureau representatives and CRPs .
 - Strategy #2: Develop a consistent framework for provider evaluation.
 - Strategy #3: Develop a consumer choice handbook to assess services from CRPs.
- **Objective #5:** To ensure effective administration of the VR program.
 - Strategy #1: Continue to monitor the staffing pattern to ensure that the needs of all VR consumers are met.
 - Strategy #2: Ensure the stability of the program through succession planning. Individual Staff Development Plans will be created for all staff.
 - Strategy #3: Provide technology to support the work of VR staff through the purchase and development of a new Case Management Information System.

Goal 2: To create a system where young adults with disabilities can achieve career and economic success.

- **Objective #1:** To coordinate with other systems to ensure that young adults with disabilities have access to a range of services.
 - Strategy #1: Provide leadership to a diverse group of stakeholders as part of a National Governor's Association Policy Academy for Young Adults with Disabilities.
 - Strategy #2: Develop resource maps to visually depict the human and fiscal resources currently targeted to services and supports for young adults with disabilities.
 - Strategy #3: Develop an inventory of the data collection capacity for the state agencies most involved in the transition of young adults from school into post-secondary education or employment.
 - Strategy #4: Share funding with the State Department of Education for a full-time Transition Consultant to provide technical assistance to both agencies around transition.
- **Objective #2:** To enhance the Bureau's capacity to meet the needs of transitioning students.
 - Strategy #1: Hire Transition Counselors to provide direct access to VR services for students in our six largest urban areas.
 - Strategy #2: Actively identify Assistive Technology and Personal Assistance Service needs early in the planning process.
 - Strategy #3: Conduct training on IPE development for all counselors.
 - Strategy #4: Develop a series of promising practices to provide VR services for young adults.
 - Strategy #5: Provide fiscal and staff support for Connecticut's Youth Leadership Forum.
 - Strategy #6: Host a summer workshop for young adults with disabilities to understand benefits issues, accessibility issues, personal assistance services and adult employment supports.
- **Objective #3:** To ensure access to an appropriate post-secondary education for young adults with disabilities participating in the VR program.
 - Strategy #1: Implement the Institution for Higher Education (IHE) Agreement

Goal 3: To create a system where individuals with psychiatric disabilities can achieve career and economic success.

- **Objective #1:** To coordinate with other systems to ensure that individuals with psychiatric disabilities have access to a range of services.
 - Strategy #1: Share funding with the State's Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for a full-time consultant to provide technical assistance to both agencies around transition.
 - Strategy #2: Participate in the employment-specific workgroups of the Mental Health Systems Transformation Grant
 - Strategy #3: Build on the partnerships established through the National Governor's Association Policy Academy on Young Adults with Disabilities to ensure that young adults with disabilities can access employment-related services.

- Strategy #4: Support the development and evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices within Connecticut, including the Individual Placement and Support model.
- **Objective #2:** To enhance the Bureau's capacity to meet the needs of individuals with psychiatric disabilities.
 - Strategy #1: Conduct training on IPE development for all counselors.
 - Strategy #2: Hire three specialized Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to meet the VR needs of individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

Goal 4: To develop creative employment strategies that transcend traditional employment services.

- **Objective #1:** To expand partnership opportunities between the VR program and other programs that can provide services or supports to individuals participating in the VR program.
 - Strategy #1: Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Partnership Strategy.
 - Strategy #2: Develop additional partnerships under the Ticket to Work program.
 - Strategy #3: Continue to build relationships with our One Stop partners.
- **Objective #2:** To participate in economic development to ensure that all Connecticut citizens, including those with disabilities, have choices about where to work.
 - Strategy #1: Lead the effort to bring a major Walgreen's Distribution Center to Connecticut.
 - Strategy #2: Provide technical assistance to ensure that this employer and future employers attracted to the state develop programs that meet the needs of individuals participating in the VR program.
- **Objective #3:** To increase the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs within the VR program.
 - Strategy #1: Provide training to all staff.
 - Strategy #2: Require all counselors to develop a minimum of one OJT site annually, and include this requirement as part of the performance evaluation system.

Goal 5: To create systems change to support the economic engagement of all Connecticut citizens, including those with disabilities.

- **Objective #1:** To collaborate in a planning process that will result in a statewide strategic plan for employment of individuals with disabilities.
 - Strategy #1: Participate in the development of the Strategic Plan
 - Strategy #2: Review the results of the Strategic Plan with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).
 - Strategy #3: Revise the triennial assessment to include information from this Strategic Plan.

- **Objective #2:** To integrate the services and supports available within the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.
 - Strategy #1: Develop a case conferencing model to allow counselors and consumers direct access to a wide array of services and supports, including benefits counseling, independent living, assistive technology, nursing facility transition, personal assistance and home/vehicle modification.
 - Strategy #2: Coordinate with the State Plan for Assistive Technology
 - Strategy #3: Coordinate with the State Plan for Independent Living
 - Strategy #4: Provide consumers, families, and CRPs with an Autism Spectrum Disorder Committee that will provide strategies on improving employment outcomes for this population.

- **Objective #3:** To maximize the revenue available to support individuals participating in the VR program.
 - Strategy #1: Continue enhancements to the automated Social Security Cost Reimbursement Program.
 - Strategy #2: Develop additional partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers, One Stops, and employers to increase options for Social Security beneficiaries.

II. Innovation and Expansion Activities

The goals and priorities listed above will be used to guide the Innovation and Expansion activities for FY2007. The goals and priorities will be shared with all staff during the summer of 2006. Individual staff, Bureau offices, State Rehabilitation Council members, and other interested parties will be encouraged to submit proposals for Innovation and Expansion projects to address any of the five Bureau goals. A team will review these proposals and funding will be prioritized to ensure the broadest possible impact on participants in the VR program. We will continue to support the activities of the Bureau's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Statewide Independent Living Center (SILC).

III. Outreach Activities under the State Supported Employment Program

Goal #1 focuses on Quality, and identifies the need to conduct outreach activities to support individuals with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds. The Bureau will coordinate its outreach efforts to ensure that the results have a positive impact for those participating in the Vocational Rehabilitation program, and those participating in Supported Employment.

Additional Components of the Bureau's Strategies:

- **Methods:** The methods to achieve the goals are incorporated in the strategies described above.

- **Assistive Technology (AT):** AT is woven throughout the rehabilitation process, from application through employment. The Bureau provides AT devices according to the needs of an individual. The state will ensure appropriate access to Assistive Technology, and will work directly with staff from the Connecticut Tech Act Program to ensure coordination. Through the Tech Act, the Bureau has built a relationship with the New

England Assistive Technology Marketplace, which strengthens the Bureau's ability to provide access to and acquisition of assistive technology.

- **Outreach to Minorities:** Goal #1, Objective #3 deals specifically with the need to outreach to minorities.
- **Outreach to Individuals who Have Been Unserved or Underserved:** Beyond the need to reach out to minority populations, the Bureau has identified two priority groups of individuals believed to be unserved or underserved in our states. These two groups include individuals with psychiatric disabilities and young adults with disabilities. Goals #2 and #3 specifically target these populations.
- **Plan for Establishing, Developing or Improving CRP's:** The Bureau has sufficient CRP's to support the needs of the VR program. Our efforts, therefore, are targeted at improvements to the current structure rather than the establishment or development of new programs. Goal #1, Objective #4 targets strategies to improve Community Rehabilitation Programs.
- **Strategies to Improve Performance on Standards and Indicators:** Goal #1, Objective #3 deals specifically with the need to outreach to minorities. This is a standard with which the Bureau has struggled in the past, so the Bureau wants to ensure that the issue continues to be addressed. All other Standards and Indicators are reviewed as part of the Bureau's ongoing performance evaluation. Information on regional performance on the Standards and Indicators is distributed and reviewed monthly.
- **Strategies for Assisting Components of the Statewide Workforce System:** The strategies outlined above include strategies to work with a number of components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System. Specific strategies address the One Stop Centers, the State Department of Education, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). The efforts of the National Governor's Association Policy Academy, the Mental Health Systems Transformation Grant, and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant cross 14 state agencies.