

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
Agency Program Plan



Fiscal Year 2018

October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018

Goal 1: Assure high-quality integrated employment outcomes for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities in Maryland through the vocational rehabilitation program.

Objective 1.1

Provide quality customer service consistent with the Governor's Customer Service Promise.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Ensure staff implement the principles of the Governor's Customer Service Promise.
2. Develop an internal strategy for evaluating customer satisfaction during service delivery in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (Needs Assessment Rec. 6).
3. Refine the Quality Assurance Program for Vocational Rehabilitation, as needed, to ensure consistency with required measures under WIOA.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Provide feedback on the Governor's Customer Service Promise and customer service training.
- b. Implement a system for consumers to provide feedback on their satisfaction with services at key points during the rehabilitation process.
- c. Identify and train a Quality Assurance Case Review Team, and complete one District case review for each District during the fiscal year.

Objective 1.2

Provide rehabilitation services and pre-employment transition services in partnership with local education agencies that lead to successful outcomes in post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Ensure that VR counselors and staff work with high school students with disabilities, families, school personnel, business partners, and community partners to help these students prepare for and achieve employment and self-sufficiency.
2. Emphasize and implement transition services, including work-based learning experiences such as Project Search, internships, and summer work-based learning experiences to promote long-term career success and leadership, including expanding transitioning services through federal initiatives, such as the Maryland Workplace Collaborative.
3. Provide Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) including the following services: Job exploration counseling, Work-based learning experiences, Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, Workplace readiness training, and Instruction on Self-Advocacy for students with disabilities who are 14-21 years old.

4. Provide training and support to DORS transition counselors and pre-employment transition services counselors through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings, the Transition Conference, and training programs. Training shall help counselors identify and develop tools and resources related to post-secondary education, and best practices in working with families and transitioning students.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. The number of students and youth with disabilities served will match or exceed those served in the previous year, including an increase in the number of students receiving pre-employment transition services compared with the previous year.
- b. There will be an increase in transitioning youth with disabilities who achieve employment and/or enroll in post-secondary education programs, compared with the previous year.
- c. The DORS Transition Specialists Group will meet at least semiannually and include staff training on pertinent topics (e.g. pre-employment transition services), and will identify, develop and disseminate tools and resources for transitioning students related to post-secondary education.

Objective 1.3

DORS will provide high quality services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by the Office of Field Services (OFS).

Strategies: DORS will

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland Regulations, and DORS Policy.
2. Collaborate with WTC in assuring consumers with all disabilities receive services offered at WTC in a seamless and timely manner.
3. Strengthen relationships with WIOA partners to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes and reporting on common performance measures for DORS consumers.
4. In conjunction with the Staff Specialist for Community Rehabilitation Programs, OFS management will continue to enhance relationships with community rehabilitation programs.
5. Implement training to define and accurately track credential attainment and measurable skills gain of DORS consumers.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Meet federal performance standards for timely determination of eligibility and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.

- b. Provide staff training related to the new federal and state common measures for WIOA Core Programs.
- c. OFS will achieve at least 85% consumer satisfaction based upon Consumer surveys.
- d. Consumers will achieve an increase in average hourly earnings from the previous year.
- e. OFS will achieve 1,892 Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes.

Objective 1.4

DORS will provide high-quality services and outcomes for individuals who are blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind (B/VI, D-B).

Strategies: DORS will

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland Regulations, the Randolph Shepard Act and DORS Policy.
2. Provide independent living services to older individuals who are blind through (1) direct services of DORS rehabilitation teachers and (2) grants to community organizations.
3. Collaborate with WTC to enhance services to assure that blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind consumers have equal access to all programs offered at WTC.
4. Enhance collaboration with businesses and work force partners to include customized training, education, disability awareness, and worksite support to facilitate increased competitive integrated employment opportunities for OBVS consumers.
5. Develop creative, innovative services and programs including Pre-ETS programs to increase employability, skills, advancement and credential attainment.
6. Continue to expand services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff serving this population (Needs Assessment).
7. Recruit and train Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind vendors, and grow the program strategically.
8. Increase targeted training and develop standardized training for OBVS staff.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Meet federal performance standards for timely determination of eligibility and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.

- b. Provide staff training related to the new federal common performance measures for WIOA programs.
- c. OBVS will achieve 108 competitive integrated employment outcomes.
- d. The Business Enterprise Program will recruit/train/license 6 new managers and establish new vending sites where available.
- e. OBVS will close 190 ILOB cases successful.
- f. An increased number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired or Deaf-Blind will be referred to WTC compared to the previous year.
- g. OBVS will achieve at least 85% consumer satisfaction based upon Consumer surveys.
- h. OBVS will serve more Consumers who are Deaf-Blind as compared to the previous year.

Objective 1.5

Provide effective pre-employment transition services and employment services at the Workforce & Technology Center using state-of-the-art interdisciplinary strategies.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to individuals with significant disabilities to facilitate successful competitive integrated employment outcomes.
2. Develop relationships with employers utilizing agency staff who specialize in underserved populations to address service needs; as well as, issues and trends related to the employment of underserved disability populations.
3. Enhance linkages between employers, the business community, DORS Business Services staff, and community partners.
4. Implement strategies for WTC staff to collaborate with OFS and OBVS to enhance consumer services for pre-employment transitioning youth.
5. Provide comprehensive services and awareness to employers to enhance knowledge and understanding of the benefit of assistive technology at the worksite.
6. Implement and promote WTC training programs which lead to industry recognized credentials.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Increase the number of consumers achieving competitive integrated employment outcomes compared to the previous year.

- b. Increase the number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired and Deaf-Blind who will receive services compared to the previous year.
- c. Increase the number of consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing who will receive services compared to the previous year.
- d. Increase the number of consumers who are Autistic who will receive services compared to the previous year.
- e. Increase the number of customized and/or partnership trainings compared to the previous year.
- f. Participate in the division-wide Business Services Team which will implement collaborative projects between OFS, OBVS, and WTC to enhance the Agency's delivery of effective and efficient consumer services.
- g. Explore the opportunity with the agency's Staff Specialist–Transition Services to develop pre-employment transition services to occur during the traditional school year.
- h. Increase the number of worksite services provided, as compared to the previous year.
- i. Establish a baseline number of available WTC training programs, which lead to an industry recognized credential.

Objective 1.6

Enhance collaboration with and services to Maryland private and public employers.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Continue to have the Business Services Representatives in each region assist with enhancing services to businesses to include recruitment assistance, technical assistance for tax incentives, development of work-based learning opportunities, OJT and customized training, education and disability awareness training.
2. Engage with businesses through the CSAVR National Employment Team (NET) activities, including use of the national Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).
3. Collaborate with WIOA partners and community rehabilitation programs to leverage business contacts, share resources and expertise, and coordinate services that are beneficial to businesses and promote the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. The number of services to business will increase as compared to the previous year, and will be documented in the AWARE employer module, as well as through a pilot using the Maryland Workforce Exchange to measure effectiveness in serving employers.
- b. The number of work-based learning opportunities, including, but not limited to, QUEST, Summer Youth Employment, and On-the-Job Training opportunities will increase as compared to the previous year, and be tracked through the AWARE case management system.

- c. Minutes of CSAVR NET meetings and the number of consumers enrolled in the Talent Acquisition Portal will confirm activities and progress.
- d. Monthly reports from Business Service Representatives will show evidence of activities with agency partners.
- e. Increase, as compared to the previous year, the number of regional employment/job development alliance groups, to include WIOA partners. Conduct one ADA or disability awareness training for employers in each region.

Goal 2: Maximize the self-sufficiency of people with disabilities through the Disability Determination Services (DDS) program.

Objective 2.1

DDS will allocate and manage personnel, technology, and financial resources to maximize timely, accurate, and cost-effective case processing and security.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Maintain adequate staffing resources through recruitment and retention strategies, coordinating personnel actions with DORS HR and SSA.
2. Provide staff development and training opportunities to address succession planning needs, to develop leadership skills, and to enhance technical skills. Utilize in-house training, DORS and MSDE development activities, and SSA training.
3. Allocate and monitor division, unit, and individual performance goals that support federal workload and performance standards. Identify staff to work on special workloads (i.e., Quick Disability Determinations, Compassionate Allowances, Military Casualty cases, SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery (SOAR) cases, Continuing Disability Reviews, etc.).
4. Explore internships for DORS consumers, QUEST participants, and transitioning students to assist in developing work skills.
5. Develop and monitor the Business Process for Fraud referrals to support the Cooperative Disability Investigation Unit.
6. Monitor the VR Referrals and the electronic record exchange process.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. The Maryland DDS will adjudicate 71,000 claims.
- b. The Maryland DDS will meet or exceed federal performance standards.

Objective 2.2

DDS will meet or exceed the national mean processing time for case adjudication.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Continue to update the electronic business processes to improve timely adjudication.
2. Triage cases daily to identify priority cases and facilitate expedited decisions.
3. Maintain effective, high-quality partnerships with the Social Security Administration (SSA) Regional Office, Area Directors' Offices, local Field Offices, and Office of Disability Adjudication and Review.
4. Include SSA Area Director and Field Office staff in support of DDS Committees and disability case troubleshooting.
5. Continue to educate treating medical sources and consultative examination providers of options for transmitting medical records electronically.
6. Utilize SSA resources to acquire HIT MER (Health Information Technology Medical Evidence of Record).
7. Coordinate resources with OFS/OBVS staff to increase the recruitment of potential Psychiatrist/Psychologist to perform consultative examinations outside of the metropolitan areas.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Maryland DDS will demonstrate on federal reports that Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income workload processing times are consistent with requirements.
- b. Eighty percent (80%) of medical records sent to the DDS will arrive electronically.
- c. Maryland DDS will expand SSA HIT MER process.

Objective 2.3

DDS will meet or exceed the net accuracy rate for case adjudication as determined by the Social Security Administration.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Conduct in-line and end-of-line quality case reviews using the MicroPact QA module. The DDS Quality Coordinator will analyze results of in-house case review and federal quality reviews. As appropriate, cited errors will be rebutted to SSA's Virtual Request for Program Assistance (RPC). Quarterly quality meetings will address trends in case development and adjudication, and appropriate actions will be implemented to address quality concerns.
2. Conduct case staffing sessions between Operations staff and Medical and Psych Consultants to enhance accurate and timely case processing.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Maryland DDS will meet or exceed federal criteria for accuracy as compared to regional and national quality review standards.

- b. Medical and Psych Consultants will participate in staffing sessions and reviews to enhance accurate and timely medical decisions.

Objective 2.4

The Maryland DDS will continue to develop and enhance electronic disability determination processes.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Provide training to select staff to develop skills for the use of the new Social Security Disability Case Processing System (DCPS), which guides decision-makers through sequential evaluation and determination preparation.
2. Increase the use of Outbound Fax functionality for requesting medical records electronically.
3. Continuously monitor and revise DDS business processes to reflect changes in electronic case processing.
4. Maryland DDS will increase the utilization of the mail machine to gain maximum mail processing efficiencies.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Revise usage of staff resources and equipment to maintain electronic environment efficiencies.
- b. Achieve an Electronic Records Express (ERE) goal of 90% for medical evidence of record.
- c. Adjust business processes and train staff on MicroPact Global Inc. upgrades and the conversion to the new Disability Case Processing System (DCPS).
- d. Create a Disability Case Processing System (DCPS) team to establish use of new adjudication tool.

Objective 2.5

DDS will coordinate the SSI/Medicaid workload with the State Review Team.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Monitor the Federal/State disability workloads through a tracking system.
2. Provide relevant case records with the State Review Team (SRT) as requested, in accordance with the MOU between Social Security Administration and Department of Human Services (DHS) formally known as the Department of Human Resource.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Conduct monthly electronic match of cases common to DDS and SRT.

- b. Maintain a log of case records that are released to SRT.
- c. Validate case invoices against DDS records that are released to SRT.

Objective 2.6

DDS will make medical disability determinations for claims filed through the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Collaborate with Maryland Department of Health, MDH, (formally DHMH) and Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to continuously review and revise procedures processing EID claims.
2. Monitor the volume, quality, and timeliness of the EID workload.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Communicate with appropriate MDH and DOD staff on procedural changes in processing EID claims.
- b. Medical determinations of EID claims will be completed accurately and in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Goal 3: Partner and collaborate with other WIOA programs, private organizations, employers, community groups and individuals to advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Objective 3.1

Enhance/expand services for DORS consumers in collaboration with WIOA partners (Needs Assessment Rec. 3 and 7).

Strategies: DORS will

1. Cross-train staff regarding services available from WIOA partners at the state and local level.
2. Participate in meetings regarding WIOA policy development and partnerships.
3. Participate in local planning meetings regarding service provision and collaboration in American Job Centers.
4. Strengthen referral procedures to increase engagement of consumers, including Consumers on the DORS waiting list, with WIOA partners.
5. Develop and implement procedures for referring consumers whose cases were recently closed to Maryland Employment Networks.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Disability awareness training for WIOA partners will be provided.
- b. A common referral form and release of confidentiality will be developed.
- c. A baseline number of individuals involved in services provided by WIOA partners will be determined, using AWARE documentation.
- d. Develop a method for tracking ticket hand-offs to Maryland Employment Networks.

Objective 3.2

Assure collaborative relationships are in place with Community Rehabilitation Programs, Community Colleges, Local Education Agencies, MANSEF Schools, and other organizations to enhance effectiveness in service delivery.

Strategies:

1. DORS managers will monitor and address concerns raised by consumers, DORS staff and community partners.
2. DORS will develop and expand collaboration between partners to address unmet consumer needs.

Performance Measures:

- a. Four times a year, DORS will survey consumers with open cases regarding their satisfaction with services provided by DORS in collaboration with community partners.
- b. Managers will follow-up on all concerns raised regarding DORS partners raised via the DORS satisfaction survey process.

Objective 3.3

Reevaluate service delivery for individuals in special populations for consistency with priorities within WIOA.

Strategies:

1. Evaluate agency resources which support BHA Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment (EBPSE) and consumers who receive Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services.
2. Collaborate with DDA and clarify procedures, including those related to Employment First, to ensure seamless delivery of services.
3. Continue strategic activities that will meet the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders preparing for employment.

4. The DORS Multi-Cultural workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Review and update DORS MOUs with BHA and DDA for consistency with WIOA requirements.
- b. Match or exceed the number of Asian and Hispanic consumers served by DORS, compared with the previous year.
- c. Match or exceed the number of consumers with Autism achieving employment compared with the previous year.

Objective 3.4

DORS will provide support to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to maintain and enhance its leadership role in the oversight of vocational rehabilitation service delivery in Maryland.

Strategies:

1. DORS will ensure that it works with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in accordance with federal law and regulations and Council By-Laws.
2. Council members will review and comment on the Annual Agency Program Plan, DORS progress in meeting its performance goals, and DORS program accomplishments.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. The Maryland SRC will conduct four (4) quarterly meetings including a meeting during the legislative session in Annapolis.
- b. The Maryland SRC and DORS will conduct annual public meetings in preparation for developing the VR portion of the Maryland Combined State Plan.
- c. The Maryland SRC will submit its annual report to the Governor and RSA as required by law.

Objective 3.5

Promote and enhance quality independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Maryland through independent living programs.

Strategies:

1. Provide grant support, technical assistance and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

2. Manage DORS grants to Centers for Independent Living (CILs), including providing technical assistance and monitoring regarding the IL program, the IL AT program, and fiscal responsibilities.
3. Participate as an IL Partner in implementation of the 2017-2019 State Plan for Independent Living.
4. Regional Directors and OBVS Supervisors will conduct an annual meeting with Executive Directors of CILs within their areas to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. Annual reviews of grant performance will be conducted for each CIL with which DORS has a grant, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.
- b. Meeting minutes will confirm DORS staff attendance and participation in quarterly meetings of Maryland IL Partners.
- c. DORS Regional/Program directors will confirm at least annual meetings with CIL Executive Directors.

Goal 4: Provide Infrastructure to promote and support the accomplishment of the DORS mission.

Objective 4.1

Implement strategies required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), consistent with WIOA final regulation, including Title IV, Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and in consultation with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, other core programs identified within the Combined State Plan, and the Technical Assistance Centers.

Strategies:

1. DORS will collaborate with workforce partners to update and implement the Combined State Plan.
2. Implement MOUs/Resource Sharing Agreements with workforce partners required for DORS to fulfill new federal reporting requirements.
3. Identify a technology training team to increase effective use of current technology for case management.
4. Develop strategy for use of Career Index Plus to enhance vocational guidance and counseling for development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.
5. Provide ongoing training to staff regarding the Rehabilitation Act and implications for DORS policy, procedures, and data collection.
6. Leverage electronic communication strategies to gather information from DORS consumers during service delivery as well as post-exit.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2018:

- a. DORS Rehabilitation Services Manuals, publications, and the AWARE case management system will be updated consistent with changes in the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. Ongoing training will be provided to DORS staff regarding the Rehabilitation Act (e.g. pre-employment transition services, supported employment, limitations on use of subminimum wage, competitive integrated employment criteria, measurable skills gains, and services to employers).
- c. The DORS section of the Combined State Plan will be updated.
- d. DORS will request and receive UI wage data from DLLR four times per year, as required for federal reporting.
- e. Electronic communication procedures for requesting and collecting information from DORS consumers will be implemented.

Objective 4.2

Staff training and leadership development programs will be provided to assure that staff maintain current competencies in rehabilitation policy and practice, targeted populations, business services, and administrative/leadership issues.

Strategies:

1. Provide effective Vocational Rehabilitation training for all staff by identifying new approaches to training new hires and to provide ongoing professional development training for all staff.
2. Provide clear and consistent communication to staff regarding policy and performance expectations to increase standardization of policy application and to improve quality of services.
3. Utilize an on-line/web-based learning management system or platform for training staff to promote continuing education
4. Provide leadership/development activities, including a supervisory training series designed specifically for DORS staff.
5. Continue to support DORS staff obtaining advanced degrees in vocational rehabilitation and related fields.
6. DORS staff and Agency partners will be given opportunities to receive internal technical assistance and training regarding WIOA implementation.
7. Conduct at least quarterly trainings of Business Services staff to enhance their skills and develop strategies for engaging businesses.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2017:

- a. The number of on-line/web-based training opportunities for staff and community partners, as appropriate, will increase as compared to the previous year.
- b. There will be a minimum of 4 trainings or meetings specifically for DORS Supervisors.
- c. The number of staff who enroll in graduate school programs will increase which will improve succession planning.
- d. Staff will be trained and/or updated on policies and procedures related to WIOA implementation at least quarterly.
- e. At least one multi-session leadership program will be offered annually.
- f. Trainings of all staff assigned to business services will be conducted on a quarterly basis; agendas and minutes of Business Services meetings will document training progress.