

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
Agency Program Plan



Fiscal Year 2019

October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019

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 follow the principles of the Governor's Customer Service Promise.
2. Monitor internal strategy for evaluating customer satisfaction during service delivery in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (Needs Assessment Rec. 6).
3. Improve communication between DORS staff and consumers.
4. Continue to implement a Quality Assurance Review Program for Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure consistency with required measures under WIOA.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. Continue to review feedback on the Governor's Customer Service Promise and respond as needed, and participate in MSDE's customer service training.
- b. Conduct Customer Satisfaction Survey on a quarterly basis for consumers to provide feedback on their satisfaction with services at key points during the rehabilitation process.
- c. Increased customer satisfaction with communication from DORS staff will be noted in DORS customer satisfaction surveys.
- d. Achieve 85% customer satisfaction for OFS and for OBVS.
- e. One Quality Assurance Case Review will be completed for each District during the fiscal year and statewide Quality Assurance measures will improve in comparison to the previous FY.

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. Formalize consistent partnerships with MSDE and local LEAs to ensure access to required/CORE Pre-ETS and Transition services throughout the state.
3. Emphasize and implement pre-ETS and transition services to promote long-term career success and leadership.
4. Provide training and support to DORS transition counselors and pre-employment transition services counselors and partners through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings 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, 2019:

- 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. Finalize MOU with MSDE Special Education and MD Department of Disabilities (MDOD) for a Student Tracker System and begin a pilot of the system.
- c. Update existing MOUs with 24 Local Education Agencies, MD School for the Deaf, MD School for the Blind, and MSDE Division of Special Education in place between DORS and State Education Agency.
- d. Increase the number of Pre-ETS and Transition service provided to youth and Students with Disabilities as documented through authorizations and Actual Service records, as compared to the previous year.
- e. 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.
- f. 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 for DORS consumers and reporting on common performance measures for DORS consumers.
4. Implement training and begin accurately recording Educational Goals and outcomes.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. Meet federal performance standards for timely determination of eligibility and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.
- b. Enhance consumer employment outcomes as measured by an increase in average hourly earnings from the previous year.
- c. Provide staff training related to the new federal and state common measures for WIOA Core Programs.
- d. OFS will achieve 1,303 Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes.
- e. Establish baseline for number of documented Educational Goals.

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 direct services of DORS rehabilitation teachers.
3. Collaborate with WTC to enhance services and educate staff to assure that blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind consumers have effective programming 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. Continue to expand services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff serving this population as recommended by the Deaf-Blind Workgroup.
6. Recruit and train Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind vendors, and grow the program strategically.
7. Develop a standardized curriculum of activities for OBVS staff to ensure highly qualified staff to provide excellent service and increase customer satisfaction.
8. Implement training and begin accurately recording Educational Goals and outcomes.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. Meet federal performance standards for timely determination of eligibility and development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.
- b. OBVS will achieve 80 competitive integrated employment outcomes.
- c. The Business Enterprise Program will recruit/train/license five new managers and establish new vending sites where available.
- d. OBVS will close 190 ILOB cases successful.
- e. An increased number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired or Deaf-Blind will be referred to WTC compared to the previous year.
- f. The Deaf-Blind Workgroup will meet three times per year to identify and expand services for the Deaf-Blind.
- g. Increase staff competencies and proficiencies to serve OBVS population.
- h. Establish baseline for number of documented Educational Goals.
- i. Provide staff training related to the new federal and state common measures for WIOA Core Programs.

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. Continue to provide high quality comprehensive services to individuals with significant disabilities to facilitate successful competitive integrated employment outcomes.
2. Continue to develop and enhance 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 transition services and services for transitioning youth.
5. Continue to provide comprehensive services and awareness to employers to enhance knowledge and understanding of the benefit of assistive technology at the worksite.
6. Develop and implement a system for WTC staff to document measurable skills gains/credentials for individuals served.
7. Investigate the feasibility of a system with WIOA partners for the sharing of training resources for individuals served.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- 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 provision and documentation of employer engagement.
- g. Designated WTC staff will attend the statewide quarterly Pre-ETS / Transitioning Youth meeting facilitated by the agency's Staff Specialist for Transition Services to enhance and/or develop new WTC programs.

- h. Increase the number of worksite consumers served as compared to the previous year.
- i. Establish a baseline for number of documented measurable skills gains/credentials for individuals served at WTC.
- j. Establish a workgroup to investigate the feasibility of a system for sharing training resources with WIOA partners.

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 new 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, including internal mentoring and leadership opportunities, 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. Monitor the Business Process for Fraud referrals to support the Cooperative Disability Investigation Unit.
5. Monitor VR requests for medical evidence of record.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- 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, 2019:

- 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. Ninety percent (90%) 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, 2019:

- 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. Maintain 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, including DCPS.
4. Maryland DDS will increase the utilization of the mail machine to gain maximum mail processing efficiencies.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- 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, 2019:

- 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, 2019:

- 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.

Objective 2.7

DDS will relocate to a new facility.

Strategies: DDS will

1. Collaborate with the Maryland Department of General Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Social Security Administration, Department of Information Technology, Maryland State Department of Education and affiliate agencies to coordinate the move.
2. Establish teams to accomplish benchmarks that will vacate and clear the existing facility and occupy the new facilities.
3. Monitor all benchmarks to ensure completion.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. Vacate 170 W. Ridgely Road facility.
- b. Relocate to 211 Schilling Circle.
- c. Have agency fully operational at new location.

Goal 3: Partner and collaborate with other WIOA programs, private organizations, employers, and community groups to advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.**Objective 3.1****Evaluate and monitor service delivery for consistency with priorities within WIOA.****Strategies: DORS will**

1. DORS staff and WIOA partners will participate in joint trainings to learn about services available at the state and local level.
2. Contribute to the tracking of the Benchmarks of Success for Maryland's Workforce System.
3. Participate in local planning meetings regarding service provision and collaboration in American Job Centers to strengthen referral procedures and tracking of consumer involvement with WIOA partners.
4. Promote the Employment First approach for individuals currently employed in subminimum wage positions by 14c license holders.
5. Ensure completion of the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities in Maryland.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. DORS participation in training activities with WIOA partners will be documented.
- b. DORS data specific to the Benchmarks for Success will be shared as requested.
- c. A baseline number of individuals, including individuals on the waitlist, involved in services provided by WIOA partners will be determined, using AWARE documentation.
- d. Group career counseling and information sessions will be provided to individuals employed in subminimum wage positions.
- e. The 2019 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities in Maryland will be completed.

Objective 3.2

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 and WTC Employment Specialists provide and enhance services to businesses to include recruitment assistance, technical assistance for tax incentives, development of work-based learning opportunities, OJT and customized training, retention services, and disability awareness and ADA training.
2. Engage with businesses through the CSAVR National Employment Team (NET).
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.
4. Partner with businesses to connect them to DORS job seekers through tours, career information sessions, job fairs, and other direct means.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. The number of services to business will increase as compared to the previous year, and will be documented in the AWARE employer module 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 business services reports will confirm activities and progress.
- d. Monthly reports from Business Service Representatives will show evidence of activities with agency partners.
- e. Business partner activities will be tracked in the AWARE Employer module and increase over previous year.

Objective 3.3

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: DORS will

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, 2019:

- a. The Maryland SRC will conduct four quarterly meetings.
- b. The Maryland SRC and DORS will conduct annual public meetings.

Objective 3.4

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

Strategies: DORS will

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, 2019:

- a. Annual reviews of grant performance will be conducted for each GIL with which DORS has a grant, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.
- b. DORS Regional/Program directors will confirm at least annual meetings with GIL Executive Directors.

Objective 3.5

Evaluate partner connection for consumers receiving Social Security Benefits.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Ensure order of selection assignments for individuals with Social security benefits are accurate.
2. Referrals will be made for Social Security recipients on the waitlist to employment networks and the WIPPA.
3. Participants who receive Social Security benefits in employed status will be referred to an employment network.
4. Ensure fee for service benefits planning is completed for all appropriate Social Security recipients.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. DORS counselors and supervisors will receive information regarding Social Security eligibility requirements.
- b. DORS will establish a baseline number of individuals in delayed status referred to employment networks and the WIPPA on the Special Programs page.
- c. DORS will establish a baseline number of participants with Social Security benefits referred to an Employment Network after obtaining employment.
- d. The number of Social Security beneficiaries receiving fee-for-service benefits counseling will increase as compared to the previous FY.

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

Objective 4.1

Implement strategies required by WIOA and in accordance with the Combined State Plan.

Strategies: DORS will

1. DORS will continue to implement MOUs/Resource Sharing Agreements with workforce partners required to fulfill new federal reporting requirements.
2. Continue and expand electronic communication with DORS consumers throughout the case process including post-exit.

3. Explore data collection systems with WIOA partners to facilitate the collection of federal reporting requirements, including consumer involvement with WIOA partner agencies.
4. DORS staff and agency partners will be given opportunities to received internal technical assistance and training regarding WIOA implementation.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. MOU's and Resource Sharing Agreements will be completed on an as needed basis to conform with State and Federal regulations.
- b. Electronic communication procedures for requesting and collecting information and input from DORS consumers will be implemented and updated in the RSM.
- c. Recommendations for data collection systems will be reviewed as available.
- d. Staff will be provided technical assistance on a topic related to WIOA at least quarterly.

Objective 4.2

Increase staff competency and satisfaction by providing ongoing staff training, professional development, and leadership development programs while intentionally promoting a culture of staff retention.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Establish an Internal Communications Workgroup to recommend a methodology which will ensure all staff receive clear and consistent communication.
2. Establish a New Counselor Training Workgroup to develop a protocol for training new counselors prior to caseload assignment.
3. Develop a comprehensive training series for new Supervisors to include personnel management and case management functions.
4. DORS staff will be encouraged to access on-line/web-based learning management systems to address ongoing training needs.
5. Leadership development and cross-training opportunities will be provided to ensure continuation of critical agency functions.
6. Continue to support DORS staff obtaining advanced degrees in vocational rehabilitation and related fields.
7. Conduct at least quarterly trainings of Business Services staff to enhance their skills and develop strategies for engaging businesses.
8. Develop and utilize a DORS Employee Satisfaction Survey.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. Internal Communication Workgroup recommendations will be provided to executive staff.
- b. New Counselor Training Workgroup recommendations will be provided to executive staff.
- c. Management trainings for new DORS supervisors will be offered twice during the FY.
- d. Staff use of on-line/web based learning management systems will increase during the FY.
- e. At least one multi-session leadership development program with a cross-training component will be offered during the FY.
- f. Staff enrollment in graduate school programs will increase from the previous FY.
- g. Agendas and minutes of Business Services meetings will document training progress.
- h. DORS Employee Satisfaction will be surveyed.

Objective 4.3

Promote strategic use of accessible technology and establish policy and internal controls to support staff effectiveness and efficiency.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Implement the recommendations from the Technology Tips Workgroup identified as Year One Key Actions in the DORS Strategic Plan for 2019-2021.
2. Ensure staff resources are aligned to the agency priorities to serve customers and claimants effectively.
3. Review, update, and document internal controls and streamline case management, communication, and administrative procedures to reduce errors and establish consistency statewide.
4. Convene a workgroup of program managers and staff specialists to develop a consistent vendor application and approval process and monitoring protocol.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2019:

- a. DORS Strategic Plan Information Technology Key Actions for Year One will be implemented.
- b. DORS intranet will be updated.
- c. E-Fax will be used for inbound and outbound communication.
- d. DORS will have identified technology for collecting e-signatures.

- e. Expand use of GovDelivery to send appointment reminders to customers and solicit post-exit follow-up.
- f. Position descriptions will be reviewed and revised, as necessary, for consistency with Agency priorities to ensure appropriate distribution of Agency resources.
- g. DORS required forms and administrative procedures will be reviewed and streamlined.
- h. Establish internal control procedures for the vendor application and approval process and monitoring vendor performance.