

Strategic Plan

OCTOBER 2021– SEPTEMBER 2023

*Office of the Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Rehabilitation Services*



DORS Strategic Plan

- **Supports DORS Mission:**

To provide leadership and support in promoting the employment, economic self-sufficiency and independence of individuals with disabilities.



DORS Strategic Plan

- **Supports DORS Organizational Values:**
 - Mission-Driven Organization
 - True Concern for Our Customers
 - Belief In and Commitment to Our Employees
 - Collaboration & Teamwork
 - Sense of Urgency
 - Eagerness to Learn, to Take Necessary Risks, and to Change
 - Commitment to Continuous Improvement



Why is Strategic Planning Needed?

Rationale Statement:

To achieve the best employment outcomes for consumers, to prepare students with disabilities for transitioning, and disability decisions for claimants, DORS needs to look to the future in assuring a responsive, accountable agency structured to meet consumer/claimant needs, support staff, develop leadership, enhance partnerships and use to full advantage the technology and resources of today and tomorrow.



Strategic Plan: Goals for the Next 3 Years

2021–2023



Goal 1

- Organizational structure will support the success of DORS customers and accurate/timely disability decisions for claimants in a manner that reflects statutory and regulatory requirements, respect for customer and claimants, and equitable working conditions for staff.



Goal 2

- Increased use of current information technology will continue to enhance administration of the program, provision of services, and achievement of employment for consumers and timely/accurate decisions for claimants.



Goal 3

- Collaboration with partners identified within the WIOA Combined State Plan will be enhanced.



Goal 4

- A strategy for increasing consistent staff training and practice will be implemented.



Objective 1.1 – Organizational Structure

- Ensure infrastructure and staff are aligned to serve customers and claimants effectively, utilizing data analytics to identify areas of need, including staffing considerations and utilization of Agency resources for the benefit of providing quality customer service.



Objective 1.2 – Organizational Structure

- Evaluate, update, and document internal control procedures to ensure the accurate collection, retention, and timely reporting of program data along with compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



Objective 1.3 – Organizational Structure

- Assess services to promote consumer career planning and training, support quality customer services, and improve post-exit retention.



Objective 2.1 – Information Technology

- Identify, implement, and train staff on technology updates supported and/or required by the State or Federal government that are anticipated to enhance workflow and responsiveness to consumers/claimants.



Objective 2.2 – Information Technology

- Promote strategic use of accessible technology to obtain electronic signatures and transition to fully electronic case records to improve staff efficiency, while supplementing consumer access to statewide resources using virtual methods of case management and service delivery.



Objective 2.3 – Information Technology

- Utilize available technology to facilitate consumer engagement and ongoing collaboration, such as bi-directional communication platforms, Mail2SMS application, and web portals designed to securely share information and manage vendor invoices.



Objective 3.1 – Partner Collaboration

- Align with WIOA and community partners to increase opportunities for collaboration at the local level, focusing on quality outcomes to increase employment satisfaction and long-term outcomes.



Objective 3.2 – Partner Collaboration

- Enhance focus with Agency partners to incorporate career pathways, Measurable Skills Gains, and credential attainment to promote post-exit employment retention and opportunity for advancement.



Objective 3.3 – Partner Collaboration

- Provide effective services to employers to identify and support employment and vocational training opportunities for consumers, including customized training programs developed.



Objective 4.1 – Staff Training

- Review internal and external staff training opportunities to compile an accessible training archive and identify additional staff training needs using CANVAS Learning Management System.



Objective 4.2 – Staff Training

- Reinforce staff awareness of partners to increase utilization of community resources and comparable benefits in vocational services, including WIOA Workforce Training Series offered in conjunction with Maryland Department of Labor.



Objective 4.3 – Staff Training

- Promote staff cross-training opportunities, including DORS Leadership Exploration and Agency Program (LEAP) and Emerging Leaders, to promote exposure to other positions and assure continuation of critical Agency functions.



SWOT Analysis

Strength – Weakness – Opportunity – Threat

SWOT Analysis: Strengths

- Dedicated, mission-driven staff who are passionate about assisting individuals with disabilities.
- Active and engaged State Rehab Council, growing in number and representing of a variety of professional disciplines and backgrounds.
- Technological resources supporting hybrid case management and virtual services, allowing staff to serve consumers outside of traditional geographic divisions and respond to statewide needs.
- Fiscal spending well managed and supplemented by SSA reimbursement.



SWOT Analysis: Strengths

- Automated processes supporting case services, including invoice and bill payment, centralized referral management, and SSA benefit verification.
- Increased use of Data Analytics to evaluate trends and monitor outcomes.
- Comprehensive Workforce & Technology Center, including customized training programs in partnership with local businesses.
- Effective partnerships with local school systems and community rehabilitation programs.
- Commitment to customer service and process improvement.



SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses

- Increased staff vacancies and difficulty filling positions following COVID-19 pandemic.
- Difficulty retaining staff due to availability of employment opportunities, including those with remote work options.
- Increased caseload size and limited staff capital resulting in customer service challenges.
- Economic difficulties have resulted in more immediate financial needs for consumers, which may not involve career training and preparation for lasting employment outcomes.



SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses

- Difficulty in obtaining consumer verification of educational outcomes and post-exit credentials.
- Limited availability of specialized services for underserved populations statewide, including Blind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and non-English speakers.
- Differences in measures of success between DORS and partners.



SWOT Analysis: Opportunities

- Center for Innovative Training for VR grant provides assistance to develop Agency learning management system to enhance staff abilities.
- Data sharing strategies to document consumer progress and demonstrate collaboration with partners.
- Increase outreach, recruitment, and tracking of participation for consumers in apprenticeships and other work-based opportunities.
- Develop case management efficiencies through the use of technology, including electronic files, video conferencing, and automated processes.



SWOT Analysis: Opportunities

- Ongoing evaluation of service delivery and outcomes through data analysis and partnership with VR technical assistance centers.
- Enhance student opportunities utilizing technology to promote service opportunities across geographic areas.
- Partner with benefits planning providers and Employment Networks.
- Promote career pathways for long-term success to increase measurable skills gains and credential attainment for consumers.



SWOT Analysis: Threats

- Challenge to attract and retain quality employees, impacting leadership development and succession planning.
- Abundance of position vacancies result in increased workloads for remaining staff, resulting in consolidation of positions/duties.
- Complexity of counselor position has increased under WIOA reporting requirements and RSA regulations.
- Continued customer demand for services, particularly Pre-Employment Transition Services.



SWOT Analysis: Threats

- Impact of pandemic on CRP long-term business models, personnel, and service provision.
- Limited consumer access and technology abilities, along with limited internet service in many parts of the state, effect ability for consumers to participate in virtual services.
- Continued growth of DORS waiting list.



Key Actions: Year One

October 2021 – September 2022



Organizational Structure

1. Document and evaluate internal controls as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and RSA regulations.
2. Evaluate strategies to effectively utilize Agency resources to reduce staff burden and meet consumer needs statewide.
3. Improve communication between staff and with consumers, including increased opportunities for feedback.



Information Technology

1. Implement technology required to collect e-signatures.
2. Complete DORS intranet update.
3. Continue to explore use of technology to streamline operations and facilitate effective case management and customer service.
4. Review Agency policy to incorporate virtual processes and identify opportunities for remote service delivery.



Partnerships

1. Review and maintain local agreements with workforce partners with a focus on increasing long-term employment outcomes and opportunities for career development.
2. Implement new counselor performance measure to improve consumer referrals to and tracking of consumer involvement with WIOA partners.
3. Develop data sharing agreement with MSDE to increase accurate reporting of skill gains and credential attainment for high school students.



Staff Training

1. Compile an accessible electronic training archive, utilizing feedback from Staff Training Workgroup, to develop position-specific training curriculum.
2. Conduct quarterly trainings with staff regarding significant policy updates, including learning checks to reinforce material.
3. Develop a work team to identify critical agency functions and create plan to cross-train staff to meet agency needs.



Thank You!



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The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For Federal fiscal year 2021, the total amount of grant funds awarded was \$46,881,489. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs \$12,668,382 were funded by State appropriations.