

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA): Attachment 4.11(a)

New York State ACCES-VR jointly conducted the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 to determine the rehabilitation (and other) needs of residents with disabilities and to identify gaps in vocational rehabilitation (VR) services.

This assessment is based on information provided by consumers, advocacy groups, disability advisory councils, community rehabilitation programs, VR staff, and other partner agency representatives. It includes a review of disability statistics for New York State (NYS), RSA 911 data, and public input gathered by ACCES-VR and its SRC members during the FFY 2014 State plan public meetings. ACCES-VR also conducted or collaborated on several key surveys that directly address the CSNA requirements.

Methodology: Assessment Activities

The SRC and ACCES-VR jointly developed a work plan for the CSNA that includes:

1. an analysis of population statistics in NYS that describe the:
 - o numbers and percentages of people with disabilities, their employment status, educational levels and income;
 - o VR participation rates of minority individuals in comparison to individuals in the overall population; and
 - o VR services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, individuals with mental health disabilities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including individuals with autism spectrum disorder and individuals with substance use disorders, youth, and individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI);
2. findings from the State Plan Public meetings for FFY 2014, at which participants were provided information about activities in their communities to help them obtain and maintain employment, and encouraged both to make recommendations to promote greater engagement in completing ACCES-VR services leading to employment and to strengthen employment opportunities;
3. results of the consumer satisfaction survey December 2011 of consumers who had received job placement services during the previous year to determine the satisfaction of these consumers with the services they received from ACCES-VR and the outcomes;
4. results of the Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (Cornell EDI) data analysis of VR services, focusing on youth, postsecondary training and the impact of supported employment on outcomes achieved by consumers;
5. services provided to individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce investment system;

6. ACCES-VR’s review of supported employment programs and quality of services for the development of new performance based funding contracts; and
7. an analysis of supported employment provider evaluations and surveys to assess needs and develop training.

ACCES-VR is committed to making effective use of the findings from the CSNA and using what is learned to shape policy, procedures, training, operations and practice.

1. Key Findings of Population Statistics for New Yorkers with Disabilities

Individuals can apply for services, receive services, and have their cases opened or closed throughout the year. The data in this report is gathered at the end of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), which is September 30. The three primary data elements for this report include information about individuals with:

- “open cases”: applied for services and their cases are open (status 02-24)
- “active cases” eligible and/or receiving VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) (status 10-24)
- “served”: all open and closed cases (status 02-30).

In FFY 2012, NYS served 90,374 individuals with disabilities. Of these, 52,341 were “active cases” with VR as of September 30, 2012. The number of individuals served is a decrease of 17.6 percent from the 109,728 individuals served in FFY 2009.

The following table has findings taken from Cornell University Online Resource for U.S. Disability Statistics⁽¹⁾ that provide an overall context for the VR program to consider the potential needs of individuals with disabilities in New York State.

Employment, Education and Earnings

Population	NYS With Disabilities	NYS Without Disabilities	National With Disabilities
Working age adults 18-64 yrs	1,054,527	12,406,200	19,641,300,
Employment rate ages 18-64	31.9%	72.1%	33.1%
No HS Diploma ages 21-64	25.0%	11.0%	22.4%
BA/BS ages 21-64	16.5%	36.6%	12.5%
FT median annual earnings ages 21-64	\$ 40,700	\$ 45,800	\$ 36,700
Median Household Income ages 21-64	\$ 37,600	\$ 66,400	\$ 36,700
Poverty Rate ages 21-64	30.0%	12.3%	27.8

There are 1.05 million individuals 18-64 years of age with disabilities in NYS (8.5 percent prevalence rate). The NYS employment rate of working-age individuals with disabilities (age 18 to 64) is 31.9 percent, compared to 72.1 percent for persons without disabilities, a gap of 40.2 percent. Twenty-five percent of New Yorkers with disabilities

(1) Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2013). Disability Statistics from the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI). Retrieved Mar 22, 2013 from www.disabilitystatistics.org ,

have less than a high school diploma, compared to 11 percent without disabilities. Only 16.5 percent of working age individuals with disabilities in NYS holds a bachelor degree, compared to 36.6 percent of non-disabled individuals. The median household income of working-age adults with disabilities in NYS is \$37,600 and \$66,400 for families without disabilities, a gap of \$28,800. The percentage of New Yorkers ages 21-64 years with a disability living below the poverty line in 2011 was 30 percent, compared to 12.3 percent of non-disabled adults.

Within NYS, there is a large gap between working age adults with disabilities and those without on key factors such as educational attainment and employment. For New Yorkers with disabilities, more than twice the number do not have a high school diploma, and less than half have a bachelor degree when compared to those without disabilities. The percent of individuals with disabilities who are employed are less than half of those without disabilities. The median household income and poverty rate is more than double for New Yorkers with disabilities. In NYS, more working age individuals with disabilities have a bachelor degree, higher median earnings and household income compared to national data. The poverty rate for New Yorkers with disabilities (30 percent) is higher than the national rate (27.8 percent).

ACCES-VR is working to close these gaps through services such as postsecondary education that should lead to increased wages. Although many institutions of higher education have not put in place the level of supports needed by individuals with disabilities to succeed, ACCES-VR provides advocacy and support to individuals requiring these services, and has identified services to youth as a priority. For transitioning youth, services that include paid work experiences are being developed as a strategy for career advancement.

In addition to these statistics, 27.2 percent of individuals served by ACCES-VR in 2012 (24,606 persons) received SSI/SSDI. Of these, 70.9 percent were considered to have most significant disabilities. Currently, 2.4 percent of individuals served came to ACCES-VR as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients and 14.6 percent came as Safety Net participants.

The employment gap is an issue of vital concern to the public-private VR system. The employment rate for individuals with disabilities is suppressed by factors such as access to housing, transportation, health care (including treatment for mental illness, substance abuse and chronic disabilities), childcare, and opportunities for asset accumulation. All of these factors impact the employment rate for individuals with disabilities and closing the employment gap will require a much broader public policy approach across federal, state and local economic initiatives and programs.

Characteristics of Individuals Served including Minority Individuals and Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

The following tables provide information about individuals with disabilities seeking VR services in New York State. In FFY 2012, ACCES-VR served 90,374

consumers. When compared to the general State population, ACCES-VR served a higher proportion of minority individuals who were African-American (26.1 percent) or Multiracial, (0.4 percent). ACCES-VR served a smaller proportion of minority individuals who were Hispanic (14 percent), Asian (1.6 percent) and American Indian (0.6 percent). Compared to the general State Population, the largest differences were 6.2 percentage points less for individuals who were Asian, and 4.0 percentage points less for individuals who were Hispanic.

FFY 2012 VR Participation Rates of Minority Individuals (all statuses)

Ethnicity	% Served	% General Population	Difference
White	54.2	71.5	- 17.3
Black	26.1	17.5	+ 8.6
Hispanic	14.0	18.0	- 4.0
Am. Indian	0.6	1.0	- 0.4
Asian	1.6	7.8	- 6.2
Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	none
Multiracial	2.8	2.2	+ 0.4

Needs of Special Populations including Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities and those Individuals considered Unserved and Underserved

In order to better understand the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the need for supported employment and those that are unserved and underserved, ACCES-VR, jointly with the SRC, conducted a range of activities, one of which was an analysis of data on participation in VR services. The following chart represents individuals with the most significant disabilities, mental health disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, substance use disorders, receiving SSI or SSDI and youth. A brief analysis follows the chart.

FFY 2012 ACCES-VR Unserved/Underserved Populations

Disability Group	Total Number (all open and closed)	% of all Active Cases	% of all VR Employment Outcomes	% with Most Significant Disability
Mental Health	17,392	20.2	17.8	71.5
Intellectual/Developmental Disability (ID/DD)	14,946	19.0	18.6	78.9
Autism Spectrum Disorder	2,823	4.0	2.8	88.5
Substance Use Disorders	16,798	17.6	20.7	39.5
Youth (apply before age 22)	35,064	42.2	36.3	61.0
SSI/SSDI	24,606	28.9	23.8	70.9
Visual	323	0.4	0.55	**
Deaf/hard of hearing, deaf/blind	3,023	3.3	5.1	63.8

** ACCES-VR will start reporting this data FFY 2014

Greater than half of the individuals served by ACCES-VR continue to be determined to have a most significant disability. The following information is provided about ACCES-VR consumers. Those with active cases are eligible and/or receiving services under an IPE (status 10-24).

The percentage of individuals with a mental health (MH) diagnosis consistently averages 20 percent of the total number of consumers, of which 71.5 percent have most significant disabilities. Individuals with mental health conditions who achieved an employment outcome (status 26) accounts for 17.8 percent (2,122 individuals) of all ACCES-VR employment outcomes (11,900 individuals). ACCES-VR and OMH discussed services for individuals with mental health conditions that would incorporate application of the "Individualized Placement and Support" (IPS) model with existing providers who are jointly funded by ACCES-VR and Office of Mental Health. Counselors were provided training in IPS that evolved into a series of trainings in the components of recovery that identify specific techniques for supporting individuals with mental health conditions in achieving employment outcomes.

For the purposes of this CSNA, intellectual disability and developmental disability (ID/DD) is defined as primary impairment due to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, cerebral palsy, congenital condition or birth injury, epilepsy, or mental retardation. Individuals with ID/DD comprise 19 percent of the total number of consumers with ACCES-VR, an increase of 1.1 percent since FFY 2009. The percentage of individuals with ID/DD who achieved an employment outcome remained at 18.6 percent (2,213 individuals) of all ACCES-VR employment outcomes. Of the total served in all VR statuses, 78.9 percent of individuals with ID/DD were considered to have a most significant disability. ACCES-VR has been engaged in a strategic collaboration with the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) for several decades, and over the past 25 years, has worked extensively in the joint implementation of supported employment services.

ACCES-VR consumers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have increased to 4.0 percent (1,899 individuals) of the total number of active cases in the VR Program, an increase of 1.6 percentage points since 2009. The percentage of individuals with ASD who achieved an employment outcome (status 26) increased from 1.5 percent of all employment outcomes in FFY 2009 (183 individuals) to 2.8 percent (337 individuals). Of the total number of individuals with ASD served, 88.5 percent were considered to have a most significant disability.

Individuals with Substance Use Disorders (SUD) comprise 17.6 percent (8,418 individuals) of the total number of active consumers. In FFY 2012, 2,833 individuals with SUD achieved an employment outcome, 20.7 percent of all outcomes. Of the total served in all VR statuses, 39.5 percent of individuals with SUD were considered to have a most significant disability. The NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and ACCES-VR collaborate to support recovery for individuals with substance use disorders with employment as an integral part of that recovery. To enhance the integration of recovery principles into VR and to enable individuals to

pursue high quality employment outcomes, ACCES-VR and OASAS provide periodic joint trainings on the collaborative working relationship in serving common consumers.

ACCES-VR defines youth as applicants for VR services prior to age 22 years. There has been a decrease of 1.6 percentage points (9,215 individuals) of youth served since 2009. This could be due in part to the end of the Model Transition Program, which saw an increase of almost 3,000 youth applying for VR services in FFY 2009. Youth with active cases make up 42.2 percent (20,226 individuals) of all consumers with active cases. The percent of youth who achieved employment was 36.3 percent of all employment outcomes, an increase of 1.7 percentage points since FFY 2009. Of the total served in all VR statuses, 61 percent of youth were considered to have a most significant disability.

Individuals on SSI/SSDI make up 28 percent of all active cases or 13,882 individuals. Those who were considered to have a most significant disability were 70.9 percent of those served in all VR statuses. While individuals receiving SSI/SSDI were only 23.8 percent of all employment outcomes in FFY 2012, the employment rate for these individuals did increase. ACCES-VR is working with the SRC to examine data on consumers who receive SSI and SSDI, and is increasing the use of benefits planning services as a strategy to increase outcomes.

Individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Fifth Edition 2008 Model State Plan (MSP) for Rehabilitation of Persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened report that "Hearing loss is the most prevalent, chronic, physically disabling condition in the United States today." The National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) reported in June 2010 that approximately 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss; 15 percent (26 million) of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds or noise at work or in leisure activities and 4,000 new cases of sudden deafness occur each year in the United States.

Hearing loss is becoming more prevalent among the general population. These losses can impact the employment status of individuals, depending on the level of loss. In FFY 2012, ACCES-VR served a total of 3,023 (3.3 percent) individuals who had a primary impairment of deafness, hearing loss, other hearing impairment and deaf-blindness, almost one third more than the number served in FFY 2009. Of these, 63.8 percent were considered to have a most significant disability. In FFY 2012, 612 individuals who were deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind achieved an employment outcome. This is 5.1 percent of all employment outcomes.

2. Findings from the 2013 State Plan Public Meetings

The State Plan Public Meetings for FFY 2014 focused on improving the percentage and quality of employment outcomes for all eligible individuals who want to work, and were receiving VR services. As suggested at the meetings last year, ACCES-VR expanded the outreach of these public meetings by conducting a video-conference to five district office sites across the entire state. ACCES-VR and the SRC jointly developed this approach, the strategy and attended these meetings.

Three public meetings were held, one each in the Capital District, Manhattan and Binghamton during February 2013. A statewide video-conference with a facilitated discussion with the ACCES-VR Deputy Commissioner was broadcast to Buffalo, Syracuse, Malone, Mid-Hudson and Hauppauge ACCES-VR district offices in March 2013. Participants were asked to think about what would promote greater engagement of individuals with disabilities in completing ACCES-VR services leading to employment, what would strengthen employment opportunities for these individuals and other suggestions about how to assist individuals to find and keep work. The public comment period ended March 18, 2013.

The following themes emerged from the meetings, as well as from other verbal and written information obtained from participants:

- Information: about VR services needs to be more available and the provision of services more consistent across counselors. Opening a case and delivery of services need to be more timely to keep consumer's interest and when saving a job.
- Employment: need more jobs for everyone, more information about opportunities available and increased use of Work-Try-Outs (WTO) and On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- Employers: need to be educated about hiring individuals with disabilities and available tax credits.
- Supported Employment: effective program, but providers are concerned about the impact of fewer resources on extended services, future referrals (number of slots a provider has) and individuals changing jobs. Skill building in specific occupational areas may lead to better outcomes.
- Pre-employment skills: provide training in hard and soft skills, work readiness and placement services, incorporating socialization and interviewing skills into the procurement process for new rehabilitation service contracts.
- Benefit Counseling: should be used more to increase employment outcomes. Families should understand the incentives.
- Consumers: need to be more engaged in the process and let everyone know they are looking for work. They want sustainable jobs and not be under-employed.
- Youth: link between ACCES-VR and schools needs to be strengthened so youth don't miss the opportunity to benefit from VR services. VR should explore paid

internships, community work experiences, volunteer work, and increase OJT and WTO to provide students a meaningful work experience prior to graduation.

- Other: impact of transportation on access to VR services and employment outcomes; provider request for ongoing updates on procurement process for new rehabilitation service contracts; continuing the use of a video-conference format to inform and dialogue with public and add a teleconference option to call in. VR staff has been great to work with.

3. Consumer Satisfaction Survey

In December, 2011, the Potsdam Institute for Applied Research at SUNY Potsdam sent a survey to 6,825 consumers who had received placement services the previous year. The purpose of the survey was to determine the satisfaction of these consumers with the services they received from ACCES-VR, as well as the outcomes they experienced.

The survey consisted of 45 questions, printed in English and Spanish, and available in English on the Internet. The participant pool received placement services between 7/1/2010 to 8/31/2011, and was divided into three status categories; Status 26 (closed with employment); Status 28 (closed without employment); and Status 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 or 24 (continuing services/Other-Open). Surveys were sent to 2,887 participants who were closed employed; 1,260 participants who were closed without employment; and 2,678 participants who were other-open.

There were 864 surveys completed, of which 781 were returned by mail and 83 completed using the on-line version. This is a return rate of 12.7 percent. Most responders were 46-55 years old. The response rate by status was 353 employed (12.2 percent); 90 closed without employment (7.1 percent) and 421 other-opened (15.7 percent).

Over 76 percent of respondents indicated satisfaction with ACCES-VR services, one percentage point less than those surveyed last year, and below the established target of 90 percent. Only 50 percent of respondents closed without employment reported the same satisfaction. Over 95 percent of the consumers who responded understood that the purpose of ACCES-VR services was to help them get a job, and almost 52 percent reported that orientation sessions were scheduled in less than 30 days.

In 2012, surveys were sent to 10,376 consumers who were receiving postsecondary training, and were closed in employment (Status 26); closed after plan was initiated without employment (Status 28); or were continuing services with an Open status (Status 18 or 22). Preliminary results indicate there was a 9.1 percent response rate, with 86 percent reporting satisfaction with ACCES-VR services. The final report of this survey has not been issued.

4. Cornell Data Analysis

Cornell Employment and Disability Institute (EDI) conducted an analysis of ACCES-VR Case Management System (CaMS) data to examine the impact of supported employment services, postsecondary education services and VR services for transition-aged youth and young adults in New York State. The sample size was 76,303 consumers who had an IPE in 2006 and 2007 and had closure status assigned as of 2010. Individuals with physical disabilities accounted for 17 percent, learning disabilities 22 percent and other mental health disabilities were 29 percent. Nearly half had secondary disabilities. The analysis included 41 percent youth and 33 percent SSI/SSDI recipients. It included 12.5 percent of Hispanic ethnicity, 27 percent African-Americans and 57 percent Caucasians. Fifty-five percent of the sample exited with employment. The report of the data analysis was issued March 2013.

Key Findings:

Supported employment has a beneficial impact for ACCES-VR consumers when compared to a national sample. Twenty-five percent of participants received supported employment services with 60 percent rehabilitated - two percent higher than national-level data and five percent higher than for other ACCES-VR employment services. Consumers' receipt of supported employment services varied substantially across VR district offices, ranging from 37 percent for the Albany office to 14 percent for the Brooklyn and Garden City offices. The likelihood of success, however, was 18 percent higher in New York City offices compared to 9 percent in Albany office outcomes.

Fifty-four percent of consumers participating in Postsecondary Education Services (PES) were successfully rehabilitated. Overall, consumers who participated in PES were about two percent less likely to achieve an employment outcome compared with their peers who received other training services for employment (compared to nine percent less likely nationally). However, youth who participated in PES were five percent more likely to be successfully rehabilitated compared with older adult consumers. State plan data on individuals who complete PES indicates that they earn higher wages.

Youth who participated in training for work, PES and those who received rehabilitation technology services had 15-16 percent higher likelihood of successful case closures compared with their peers who only participated in pre-vocational services. Young adult consumers had a four percent lower likelihood of successful case closures compared to their adult counterparts. Youth with minority statuses were three to seven percent less likely to achieve a successful closure compared to Caucasian youth. Youth with mental health disabilities were four percent less likely to achieve an employment outcome when compared to youth with learning disabilities.

The data analysis indicate that services that primarily build human capital (e.g., training, postsecondary education, etc.) improve employment outcomes for young people, whereas restoration/rehabilitation services such as rehabilitation technology,

have greater impact for the adult population. These findings are too preliminary to draw any definitive conclusions related to service design and more analysis is needed. ACCES-VR will be sharing the report with the SRC and district managers to explore the implications for policy, procedure and practices.

5. Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who have been Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System

ACCES-VR continues to develop local strategies to increase access to employment services for individuals with disabilities. There are 13 Disability Employment Initiative Projects at the upstate NY local workforce areas that focus on Employment Networks and services for VR consumers related to assessment, benefits advisement and placement. ACCES-VR liaisons meet periodically with the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) to better understand and coordinate cross-systems services and to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

ACCES-VR and the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene (RFMH), representing OMH, have signed a Partnership Plus Memorandum of Agreement. Through this agreement, ACCES-VR can coordinate the Ticket to Work assignment with RFMH, which is acting as a statewide administrative employment network. ACCES-VR is also negotiating the data sharing agreement provided by OMH as part of their collaboration with DOL to transform the One-Stop Operating System into a data and case services system. The system includes all the components of the New York Interagency Supported Employment Reporting Data System (NYISER) that was replaced in 2012 by the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) for its supported employment providers. The NYESS is a combined data warehouse and information sharing system for state and community agencies and a job matching/labor exchange system for consumers and employers. This new employment system should enhance our ability to improve employment outcomes for New Yorkers with disabilities, and prove greatly beneficial to businesses/employers and providers of employment supports.

6. ACCES-VR Review of Supported Employment Programs and Quality of Services for Rate Development for New Milestones that are Performance Based

ACCES-VR will integrate the Supported Employment contracts with the Unified Contract Services into one proposed contract, Core Rehabilitation Services (CRS), effective October 1, 2013. This will result in one set of nearly 500 contracts. New standards and measures will be developed to improve services to individuals and the provision of services by community rehabilitation providers. This realignment of services and contracts will allow us to further develop the rehabilitation provider capacity to serve people with the most significant disabilities.

Changes under CRS include moving supported employment services to a performance-based system, with new milestone payments and program enhancements,

such as quality outcome payment for hours worked per week by the consumer. All job retention services will have a quality outcome payment based on the hourly wage earned by the consumer. Rates to providers will be increased for soft skills training and transportation assistance to encourage utilization of the service. Services already provided, such as pre-employment, employment and individual services to enhance job readiness, will be emphasized for transition aged youth, under Youth Employment Services. A new service, community work experience, will be added.

7. Analysis of Supported Provider Evaluations and Surveys to Assess Needs and Develop Training

ACCES-VR is responsible for administering, establishing standards for and monitoring the intensive services component of all supported employment programs in New York State. ACCES-VR, with the cooperation of OMH, OPWDD and CBVH, established the Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team in October 2006 for ongoing coordination of the implementation of supported employment intensive and extended services in the State. The Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team meets bi-monthly to discuss program, data and funding issues, facilitate cross-systems implementation and identify opportunities for program improvements.

Supported employment providers are surveyed periodically to assess their needs and to improve and develop training curriculums. Supported employment training began in 2007 for supported employment providers. The training is considered essential for assuring quality of services. It helps maintain effective core skills for a work force that evidences moderate staff turn over. Training improves essential job development and placement skills needed to develop strategies to increase employment outcomes consistent with ACCES-VR's State Plan Goals and Priorities, and helps ensure quality services for ACCES-VR's most significantly disabled consumers.

ACCES-VR solicited proposals to provide the training through a Request for Proposal, and awarded the contract to Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute (EDI), School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR). The training will be provided under a program known as the NYS Consortium for Advancement of Supported Employment (CASE). CASE is a collaboration comprised of Cornell University's EDI (the lead agency), the Center for Human Services Education (CHSE), a division of the Heritage Christian Services, the NYS Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) and the NYS Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA). An agreement has been drafted with Cornell for a term of five years, with an anticipated start date of April 1, 2013. Through the CASE, and collaboration with Chapter 515 Interagency Implementation Team, training and technical assistance will be focused on improving the capacity of community rehabilitation providers to place individuals with most significant disabilities into employment.