

Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities: Attachment 4.11(e)(2)

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1998, requires the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to evaluate State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies based on their performance on evaluation standards and indicators. Performance on these standards is used to determine whether a State VR agency is complying substantially with the provisions of its State Plan. States that do not meet the performance criteria are required to develop a program improvement plan jointly with RSA. The Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) has established additional measures related to the priorities and goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) Annual Goals and Priorities. Together, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and ACCES-VR reviewed and agreed upon priorities, goals, strategies and performance measures that are consistent with Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act and with regulations found in 34 CFR 361.

The baseline and target performance measures for each indicator below was initially established by ACCES-VR and the SRC using Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2010 data, with the expectation that ACCES-VR would start to report the results after FFY 2012, the year in which the agency could gather a full year of complete data. In this attachment, the following evaluative results are based on the most recent data available on the federal performance indicators and the priorities and goals, as described in Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

Priority #1: Increase the employment rate and earnings for individuals with disabilities served by ACCES-VR.

Goal 1.1: Increase the percentage of individuals exiting the VR program after receiving services that achieve an employment outcome and exceed the national standard of 55.8 percent.

RSA Performance Indicator 1.2: At least 55.8 percent of all cases closed after receiving VR services, will have achieved an employment outcome.

Baseline FFY 2010: 45.9 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 55.0 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 62.4 percent achieved an employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed the RSA performance standard of 55.8 percent.

Results: Since FFY 2010, the percent of individuals who achieved an employment outcome after receiving VR services has steadily increased. In FFY 2013, ACCES-VR

achieved a performance indicator of 62.4 percent, which is above the national standard of 55.8 percent by 6.6 percentage points. Although the ACCES-VR district offices continue to make significant efforts to increase employment outcomes, the results are still affected by the significant downturn in the economy over the last several years.

Goal 1.1.A Youth: Increase the percentage of youth with disabilities (applicants prior to age 22) exiting the VR program after receiving services that achieve an employment outcome and exceed the national standard of 55.8 percent.

Baseline FFY 2010: 42.5 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 55.7 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 63.1 percent achieved an employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed the RSA performance standard of 55.8 percent.

Results: The percentage of youth with disabilities that achieved an employment outcome after receiving VR services from ACCES-VR has increased annually since FFY 2010. From FFY 2010 to FFY 2013 the percentage of youth that achieved an employment goal increased by 20.6 percentage points, a significant increase. In FFY 2013 ACCES-VR achieved a performance indicator of 63.1 percent which is above the national standard of 55.8 percent by 7.3 percentage points. Although ACCES-VR district offices continue to make significant efforts to increase employment outcomes, the results are still affected by the slow recovery from the recession over the last several years.

Goal 1.1.B Supported Employment: Increase the percentage of individuals that achieve an employment outcome after receiving supported employment services.

Baseline FFY 2010: 45.2 percent of all consumers who were closed during the year after having a supported employment Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) and supported employment authorization, achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 53.3 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 60.9 percent achieved an employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed the RSA performance standard of 55.8 percent.

Results: The percentage of individuals that achieve an employment outcome after receiving supported employment services has been steadily increasing since FFY 2010. In FFY 2013 ACCES-VR achieved a performance indicator of 60.9 percent which is 5.1 percentage points above the national standard of 55.8 percent.

Goal 1.1.C Social Security Participants: Increase the percentage of individuals that are recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or SSI/SSDI and achieve an employment outcome that exceeds the national standard of 55.8 percent.

Baseline FFY 2010: 39.4 percent of all SSI, SSDI or SSI/SSDI participants who were closed during the year after receiving VR services achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 46.7 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 54.0 percent achieved an employment outcome; does not meet the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed the RSA performance standard of 55.8 percent.

Results: The percentage of individuals that are recipients of SSI, SSDI or SSI/SSDI that achieve an employment outcome is slowly rising from the baseline data reported in FFY 2010. Since FFY 2010 the percentage of individuals in this category has steadily increased by 14.6 percentage points to 54.0, slightly below the RSA performance standard. Although the ACCES-VR district offices continue to make significant efforts to increase employment outcomes, the results are still affected by the slow economy and high unemployment rate during the last several years.

Related Measures:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.1: The number of individuals exiting the VR program who have achieved an employment outcome must equal or exceed performance in the previous period.

Baseline FFY 2010: 12,092 individuals achieved an employment outcome.

Performance for FFY 2012: 11,900 individuals achieved an employment outcome; does not meet performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 12,025 individuals achieved an employment outcome; meets the performance standard but not the target.

Performance Target: ACCES-VR will exceed the final FFY 2010 result for RSA Performance Indicator 1.1.

Results: The number of employment outcomes has fluctuated since the baseline was established in FFY 2010. Although the number of employment outcomes in FFY 2013 increased by 125 individuals, it was still below FFY 2010 levels by 67 individuals.

The employment outcome numbers are influenced by many factors, including the overall economic climate in the State. New York State (NYS) experienced a deep recession from 2008 to 2010 which led to increased unemployment. The economic situation began to slowly improve in 2011, but it is still sluggish. Job seekers with disabilities, who may not have the experience of more seasoned workers, are at a distinct disadvantage in the job market.

RSA Performance Indicator 1.4: The percentage of individuals who have significant disabilities that achieve an employment outcome with earnings of at least minimum wage will be 62.4 percent or greater.

Baseline FFY 2010: 98.2 percent earned at least minimum wage; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 98.1 percent earned at least minimum wage; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 98.3 percent earned at least minimum wage; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed the RSA performance standard of 62.4 percent.

Results: ACCES-VR has exceeded the RSA performance standard each year for the last four years since the baseline data was established. Individuals are considered to have a significant disability when they have a physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or two functional capacities, such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, cognition, work tolerance, or work skills, and whose vocational rehabilitation will require multiple supported employment services over an extended period of time. ACCES-VR assisted a substantially greater percentage of individuals with significant disabilities to achieve competitive employment compared with to the national standard. In FFY 2013, 98.3 percent of individuals with significant disabilities that obtained employment through ACCES-VR earned at least minimum wage. This rate has been consistent since FFY 2000.

ACCES-VR has developed a strong infrastructure to competently serve these individuals through its partnerships with the State offices for mental health, developmental disabilities, blind and visually impaired, health (AIDS Institute) and alcoholism and substance abuse services.

Goal 1.2: Improve earnings of individuals achieving an employment outcome by increasing the percentage that earn at least 200 percent of the federal poverty level at closure.

Baseline FFY 2010: 23 percent (2,710 individuals) of all individuals achieving an employment outcome earned above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$416/week).

Performance for FFY 2012: 25 percent (2,830 individuals) of all individuals achieving an employment outcome earned above 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (\$418/week); exceeds the goal.

Performance for FFY 2013: 23 percent (2,680 individuals) of all individuals achieving an employment outcome earned above 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (\$430/week); did not meet the goal.

Performance Target: 28 percent of all individuals achieving an employment outcome will earn above 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Results: Although ACCES-VR was able to slightly increase the percentage of individuals that earned at least 200 percent of the federal poverty level at closure by two percentage points in FFY 2012, it was not able to sustain this increase. In FFY 2013, the percentage of individuals that earned at least 200 percent of the federal poverty level was 23 percent – the same percent as the baseline established FFY 2010.

Related Measures:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.3: The percentage of individuals that achieve an employment outcome with earnings equivalent to at least minimum wage will be 72.6 percent or greater.

Baseline FFY 2010: 95.4 percent of individuals achieved this employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: 96.6 percent of individuals achieved this employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 96.2 percent of individuals achieved this employment outcome; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: 97.5 percent of individuals will achieve this employment outcome; exceed the RSA performance standard.

Results: ACCES-VR's performance on this measure far exceeds the RSA performance measure. ACCES-VR continues to strive to increase the employment outcomes with earnings that are at least minimum wage or greater.

RSA Performance Indicator 1.6: Increase the percentage of individuals that report earned income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program; the national standard is 53 percent or greater.

Baseline FFY 2010: 59.8 percent.

Performance FFY 2012: 59.4 percent; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: 60.5 percent; exceeds the RSA performance standard.

Performance Target: 64.8 percent.

Results: ACCES-VR's performance on this measure exceeds the RSA performance measure. However, ACCES-VR strives to increase the number of individuals who report earned income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program.

Goal 1.3: Increase the average hourly earnings of individuals employed after participating in postsecondary training when compared to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the State and approach the national benchmark ratio of .52 (variation on RSA Performance Indicator 1.5 – see *Related Measures* below).

Baseline FFY 2010: Average wage of individuals with postsecondary training is \$11.42 per hour; .40 of the State Average Wage; does not meet the standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: Average wage of individuals with postsecondary training is \$11.92 per hour; .40 of the State Average Wage; does not meet the standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: Average wage of individuals with postsecondary training is \$12.12 per hour; .40 of the State Average Wage; does not meet the standard.

Performance Target: The long term target is to meet the national benchmark of .52. The short term target is to increase the level of earnings closer to the national benchmark of .52.

Results: Performance on this indicator has improved slightly. In NYS the average hourly wage is \$30.30. The FFY 2013 average VR wage of \$12.12 is \$3.64 less per hour than the required threshold (calculated for the national benchmark ratio of .52) of \$15.76. As would be expected, individuals who participate in postsecondary training are earning higher wages on average when compared to all VR participants. Although the average VR wage of individuals who participate in postsecondary training has improved slightly each year since the baseline FFY 2010 was established, these individuals are still securing jobs, on average, at wages below the .52 threshold established by RSA. One factor that might account for lower wages is that ACCES-VR job seekers, while gaining postsecondary training to increase their overall wages, may still be at a disadvantage in comparison to their non-disabled counterparts who may have more work experience, in addition to training, upon entering the job market. Job seekers without disabilities may be tapping into the higher wage opportunities at a greater rate than job seekers with disabilities.

ACCES-VR will continue to use the strategy of supporting higher education and workforce credentials as a means to higher wage employment and careers by developing strategies to address postsecondary work experiences (see Attachment 4.11(d)).

Related Measures:

RSA Performance Indicator 1.5: Average hourly earnings of individuals employed after receiving VR services will be equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earning for all individuals in NYS who are employed; ratio equals .52 or more.

Baseline FFY 2010: The average VR wage of \$10.70 per hour is .37 of the State Average Wage (\$28.84).

Performance for FFY 2012: The average VR wage of \$10.95 is .37 of the State Average Wage (\$29.61).

Performance for FFY 2013: The average VR wage of \$10.92 per hour is .37 of the State Average Wage (\$30.30).

Performance Target: \$15.76 per hour would equal .52 of the State Average Wage.

Results: Performance on this indicator remains at the same baseline level established in FFY 2010. Although the FFY 2013 average wage increased from the FFY 2010 baseline of \$10.70 to \$10.92, the average VR wage in FFY 2013 would need to be \$15.76 in order for NYS to meet the standard for this indicator. ACCES-VR results for

this standard remain below the national benchmark, which is set at a ratio of .52. This ratio reflects the relationship of hourly wages earned by individuals at the time of closure (typically 90 days after attaining employment) to the average hourly wage for all workers in the State. The benchmark ratio of .52 is set at just above half of the overall State hourly wage.

There are many structural forces in the NYS economy that make it challenging for individuals participating in VR to earn a livable wage. Many of the individuals served by ACCES-VR, given the economic need criteria for many VR services, are low-income individuals. A high percentage of individuals served by the VR program are determined to have significant and most significant disabilities. The wide gap in wage distribution in NYS also makes this performance measure particularly problematic for low-income individuals participating in VR services. The wage gap in NYS is influenced or skewed by the earnings in Manhattan, particularly on Wall Street. ACCES-VR remains committed to improving its performance on this indicator and assisting VR participants in obtaining higher wage outcomes.

Priority #2: Increase services to unserved and underserved groups.

Goal 2.1: The service rate for identified unserved and underserved populations will be commensurate with the NYS population rates for those populations based on race, ethnicity and disability.

RSA Performance Indicator 2.1: The ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program that received VR services; RSA performance standard \geq .80.

Baseline FFY 2010: .87; exceeds the standard.

Performance for FFY 2012: .88; exceeds the standard.

Performance for FFY 2013: .87 exceeds the standard.

Performance Target: Continue to meet or exceed the RSA performance standard.

Results: In FFY 2013, the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program that received VR services was .87.

ACCES-VR continues to exceed the national standard of .80 on this indicator, and has consistently met the performance standard for this indicator since its inception. It is noteworthy that ACCES-VR seems to be serving a higher percentage of black or African-American individuals in comparison to the general NYS population. One factor assisting ACCES-VR in meeting this standard is its effort to hire staff whose diversity reflects the communities we are serving.

Priority #3: Improve the quality of ACCES-VR services.

Goal 3.1: Consumer satisfaction with ACCES-VR services will increase annually toward the target of 90 percent of respondents expressing satisfaction on key questions contained in ACCES-VR consumer satisfaction surveys.

Baseline FFY 2010: 76 percent indicated satisfaction with ACCES-VR services.

Performance for FFY 2012: 76 percent indicated satisfaction with ACCES-VR services.

Performance for FFY 2013: 86 percent indicated satisfaction with ACCES-VR services.

Performance Target: Meet or exceed 90 percent of respondents to consumer satisfaction surveys expressing satisfaction with VR services.

Results: In FFY 2013, ACCES-VR contracted with the Potsdam Institute for Applied Research (PIAR) at SUNY Potsdam to conduct a survey of consumers who had received or were receiving continuing education services and who terminated from services either Closed Rehabilitation (Status 26); Closed after Plan Initiated (Status 28) or were continuing services with an Open status (Status 18 or 22). 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 consisting of 38 questions printed in both English and Spanish and available on the Internet in English was sent to 10,376 consumers. A total of 946 surveys were completed with 786 returned by mail and 160 completed online. The return rate was 9.1 percent.

Response rate by status:

Status 18: 547 of 4300 surveys (12.7 percent)

Status 22: 29 of 107 surveys (27.1 percent)

Status 26: 290 of 3806 surveys (7.6 percent)

Status 28: 80 of 2163 surveys (3.7 percent)

The following represents a summary of responses to key areas:

- Over 86 percent of respondents indicated satisfaction with ACCES-VR services – ten percent more than last year, but still below the target of 90 percent. However, just 59 percent of individuals closed without employment (Status 28) reported the same satisfaction.
- Over 89 percent of the consumers who responded to the survey understood that the purpose of ACCES-VR services was to help them get a job.
- Almost 50 percent of the respondents reported that it took 30 days or less to get an orientation session.

Goal 3.2: Increase collaboration with community partners, particularly the State agency partners who share responsibility for achieving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Baseline 2010: ACCES-VR is in the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the NYS Department of Labor (DOL) for a cooperative effort through its Disability Employment Initiative to improve service options and results for individuals with disabilities served through the One-Stop centers.

Performance Target: NYS DOL and ACCES-VR will implement promising practices that improve service results for individuals with disabilities.

Results: ACCES-VR and Office of Special Education worked closely the NYS DOL to qualify as a demonstration site for youth skills training that could lead to increased youth employment. The U.S. DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) selected NYS as one of the partners to have staff participate in four free full-day trainings in the core competencies that professionals need to have when working with youth. The training includes content-rich materials, resources and pre/post training technical assistance from experts in youth and workforce development, and disability information.

New York State received an award from the U.S. Department of Education to establish and operate model demonstration projects designed to improve the education and employment outcomes of child Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and their families. The Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) initiative is intended to improve the provision and coordination of services for these children and their families. The services will help child recipients achieve better outcomes, including graduating from high school ready for college and a career, completing postsecondary education and job training, and obtaining competitive employment in an integrated setting. ACCES-VR is an active partner in this initiative and joins other NYS agencies, non-profit organizations and Cornell University to improve the education and employment outcomes for children with disabilities receiving SSI in Western New York, Capital Region and New York City.

ACCES-VR is a partner in the NYS Partnerships in Employment Systems Change, a five year project to develop and sustain activities that improve opportunities for integrated, competitive employment. ACCES-VR is also an active partner collaborating with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and NYS DOL to ensure access to integrated employment opportunities.

Goal 3.3: Increase collaboration with employers that may lead to employment outcomes.

Baseline 2011: The ACCES-VR Business Relations Unit is continuing to establish business relationships and develop business accounts. Collaborative projects with the National Employment Team (NET) and other national, State and regional resources, including local One-Stops that have yielded quality employment outcomes.

Performance Target: ACCES-VR will continue to develop collaborative business relationships to increase employment outcomes.

Results: ACCES-VR continues to develop and maintain several business partnerships at the federal, State, and regional levels. During FFY 2013, the NET partnership with United Health Group was renewed, and Ernst & Young became a new NET business partner, providing access to job opportunities at several retailers including Macy's, CVS Caremark, Best Buy, and TJX Companies, Inc. (includes TJ Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods, and more). NET partnerships continue with M&T Bank, Lowe's, Walgreens, JLDodge, etc.

Regionally, ACCES-VR's Manhattan District Office enhanced the liaison relationship with City University of New York (CUNY) college offices to facilitate the preparation and referral of professional-level applicants to area businesses. The ACCES-VR District Offices located in the Central New York region have partnered with the National Disability Institute and the NYS Credit Union Association to facilitate training and employment for consumers with middle to professional level skills. Work continues with the Long Island Working Partnership members (a consortium of business and service provider agencies) to enhance important initiatives for the 2013-2014 Summer Internship Program for high school graduates.

As part of its Strategic Planning process, ACCES-VR surveyed a sampling of businesses from across the state to ascertain their current knowledge of ACCES-VR. The results of this survey will assist in the development of more compelling marketing and outreach materials targeted for business. ACCES-VR is also working to identify federal contractors/subcontractors, and to obtain the most current information regarding the changes in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) rules, which advance the recruitment of qualified candidates with disabilities.

ACCES-VR ensures that key staffs across the state are prepared to provide customized training to the business community on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities, through their participation in the American Disabilities Act (ADA) Trainer Network. This no-cost service is a valuable resource to businesses as they strive to diversify their workforces with qualified candidates with disabilities.