

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanation for Rejection of Input or Recommendations: Attachment 4.2(c)

The New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is mandated under the Rehabilitation Act to work in partnership with the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR). Together, the SRC and ACCES-VR partner to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive timely and effective vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. The SRC relies on the following committees to carry out its responsibilities: the Executive Committee; the Membership Committee; the Policy and Planning Committee; the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee; and the Workforce Development Committee. The SRC Chairperson, Committee Chairpersons and the ACCES-VR SRC Liaisons constitute the Executive Committee that coordinates the work of the full Council.

ACCES-VR and the SRC work cooperatively in setting strategic priorities and in developing agency policy for the delivery of VR services to eligible New Yorkers with disabilities. When ACCES-VR undertakes substantive policy changes, the agency convenes an ad hoc policy development committee that is chaired by an ACCES-VR Policy and Partnerships Unit staff person. These policy development committees also include representation from ACCES-VR management, vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) and key stakeholders including an SRC representative. The SRC has served as an integral partner in the development of all substantive ACCES-VR policy reforms throughout FFY 2013.

The following is a summary of recommendations made by the SRC to ACCES-VR and the corresponding responses from ACCES-VR to the recommendations:

Information and Reporting

SRC Recommendation: SRC recommends that ACCES-VR communicate with NYS Department of Labor, NYS Commission for the Blind and the Governor's office, and report back to the SRC on the NYS response to the National Governor's Association's (NGA) theme of employing persons with disabilities. The SRC asks for ACCES-VR to identify ways that NYS is involved and how ACCES-VR might participate.

ACCES-VR Response: Material on the NGA "A Better Bottom Line" initiative has been shared with SED leadership and referenced in an ACCES-VR presentation to the NYS Board of Regents. ACCES-VR will update the SRC on its role in this initiative as information becomes available. If the SRC's primary intent is to encourage the executive branch to undertake the NGA's "A Better Bottom Line" campaign they may wish to communicate that suggestion directly to the Governor's office.

Program and Policy Implementation

SRC Recommendation: SRC recommends that ACCES-VR work directly with P-12: Office of Special Education and other stakeholders, where appropriate, to develop guidance and make specific resources available to connect to local business and industry, by:

- including employers and their representatives in planning and implementation of the new credentials to encourage both real-world student skill development and understanding of the value of the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential within employment;
- tapping into service programs at employers, Small Business associations, local unions, Society for Human Resource Management, etc. to benefit students (resume review, soft skill development, interviewing); and
- capitalizing on existing business involvement in the employment of students with disabilities or developing new relationships to provide internships, job trials, and worksite visits.

ACCES-VR Response: ACCES-VR will advance this recommendation with P-12: Office of Special Education leadership and offer assistance in facilitating access to local employers and/or employer service programs. P-12: Office of Special Education is the lead SED agency for the development and implementation of the CDOS curriculum and credential. P-12: Office of Special Education recognizes the importance of the employer perspective in the successful administration of these programs.

ACCES-VR is establishing a new transition unit to adopt practices that: capitalize on existing business involvement in hiring transition age youth with disabilities, and promote the development of new relationships with business and industry that will facilitate increased access to internships, job trials/work tryouts, and opportunities for worksite visits in support of career exploration and employment.

Marketing and Public Relations

SRC Recommendation: SRC recommends that ACCES-VR work directly with P-12: Office of Special Education and other stakeholders, to both identify school staff who need career education to effectively support students, student planning and decisions; and to develop guidance and make specific resources available to educate school staff, including Committee on Special Education (CSE) on the roles of Youth Employment Service (YES) programs on career education, and the Integrated Employment Specialists (IES) in developing and maintaining relationships with businesses.

ACCES-VR Response: P-12: Office of Special Education is the lead SED agency responsible for the development and implementation of CDOS programming and staff development. ACCES-VR will serve as a resource and partner to P-12: Office of Special Education as they identify and develop training for related school staff that

can benefit from training on the value of vocational/technical education. ACCES-VR will also serve as a resource and partner in the development of training on VR transition age services (including the Youth Employment Services) for CSE members and other appropriate school personnel.

Transition from School to Adult Life for Students with Disabilities

SRC Recommendation: SRC recommends that ACCES-VR assist in the success of the YES initiative by identifying and disseminating information on transition practices that result in stable employment for young persons and create an annual report to the SRC and any other interested entities focusing on outcomes, best practices and utilization by district.

ACCES-VR Response: ACCES-VR and P-12: Office of Special Education have a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that identifies the obligations of schools and VR in successful planning and service delivery for youth with disabilities in transition from school to adult life. The agreement is a blueprint for collaboration that fosters a common understanding of respective transition requirements and responsibilities. It is also intended to build stronger partnerships between transition specialists, school districts, and ACCES-VR District Offices throughout the State.

The MOU commits ACCES-VR to designating VR personnel responsible for the delivery of technical assistance statewide, consultation in the development of program strategies and procedures for youth with disabilities; and, training and outreach to promote awareness of the VR program among local education agency (LEA) personnel, students and their families with regard to VR eligibility requirements, application procedures and scope of services that may be provided to all eligible individuals

ACCES-VR is establishing a new Transition Unit to develop practices that facilitate the review and consideration of VR research by ACCES-VR leadership and inform ACCES-VR's service delivery. ACCES-VR will share research and best practices with P-12: Office of Special Education's leadership as appropriate, and

- participate in conferences and other means of informing Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel, students and their families about the VR program, including, but not limited to: VR eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of VR services available; and,
- continue to maintain a comprehensive web-based listing of regional services and resources available to transition age youth and their families.

ACCES-VR is not able to commit to the explicit development of an annual report to the SRC at this time. ACCES-VR does; however, commit to keeping the SRC fully informed of ACCES-VR service delivery for transition age youth and will work closely with the recently formed SRC Transition Committee.

Labor Market and Workforce

SRC Recommendation: SRC recommends that ACCES-VR work directly with P-12: Office of Special Education and other stakeholders, where appropriate, to develop guidance and make specific resources available to define the labor markets in local communities, including existing and emerging employment opportunities and local support services such as local One-Stop Career Centers and other workforce organizations.

ACCES-VR Response: ACCES-VR's counseling and Integrated Employment Specialist (IES) staff develop local workforce relationships and stay aware of local, regional and statewide trends in employment. The IES routinely shares labor market information on existing and emerging employment opportunities with ACCES-VR managers and VR counselors.

ACCES-VR will work with P-12: Office of Special Education to determine if appropriate transition planning school personnel have access to, and are informed about current information for local existing and emerging employment opportunities, and if necessary, will work with P-12: Office of Special Education to ensure this workforce information and technical assistance is available to appropriate school personnel. Additionally, ACCES-VR will participate in conferences and other activities to inform LEA personnel, students and their families about the vocational rehabilitation program, including, but not limited to: VR eligibility requirements, as applicable procedures, and the scope of VR services available. ACCES-VR District Offices maintain a comprehensive web-based listing of regional services and resources available to transition age youth and their families.