

**Amendment to the State Plan for
Vocational Rehabilitation Services and for
Supported Employment Services Program**

Federal Fiscal Year 2015

**New York State Education Department
The Office of Adult Career and Continuing
Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation
(ACCES-VR)**

Summary of Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and for Supported Employment Services Program Federal Fiscal Year 2015

The Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

The New York State Education Department is the designated state agency for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. ACCES is the designated State unit to provide services to individuals with disabilities (other than those who are legally blind). ACCES is comprised of three primary areas: Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living, Adult Education and the Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision. The State Plan is focused on ACCES-VR.

State Plan Process

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, requires that New York State (NYS) prepare a state plan that informs the public of ACCES-VR's goals, priorities and performance in providing vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services to individuals with disabilities in New York State. This document, entitled State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supported Employment Services Program, Effective July 1, 2001, was previously submitted and approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The Rehabilitation Act further requires that each state annually amend its approved State Plan in specific areas, as requested by RSA, through the submission of specific updated attachments. The Amendment to the State Plan for 2015 consists of these specific attachments and is based on the most recent guidance provided by RSA.

ACCES-VR, in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), jointly developed the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supported Employment Services Program, FFY 2015. ACCES-VR consulted with the SRC throughout the year on critical aspects of the State Plan development process and the joint planning of the State Plan public meetings.

The SRC provided comments and advice on the content of the State Plan. The previous year's Amendment to the State Plan (FFY 2014) was used to solicit input and recommendations from the public on planned activities related to the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities for the following year.

As part of the State Plan development, ACCES-VR requested public comments from February 5, 2014 through March 7, 2014 regarding the State Plan amendments. In February 2014, three public meetings were held, one each in the Capital District, Manhattan and Poughkeepsie and a statewide video-

conference was broadcast to Bronx, Buffalo, Hauppauge, Malone and Syracuse ACCES-VR District Offices.

The meetings focused on identifying how to increase employment outcomes for individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services and to give the public an opportunity to comment on NYS's implementation of the VR program. Questions were prepared to facilitate a discussion with participants about their perspectives on VR services, how to strengthen employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, how to promote greater engagement of individuals with disabilities in completing ACCES-VR services leading to employment, and what was occurring at the local level to strengthen employment opportunities for these individuals.

Public Meetings

To notify and inform the public about the meetings on the State Plan, ACCES-VR emailed flyers that provided specific details on the State Plan public meetings, including the meeting dates, times and locations. ACCES-VR advertised the public meetings through the ACCES-VR's website and the public was encouraged to submit written comments through the vrpolicy@mail.nysed.gov email box.

The public meetings are designed to provide ample opportunities for participants to review and discuss their ideas about ACCES-VR's State Plan, policies, future direction and how the VR program could better assist individuals to obtain and maintain quality employment. At all of the meetings, ACCES-VR provided a brief presentation on the State Plan and provided data and information related to the key questions. ACCES-VR staff facilitated the discussion, and public participants were able to offer comments or recommendations on any part of the State Plan and its process at the meetings, electronically or by mail.

Attendance at the public meetings was low this year, most likely due to severe weather systems interrupting travel. Six SRC representatives and nineteen consumers/advocates participated in the public meetings either in person or via video-conference. ACCES-VR staff included: the Assistant Commissioner who participated in the statewide video-conference and attended the meeting in Manhattan; the Coordinator of District Office Administration who participated in the statewide video-conference; and the Coordinator of Service Delivery who attended the Capital District Public Meeting.

The recommendations received during the public comment period were reviewed, shared with leadership and the SRC for consideration, and posted on the ACCES-VR website.

Amendment of the State Plan: Required Attachments

The following attachments describe ACCES-VR's plans, policies and activities in a number of areas as part of this Amendment. The sections of the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and for Supported Employment Services Program, FFY 2015 include:

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)

- Summarizes the advice of the SRC on State Plan and policy development. ACCES-VR responses to SRC are also included.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD): Attachment 4.10

- Describes ACCES-VR activities that ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals in conformance with its CSPD and training provided to VR staff. ACCES-VR utilizes the national standard, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), as the goal in recruitment and retention of counselors.

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Service: Attachment 4.11(b)

- ACCES-VR estimates that during FFY 2015, about 25,850 individuals with significant or most significant disabilities will become eligible for ACCES-VR services.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds (Supported Employment): Attachment 4.11(c)(4)

- Indicates that ACCES-VR plans to continue to fund supported employment services utilizing Federal Title VI, Part B and other funds.

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)

- Describes ACCES-VR progress in achieving the goals and priorities, as required by regulation and agreed to with the State Rehabilitation Council.