



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Strategic Plan FFY2020 – 2023

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Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Plan for FFY2020 – 2023

The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) along with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Council (SVRC) continually assess the vocational rehabilitation needs of Alaskans with disabilities and the success of DVR in meeting those needs. DVR's strategic plan is a major component in continuous program evaluation and planning for the division in the implementation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the associated regulations, 34 CFR Part 361.

Mission

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Principles

DVR believes in:

- The empowering value of employment in an individual's life.
- Honoring and respecting each individual's strengths, skills, choices, abilities and cultural identity.
- Developing strong partnerships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, schools, job-centers and centers for independent living.
- Delivering high quality vocational rehabilitation services.
- Employing and developing highly qualified and skilled rehabilitation staff.
- The principles of stewardship in the use of public resources.

Background

DVR is committed to the challenge of continuously improving both the organization's systems and the delivery of services to those individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services. DVR utilizes the strategic planning process to develop a plan to put into action the concept of continuous improvement. DVR has an on-going three-year strategic planning process coinciding with the federally required triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Based on the information collected and analyzed from the CSNA, analysis of current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, Federal Common Measures, and input from staff, the team identified service delivery, staff development, organizational efficiencies, and DVR's role in the statewide workforce and service delivery systems, a new strategic plan is created. This plan will be updated quarterly by the individuals responsible for specific activities. This information will be utilized by the Leadership Team to determine if the Agency is meeting its goals and objectives and if revisions are needed.

The strategic planning team is composed of the DVR management and leadership teams, SVRC Chair, a representative from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), and representatives from Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs.

A summary of the goals and priorities:

- Delivery of high quality vocational rehabilitation services to all individuals with disabilities with priorities established for:
 - Transition age youth;
 - individuals residing in rural Alaska;
 - individuals who experience blindness or who have a visual impairment; and

- Staff development includes efforts in:
 - Training opportunities to maintain professional certifications and for staff development;
 - leadership development; and
 - succession planning.

- Organizational efficiencies and responsibilities:
 - Meet all Federal regulations;
 - report common performance measures; and
 - ensure case management software is up-to-date and will generate federal reporting the meets the requirements of the RSA-911 data manual.

- DVR is part of the statewide workforce and service delivery systems:
 - DVR collaborates with other core WIOA agencies to improve the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services; and
 - is an advocate for people with disabilities on appropriate boards and committees.

Goals, Priorities, Strategies and Performance Indicators

Goal 1 – Service Delivery – DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the priorities and strategies identified by the CSNA.

Priority 1.1: Improve employment outcomes to more closely align with high demand jobs.

Strategies:

- Review Labor Market Research protocol to ensure validity.
- Ensure Labor Market Research is occurring in cases at IPE when appropriate.
- Train field staff on career pathways and RSA expectations for employment and training outcomes.
- Utilize all training opportunities i.e., AVTEC, UAA, UAF, and UAS, apprenticeships, etc. by educating staff on the opportunities available.
- Engage with AVTEC to ensure staff recognize the opportunities it offers, i.e. arrange a field trip.
- Work with employers to ensure opportunities for DVR clients to succeed in high demand jobs.
- Work with Labor Research and Development to ensure staff have access to the most current job forecasts by developing a distribution plan for "Trends" economic forecast magazine, economic development corporation info, etc.
- Provide training to in-house job developers.
 - Develop YouTube channel – with clips that BEST team can bring to employers, show ADA information, positive examples and experiences from other employers.
 - Develop standardized outreach materials for employers.
 - Develop standardized FAQs to be publicly available.
- BEST team will develop one-year plan for employer engagement and measuring success.

Indicators of Success:

- Revised protocol(s) as necessary.
- Case reviews indicate the plan aligns with labor market research.
- Training occurred.
- Managers to report back to leadership that staff have been given these training opportunities.
- Field trip(s) will have occurred.
- Employers in high demand job areas will hire DVR clients.
- Staff have access to current job forecasts.
- Training program developed for job developers.
- BEST will develop a one year plan with SMART goals and measures of success.

Priority 1.2: Evaluate services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired

Strategies:

- Update software and procedures for Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Include SARA.
- Update policies and administrative codes where necessary to ensure BEP meets all regulatory requirements.
- Modernize existing sites Micro-Markets.
- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.
- Inform all regional offices about the BEP program and opportunities for referrals.

Indicators of Success:

- BEP module installed. New procedures developed, based on the new software.
- Contractor to develop/edit current policies and administrative codes to ensure BEP compliance.
- Updated equipment in all sites.
- Evaluation completed with recommendations for improvement.
- Materials have been developed and distributed.

Priority 1.3: Evaluate services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing

Strategies:

- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.

Indicator of Success:

- Evaluation completed with recommendations for improvement.

Priority 1.4: Enhance Communication with Tribal Partners

Strategies:

- Hold a face-to-face meeting.
- Create communication plan to increase referrals and shared cases
 - Get the information to come back to DVR.
 - Identify contact in each region to share information and communicate information.
 - Identify clear chain for command for reporting issues.
 - Review MOU and draft changes as agreed upon.

Indicators of Success:

- Meeting occurred.
- Creation of a communication plan.
- MOU revised as necessary.

Priority 1.5: Continue to deliver Pre-ETS**Strategies:**

- Increase work experience activities and sites.
- Work closely with CRPs and Pre-ETS contractors to align work experiences with high demand jobs.
- Ensure that expected number of students participating in Pre-ETS matches CSNA goal.
- Continue to recruit CRPs for providing Pre-ETS services.
- Continue to ensure At Risk Youth are included in Pre-ETS activities.

Indicators of Success:

- Additional work experiences are available.
- Work experiences more closely mirror high demand job categories.
- Meet or exceed expected number of Pre-ETS students provided services.
- Additional CRPs are available to provide Pre-ETS services.
- Baseline data collected.

Priority 1.6: Improve usage and quality of CRP services in all regions**Strategies:**

- Work with CRP Coordinator to develop a comprehensive CRP monitoring plan.
- Ensure Managers are involved in vetting new CRP applicants and in creating corrective action plans.
- Use software to improve service delivery (Enforce Vendor Logic in AWARE)

Indicators of Success:

- Improved adherence to contract timelines.
- Process developed and followed for new CRPs and determining corrective action plans.
- Vendor module in AWARE case management system adapted.

Priority 1.7: Continue to provide quality services to rural locations.**Strategies:**

- Continue to support rural locations with VRC travel.
- Develop rural travel expectations to ensure staff time is effectively utilized.
- Expand services to underserved hubs.
- Start attending events like AFN, NYO, SCF, etc.
- Invite TVR rep annually to attend rural services meeting.
- Expand use of technology in rural areas.

Indicators of Success:

- Travel approved for two trips a year to outlying areas.

- Travel expectations document is in use.
- More utilization of rural hubs for reaching rural clients.
- Events attended.
- TVR Rep attends Rural Services meeting.
- Technology implemented.

Priority 1.8: Utilize “Employment First” initiative

Strategies:

- Hire an Employment First Coordinator.
- Increase supported employment opportunities.
- Increase use of Provisional Hire within the State.
 - Include training at the hiring manager level.
 - Meet with other division directors to educate on the provisional hire process.
 - Adapt AWARE work status to include Provisional Hire as an option.
 - NEOGOV links to include PH opportunities when new positions post.
- Use Job Ready consistently in all regions, and provide training.

Indicators of Success:

- Employment First Coordinator successful in making connections to enhance employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.
- Increased successful supported employment cases.
- Increased Provisional Hire requests.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the future.

Priority 2.1: Ensure resources are available for hiring and retaining qualified staff

Strategies:

- Schedule “all-staff” training sessions for professional staff when feasible.
- Utilize internship programs.
- Expand recruitment strategies to fill both VRC and VRA vacancies.
- Ensure all staff are aware of continuing education and advancement opportunities.
- Develop professional development plans for staff (VRCs).
- Ensure all VRAs receive the VRA Online Training.

Indicators of Success:

- All staff training occurs.

- Internship position available.
- Vacancy rate maintained.
- Communication to staff occurs.
- All VRC have a Professional Development Plan.
- Training checklist completed.

Priority 2.2: Ensure ongoing staff development and training

Strategies:

- Provide links for training on technology MS, Outlook, basic computer training.
- Provide specialized training: FAST, BEST, Blind Services, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, EVAL, etc.
- Provide ongoing training opportunities for VRAs.
- Rewrite online modules for VRC training.
- Develop ongoing education for eligibilities, disabilities, plans, closures, etc.
- RM training on software and reporting.

Indicators of Success:

- Links are posted on SharePoint.
- Specialized training developed.
- Opportunities are communicated to VRAs.
- Online modules are updated.
- Quarterly training opportunities for staff are available.
- Training is scheduled.

Priority 2.3: Continue mentoring and succession planning

Strategies:

- VRC III are given opportunities to be in acting status.
- Develop specialized desk manuals for unique job duties.

Indicators of Success:

- All VRC III are given the opportunity to be in acting status.
- Desk manuals created.

Goal 3 – DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes

This goal reflects DVR's commitment to continual improvement and efficiency.

Priority 3.1: Provide on-going Quality Assurance (QA) and program evaluation activities to ensure integrity of VR Services

Strategies:

- Program evaluation results are reviewed by administrative and management staff.
- Consumer satisfaction responses are analyzed and disseminated to SVRC on a quarterly basis and sent to Managers monthly.
- Internal case review process developed and implemented.
- Qualitative and Quantitative.
- Develop procedures with internal controls that ensure fidelity and accuracy of data submitted to RSA.
- Create reports in Tableau for Managers to run on demand.
- Help Desk staff will provide on-going support and training by participating in monthly staff meetings and flying to Fairbanks and Juneau semi-annually to meet with staff.
- Develop position paper by February 2020, on the importance of face-to-face case reviews.

Indicators of Success:

- Internal documentation revised as necessary based on QA results
- Staff training developed as necessary.
- Results shared with appropriate staff.
- Case reviews completed and scheduled on a regular basis and incorporate internal controls.
- Staff are trained on new procedures.
- Managers will have access and be able to run reports when needed.
- Staff meetings scheduled with Help Desk Staff on an on-going basis.
- Position paper completed.

Priority 3.2: DVR will meet or exceed state and federal common performance measures (CPMs)

Strategies:

- Establish baseline data for all WIOA required data elements and negotiate with RSA on required CPMs.
- Monitor data collection processes to ensure program fidelity.
- Work with National Clearinghouse to obtain additional education information.
- Work with Leadership to determine appropriate Missions & Measures.

Indicators of Success:

- Negotiation with RSA completed.
- All required federal reporting submitted on time.

- Schedule established for sending/receiving data from the National Clearinghouse.
- Meet or exceed State M&Ms.

Priority 3.3: Continue to update the AWARE case management system to provide quality data

Strategies:

- Help desk team actively participates in all AWARE user groups and Community of Practice group to ensure DVR's work flows are considered when Alliance is creating enhancements to the software.
- Help desk team meet and thoroughly analyze impact to field and accounting staff with each iteration of RSA-911 data manual, upgrade to the AWARE system or clarification of current regulations by RSA.
- Help desk team works with management team to ensure on-going, accurate data collection by field staff.
- Help desk team coordinates all training of field and other staff and provides training in timely manner.
- Help desk team routinely runs QA on AWARE data to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- P, P & P team to evaluate processes for moving to a paperless system. To include hardware and software purchases that may be necessary and all staff training.
- Incorporate SharePoint in all policy and procedure development.

Indicators of Success:

- All AWARE updates are reviewed and installed as required.
- Federal reports produced on time and accurately. Staff notified and trained on any changes to AWARE.
- Required data is collected accurately.
- DVR services are not negatively impacted
- Edit program issues are resolved.
- Plan for moving to paperless is established with timelines and costs.
- Policies and Procedures available on SharePoint.

Priority 3.4: Continue to support SARA communication system

Strategies:

- Help Desk staff will continue support and provide training for SARA.
- Increase SARA usage 10% by staff over the next 6 months.
- Incorporate BEP clients into SARA. Provide training to vendors.
- Incorporate CRPs into SARA.

Indicators of Success:

- SARA interface functional.
- SARA use increased by 10% by all staff.
- BEP clients using SARA notifications.
- Increased utilization of SARA for communication.

Priority 3.5: Explore and improve technology usage

Strategies:

- Replace current Intranet by implementing SharePoint and training staff.
- Explore shared IT staff with DVR and DDS.
- Set up a “Text DVR” number for anyone to request additional information about DVR to increase outreach.

Indicators of Success:

- SharePoint Implemented.
- IT issues resolved.
- Text DVR number set up and functioning.

Priority 3.6: Review existing Policies and Procedures

Strategies:

- Revise existing policies.
- Obtain SVRC approval on service delivery policies.
- Revise client services procedures.

Performance Indicators:

- New policies written.
- Policies are posted publicly.
- New procedures available.

Goal 4 – DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

This goal is intended to strengthen our connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

Priority 4.1: Improve communication between the WIOA partners

Strategies:

- Develop structured communication plan with DETS.
- Develop structured communication plan with Labor.

Indicators of Success

- Improved communication and referrals.
- Improved interdepartmental communication.

Priority 4.2: Increase OCS and DVR Collaboration

Strategies:

- Create a scorecard for serving the At Risk Youth population to determine baseline and progress.

Indicator of Success

- Scorecard developed.

Priority 4.3: Promote Senior Employment

Strategies:

- Promote senior employment by forming a standing committee between DETS and DVR to determine activities to improve senior employment rates.

Indicator of Success

- Activities identified with resources.