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# Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

## Strategic Plan FFY2010 – 2012



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Plan for FFY2010 - 2012**

The FY2010 – 2012 Strategic Plan for the implementation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the associated regulations, 34 CFR Part 361 was developed jointly by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) which in Alaska is organized as the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities.

### **Mission**

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

### **Guiding 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 systems and the delivery of services to those individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services. DVR utilizes the strategic planning process and the resulting plan to put into action this concept of continuous improvement. Consequently, DVR has implemented an on-going three-year strategic planning process coinciding with the federally required triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). A new strategic plan is written every three years and is informed by the CSNA. In years two and three of the strategic planning cycle, the planning team convenes to review progress, amend the objectives and strategies as required and develop a detailed work plan for the upcoming year.

The strategic planning team is composed of the DVR management team and members of the SRC including the chair and representatives from the Client Assistance Program, the Tribal Voc Rehab (TVR) programs and the State Independent Living Council (SILC). In the most recent planning cycle, the team identified four focus areas with specific priorities for FY2010 which are listed below. The list is ambitious and the intention is not to complete all of the items in FY2010, but at a minimum to begin the planning/implementation cycle for the items. The team simply felt the significance of the items identified warranted initiating work on them sooner rather than later.

The following are the focus areas with the FY2010 priorities. They will serve as the foundation for the goals, priorities and strategies in the writing of the federally required Alaska DVR State Plan.

1. In the area of the delivery of high quality vocational rehabilitation services:
  - Transition services
  - Rural services
  - In-house evaluation services delivery system
  - CRP services including consumer satisfaction with, outcomes of, and payment structure.
2. In the area of staff development:
  - Succession planning
  - Leadership development
  - Provide on-going training opportunities
3. In the area of organizational efficiencies:
  - Social security reimbursement system
  - Timeliness of service delivery
  - AWARE accounting interface
  - Tools/reports for easy access to statistical information
  - Evaluation of administrative processes
4. In the area of the role of DVR in the workforce system:
  - Behavioral health services

## **Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Measures and Outcomes**

### **Goal 1 - Service Delivery: DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to 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 objectives and strategies identified by the CSNA.

#### **Objective 1.1: Improve VR transition services for youth with disabilities**

##### Strategies:

- Develop long range transition plan for the division
- Determine most effective strategies/methods/time frame for informing schools about DVR services
- Develop outreach strategy for youth with other health impairments (504 students)
- Explore use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook to connect DVR services with youth
- VR staff have a positive presence at the annual Directors of Special Education conference
- Have a VR presence on workgroups both local and statewide associated with youth related initiatives
- Develop strategies to collaborate with businesses to assist youth with disabilities to obtain employment
- Increase the rehabilitation rate for youth

##### Performance Indicators

- Division transition plan developed
- Number of youth applying for VR services
- The rehab rate for transition students

#### **Objective 1.2: Improve VR services in rural Alaska**

##### Strategies

- Create a work group of DVR counselors who serve rural areas to share effective service delivery strategies
- DVR and TVR staff share technical expertise
- Invite TVR staff to attend DVR sponsored trainings
- Maximize number of shared cases with TVR
- Assign counselors to serve primary or hub-communities and provide adequate travel funds
- DVR staff participate in rural employment camps
- Develop more CRPs in rural Alaska
- Identify strategies for serving individuals who are not Alaska Natives but whom live in rural Alaska
- Investigate use of technology for distance delivery of services (web cams, etc.)
- Develop contingency plan for potential loss of discretionary grants with TVR programs

- Evaluate options providing counselors with equipment and resources when traveling to effectively provide a high level of service to individuals with a disability

#### Performance Indicators

- Counselors travel to rural Alaska
- Number of cases shared with TVR programs
- TVR counselors attend DVR sponsored training
- Number of individuals served who live in rural areas
- Contingency plans between DVR and TVR programs
- Number of new CRPs in rural Alaska

### **Objective 1.3: Evaluate the effectiveness and use of the in-house vocational evaluation system**

#### Strategies

- Develop MIS reporting and referral systems
- Develop statewide standards for performance and capacity
- Develop mechanism for matching evaluation services to outcomes
- Determine counselor needs and develop a marketing strategy for evaluation services
- Analyze relationship of evaluation services to timely case movement

#### Performance Indicators

- MIS reports
- Number of referrals for in-house services
- Number of workshops and evaluation activities completed
- Days to plan for those receiving in-house services vs. those who do not
- Number who became employed after receiving in-house services vs. those who do not

### **Objective 1.4: Improve services in job centers for Alaskans with disabilities**

#### Strategies

- Provide training on DVR services to rural job center staff
- Explore options for job center staff to be trained on various types of disabilities
- Explore options for supporting AT devices in job centers
- Support the reinstatement of the statewide Training Academy
- VR leadership team and VR managers continue to identify functional job center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division
- VR continues to support initiatives in the job-centers such as the Disability Program Navigators and Start-up Alaska Self-employment
- Support strong partnerships to address cross-agency differences in policy and federal program requirements
- DVR staff provide long distance support to job center staff where DVR counselors travel on an itinerant basis
- Partner with the Division of Business Partnership to maximize the number of joint cases

- Ensure DVR contacts all individuals receiving Job Training services who self-identify as having an employment related disability
- Define role of DVR in job centers

#### Performance Indicators

- AT devices available in job centers
- Number of job center staff trained on AT
- Number of job center staff trained on DVR and disabilities
- Number of cases shared with job center partners

### **Objective 1.5: Support and/or develop consumer satisfaction surveys or community forums**

#### Strategies

- Evaluate use of on-going open cases survey
- Effectively distribute survey information
- Maximize use of on-line web surveys
- Provide support for the Governor's Committee consumer satisfaction survey
- Provide support to the Governor's Committee for public testimony

#### Performance Measures (Indicators)

- Consumer satisfaction survey is carried out on a regular basis
- Consumer satisfaction survey results are disseminated
- GCERPD conducts forums in communities where their meetings are held
- Public testimony taken by GCERPD on efficacy of DVR services

#### Result

### **Objective 1.6: Meet or exceed state and federal production standards**

#### Strategies

- Formalize training for new staff on production goals and *AWARE* case management tools
- Disseminate information to staff on a regular basis on production statewide
- Analyze areas when standards are not met and develop plan for improvement, i.e. days from eligibility to plan

#### Performance Indicators

- Federal standard and indicators
- State mission and measures goals

**Objective 1.7: Enhance the CRP service delivery system through evaluation, training and development of new CRPs**

Strategies

- Develop a work plan for the recruitment and training of CRPs
- Provide additional CRP information for DVR participants on the internet
- Develop statewide training plan on behavioral health issues
- Develop more CRPs in all areas of the state
- Develop CRPs in rural areas with consideration given to local resources such as natural helpers, elders and teachers
- Develop orientation and training materials for VR staff about the use of CRPs
- Assess the specialized skills of CRPs to meet the needs of DVR participants either by occupation or disability
- Evaluate outcome/milestone or other payment systems for CRPs
- Develop documentation for staff maintenance of CRP information in AWARE
- Encourage community behavioral health centers and providers of cognitively disabled services to develop vocational programs
- Survey staff and CRPs on an on-going basis
- Explore further use of centers for independent living

Performance Indicators

- Information on CRPs available to staff and consumers
- CRP application package is current
- CRP training developed
- Number of CRPs attending training
- Counselors satisfaction with CRP services
- CRPs satisfied with DVR processes

**Objective 1.8: Enhance the VR service delivery system through the use of technology**

Strategies

- Continually evaluate new technology such as assistive technology (AT), social networking
- Update orientation video
- Explore video conferencing in VR offices
- VR offices are equipped with the required technology for services to be accessible
- Explore division support of case management services for Center for the Blind
- Evaluate the current use of assistive technology in the service delivery system

Performance Indicators

- Type of AT devices in DVR offices
- Number of DVR offices with AT devices
- Orientation video is current

**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 near future.

**Objective 2.1: Recruit and retain qualified staff**

Strategies

- Identify strategies for hiring qualified VR counselors
- Maximize training funds to support VR counselors in graduate rehabilitation programs
- Offer practicum opportunities and internships to rehabilitation graduate students
- Maximize the number of counselors who are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC)
- Recognize employee performance
- Develop a consistent statewide method for evaluating employee performance
- Develop and keep current employee development plans
- Survey staff

Performance Indicators

- Number of VR counselors who are in graduate programs working towards the CRC
- Number of VR counselors who are a CRC
- Number of internships
- Staff satisfaction
- Number of staff leaving DVR employment and reason

**Objective 2.2: Provide on-going training opportunities**

Strategies

- Provide subject matter training as identified through program evaluation (staff and surveys, case review, etc.)
- Develop staff training modules as identified
- Re-establish the training team to prioritize and develop training opportunities
- Develop a training outline for VR managers
- Continued use of on-line training
- Leverage training resources from outside partners
- Develop a comprehensive system for the documentation of staff training
- Provide trainings with CRC credits
- Identify evidence based or promising practices in VR, i.e. motivational interviewing

Performance Indicators

- Number of CRC trainings provided by DVR
- Number of staff attending trainings

### **Objective 2.3: Support leadership development and succession planning**

#### Strategies

- Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as the Emerging Leaders program
- VR counselors participate on regional case review teams
- Develop in-house leadership seminars or trainings
- Identify and make available to staff public policy, administrative or leadership information
- Utilize Division of Personnel and unions resources
- Staff mentoring, job shadowing
- Identify staff strengths and interests
- Identify training required for staff to represent DVR on appropriate boards
- Provide support to the statewide coordinators for blind and deaf
- Develop long-range succession plan

#### Performance Indicators

- Number of DVR staff attending leadership training
- Number of VR counselors who are on case review team

### **Goal 3 – DVR will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems**

This goal reflects DVR's commitment to organizational effectiveness through the continual analysis and improvement of agency systems and resources including both the delivery of VR service and administrative functions.

### **Objective 3.1: Enhance current technology to maximize efficiencies and access to information for DVR staff and stakeholders**

#### Strategies

- DVR intranet and internet sites to improve usability for internal and external users
- Maintain AWARE management's activities information and case management system
- Complete accounting interface between AWARE and AKSAS
- Implement system for maximizing social security reimbursements such as the Ticket Tracker
- Integrate VIS reporting functionality

#### Performance Indicators

- Usability of DVR internet
- Usability of DVR intranet
- Procurement of Ticket Tracker
- AWARE accounting interface

### **Objective 3.2: State regulations and policies are current**

#### Strategies

- Contract to have regulations rewritten

- Write policies and procedures for grant administration
- Institutionalize processes for business practice and policy revisions

Performance Indicators

- State regulations are current
- Processes for revisions to business practices and policies are completed

**Objective 3.3: Improve processes for the procurement of VR services**

Strategies

- Evaluate processes for the procurement of recurring services
- Evaluate the feasibility of debit cards
- Evaluate the methods for transmitting requests for payment, i.e. invoices and backup
- Evaluate system for bottlenecks

Performance Indicators

- Streamlined procurement processes

**Objective 3.4: Develop a system for comprehensive program evaluation**

Strategies

- Identify elements of program evaluation; develop process for data collection
- Evaluate case review process to include vocational evaluation and VRA responsibilities
- Develop a long range plan for the evaluation of administrative processes such as travel
- Conduct an organizational review of the division by an outside entity
- Formalize the triggers for the need to go on an order of selection (OOS)

Performance Indicators

- OOS triggers
- Case review process
- Program evaluation components manual

**Objective 3.5: Enhance the current means for the dissemination of program information to DVR staff and stakeholders**

Strategies

- Disseminate administrative reviews with outcomes
- Institutionalize the production of an annual report
- Formalize the organization for the storage and retrieval of documents and information such as information requests from the legislature and the state plan

Performance Indicators

- Electronic tracking of administrative reviews
- Document storage system

**Goal 4 – DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and will leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities.**

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

**Objective 4.1: Partner with employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities**

Strategies

- DVR supports the replication of the Anchorage Integrated Employment Services team in Fairbanks and Juneau
- Attend career days at local universities
- Continue to develop best practices establishing the State of Alaska as a model employer
- Employers see VR as a resource
- Participate in local community groups such the Chambers of Commerce and SHRIM
- Develop teams within offices to meet the needs of employers
- Coordinate the employer outreach functions of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant with the Governor’s Council

Performance Indicators

- Number of career fairs attended
- Participation of DVR staff in Integrated Employment Services team
- Number of individuals employed by the state
- State hiring practices
- Number of employers who hired VR participants

**Objective 4.2: Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services especially for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services and employment services from community behavioral health providers**

Strategies

- Ensure MOAs with appropriate state agencies are current and effective
- Work with SILC and CILs to increase the opportunities for the most severely disabled Alaskans to become employed
- Work with job-center partners to maximize shared cases
- Work with the Governor’s Council, the Alaska Mental Health Board, Community Behavioral Health programs, and the Trust to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system
- Together with mental health centers identify barriers to providing vocational services
- Strengthen relationships with community behavioral health providers

- Encourage the development of employment networks to provide the long term support services for both supported employment and Social Security beneficiaries
- Be actively involved with initiatives proposed by other agencies that could affect DVR and the VR service delivery

#### Performance Indicators

- Training plans with mental health centers around vocational services
- Vocational services available at community mental health centers