



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Strategic Plan
FFY2017 – 2019

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Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Plan for FFY2017 - 2019

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 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 priorities and strategies identified by the CSNA.

Priority 1.1: Expand Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities

Strategies:

- Expand Pre-Application activities under Pre-ETS, including summer work experience programs.
- Outreach to 504 coordinators, special education staff, alternative schools, rural schools and youth correctional facilities.
- Work with Technical Assistance Centers (TACs) to develop and share best practices in serving transition-aged youth.
- Contract with CRPs to provide Pre-ETS activities at a reasonable cost resulting in valuable services.
- Provide quality assurance oversight to ensure Pre-ETS expenditures are being correctly captured and reported.
- Strengthen partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs), TVR, DEI, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA).
- Develop program evaluation processes.

Performance Indicators:

- Pre-ETS required services are provided to 585 students with disabilities annually.
- 15% of federal award is expended on Pre-ETS required and authorized activities.
- Increased number of referrals to Pre-ETS from the LEAs.
- Increased delivery of Pre-ETS activities.

Priority 1.2: Ensure the integrity and quality of VR services required under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Strategies:

- Review, regulations to ensure adherence to and implementation of new WIOA regulations is timely and accurate.
- Review and amend DVR policy manual and the Alaska Administrative Code to ensure alignment with WIOA regulations.
- Provide staff training on WIOA requirements.
- Develop strategies to ensure effectiveness in serving employers.

Performance Indicators:

- Changes are implemented and disseminated to staff in a timely manner.
- Policies are updated as necessary and disseminated to staff.
- Staff are provided training on the implementation of WIOA changes.

Priority 1.3: Continue to improve VR services to rural Alaskans.

Strategies:

- DVR rural work group and local TVR partners will meet to identify realistic goals for rural services, develop strategies for meeting these goals, and convey this information to VR field staff.
- Continue to leverage relationships with TVR, LEAs, CRPs, other state agencies and Job Center partners.
- All rural hubs have a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) timely assigned and trained to meet the needs of rural participants.
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Council (SVRC) continues to address rural needs through scheduling a meeting annually that is located in the rural hub.

Performance Indicators:

- Increase competitive integrated employment for rural participants.
- Increased collaboration with local partners.
- Increased number of qualified CRPs in rural areas.

Priority 1.4: Ensure on-going support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment

Strategies:

- Continue to support the needs of individuals, including Pre-ETS who experience blindness or visual impairment through informed choice to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met.
- Blind Services Team tasked with developing strategies and goals for meeting the needs of this population, including membership in appropriate associations.

Performance Indicators:

- VR clients who experience blindness or visual impairments, including Pre-ETS receive appropriate services.
- Continue Division support for the Blind Services Team.

Priority 1.5: DVR will ensure that CRPs are providing quality services consistently statewide

Strategies:

- Continue to work with CRPs to ensure fidelity, effectiveness and quality of service outcomes and program fidelity.
- Monitor and evaluate CRP performance to ensure consistency and quality of service.
- Build capacity through development of qualified CRPs across the state.

Performance Indicators:

- Process for evaluating CRPs in place.
- Staff satisfaction and usage of CRPs improves statewide.

Priority 1.6: DVR will continue to provide quality Assistive Technology (AT) services consistently statewide

Strategies:

- Continue to work with AT providers to improve service delivery across the state.

Performance Indicators:

- Consistent delivery of AT services to Alaskans with disabilities.

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: Recruit and retain qualified staff both Vocational Rehabilitation Assistants (VRAs) and VRCs

Strategies:

- Develop consistent statewide tools for evaluating employee performance, annual reviews, training needs and for promotion criteria.
- Expand recruitment strategies to fill both VRC and VRA vacancies with quality applicants.

Performance Indicators:

- All VRCs become Qualified Rehabilitation Counselors per DVR standards.
- Continuing Education (CE) courses are offered when available.
- All DVR professional and paraprofessional staff have a professional development plan.

Priority 2.2: Leadership development and succession planning

Strategies:

- Strategize ways to ensure staff have access to leadership and mentoring opportunities within the agency.
- Strategize ways for staff in unique positions in the agency to create a knowledge base for their successor.

Performance Indicators:

- Opportunities for fostering mobility are provided.
- Reference materials are created by incumbents for unique positions.

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:

- Determine training needs based on evaluation results.
- Perform internal case reviews annually with results driving training and/or internal documentation materials.

Performance Indicators:

- Internal documentation revised as necessary based on QA results
- Staff training developed as necessary

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

Strategies:

- Negotiate targets for required common performance measures, based on baseline data collected.
- Work with WIOA Core partners to implement activities identified in the Alaska Combined State Plan, including common performance measures.
- Amend Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Key Performance Indicators, Missions & Measures (M&Ms) to more closely align with WIOA performance measures.

Performance Indicators:

- Case management software captures all new required data elements to determine baseline for common measures.
- All required federal reporting submitted on time.
- Meet or exceed State M&Ms.

Priority 3.3: Implement federally required RSA-911 changes to the AWARE case management system

Strategies:

- Analyze all changes to case management (AWARE) software and determine their impact on field and accounting staff.
- Train staff in timely manner.

Performance Indicators:

- Required data is collected accurately.
- Federal reports produced on time and accurately.
- DVR services are not negatively impacted.

Priority 3.4: Implement SARA notification system

Strategies:

- Coordinate with Alliance Enterprises, DOL IT, and The Career Index to implement software.
- Monitor effectiveness of software.

Performance Indicators:

- Increased communication with participants.
- Increased documentation with participant contact.
- Improved time management for staff.

Priority 3.5: Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement Process

Strategies:

- Implement a new Ticket To Work (TTW) tracking system.
- Monitor ticket reimbursement amounts.

Performance Indicators:

- Software implemented and staff trained.
- Continued collection of Social Security Reimbursements.
- Improved capability to capture all available reimbursements.

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: DVR will maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities

Strategies:

- Collaborate with core programs authorized by WIOA to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services and to develop and update the Combined State Plan as required.
- Strategize ways for sharing resources and information within other Labor programs.
- Encourage and support the presence of DVR staff on boards, councils, and advisory groups, including the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Team (NET).
- Continue to seek membership on the Alaska Workforce Investment Board AWIB.

Performance Indicators

- DVR is appropriately represented on the AWIB in alignment with federal statutes/regulations.
- Statewide and local cooperative agreements are in place in accordance with federal statutes and regulations.
- Number of TTW holders obtaining job retention services from ENs is tracked.
- Combined State Plan is revised and submitted per requirements.