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Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

In Section C of the Unified State Plan, this has been updated as follows:

- **Department of Corrections and VR MOU — Procedural Guidance**

The Maine Department of Labor— Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) have worked together to establish procedural guidance on collaboration between the two agencies. Work thus far has resulted in two procedural directives outlining how the two agencies will work together to best meet the needs of individuals who are currently incarcerated or on probation and may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. In each of the larger offices a DVR staff member has been identified who serves as the liaison to the correctional agencies in their region. DVR corrections liaisons meet as a group on a quarterly basis with DOC staff to share updates and best practices. (Page 203) Title II

In June 2014, Maine’s legislature enacted the Employment First Maine Act (Sec. A-1. 26 MRSA c.3), which was a natural progression in Maine’s focus on competitive integrated employment as a valued outcome for the state’s citizens with disabilities. It set forth that the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education must implement employment as a core component of services and supports provided and is the first and preferred service or support option offered to individuals with disabilities.

The Act also convened a time-limited coalition of interested parties, including employers, state agency representatives, advocacy organizations, and people with disabilities, to review and make recommendations regarding the improvement of the administration of employment services and the employment outcomes of people with disabilities. Before its sunset in October 2016, the Employment First Maine Coalition produced a report summarizing the work that was completed and identifying twenty-seven recommendations for consideration by the Governor, the Legislature and state agencies, primarily identifying strategies that encourage the employment of youth and adults with disabilities, engage the business community, and improve EFM performance measures. (Page 233) Title II

The Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with other State Agencies and partners, has begun to implement the recommendations that were developed by the Employment First Maine Coalition. The Offices of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Child and Family Services, and Aging and Disability Services have committed to work together to ensure that the outcome of employment of people with disabilities is a strong focus of the services they provide. During the past year, DHHS has created new resources, developed additional employment services, and has begun to expand expectations that service providers all have a responsibility to promote employment as the first and preferred outcome. (Page 234) Title II
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Objective: To increase the number of individuals with significant intellectual disabilities who access the available waiver employment support for long term employment support needs after closure from BRS.

Strategies:

b. Continue to work with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that all individuals who have the waiver — but have not taken advantage of employment services — are aware of employment supports open to them through coordination between the two Departments

c. Continue to provide access and training to the BRIDGE — Career Exploration Workshop, appropriate for individuals with intellectual disabilities

Objective: Maine DVR will undertake efforts to continue to embrace and implement an “Employment First” philosophy during the next year as documented by a decrease of 5% in the statewide unemployment rate of people with intellectual disabilities. (Page 246) Title II

Customized Employment

Expanded use of technology to increase access to workforce development services; • Quality work experiences, including job placement assistance and ideally, quality sector/occupation specific pre—employment work experiences (e.g., apprenticeships, internships). With this customized approach, all participants, including the target populations, are able to access the programming and services necessary to become fully engaged in the workforce system. For example, by working with individuals using various tools, such as Discovering Personal Genius and Customized Employment, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services will encourage some individuals with significant disabilities to consider self—employment as a viable option with appropriate supports. (Page 55) Title I

With the implementation of WIOA and reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, Maine DVR has revisited its personnel requirements and hiring practices. Maine DVR recognizes that the standards for rehabilitation counseling personnel outlined in WIOA represent the minimum standards for qualification. These standards require a minimum of attainment of a baccalaureate degree in a field of study reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, to indicate a level of competency and skill demonstrating basic preparation in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with consumers and employers; and

(2) Demonstrated paid or unpaid experience, for not less than one year, consisting of -

(i) Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center;

(ii) Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individual with experience and skills
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in working with individuals with disabilities; or

(iii) Direct experience in competitive integrated employment environments as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources or recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities; or

Maine DVR continues to give priority to applicants and staff who possess master’s degrees in counseling or a counseling—related degree, defined as Social Work, Psychology, Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling in alignment with WIOA’s alternative requirement of attainment of a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related fields. (Page 230) Title II

DVR has a close working relationship with our partners at DHHS Office of Aging and Disability Services and Mental Health Services we have developed a procedural directive which spells out how waiver services will fund career planning (specifically they fund Discovering Personal Genius© as the career planning model) and once Discovery is completed (waiver services will fund up to 50 hours), a referral is made to DVR who will work with the case manager and agency to proceed with job development and perhaps further exploration as needed. Then, when an individual has been successfully placed in a job and is stable and closed out successfully (may utilize extended services for this as needed), waiver funds will then pick up again and cover long term support services (usually job coaching) which will help the individual continue to remain stable on the job. (Pages 243-244) Title II

Braiding/Blending Resources

Co—training with and for partners will be considered to best use resources and help system partners’ staffs to “be on the same page.” Blending and braiding training resources will be a guiding principle. All one—stop center staff will be trained and required to demonstrate competency in serving diverse populations and knowledge of related policies across the system and among partner agencies. One—stop center certification will depend on demonstrating that employees have achieved the required competencies in universal access. Policies: Existing policies will be reviewed and updated to reflect WIOA intent and to meet the standards articulated in the Section 188 Checklist. Universal access policies that will govern one—stop center certification will be developed in collaboration with the Bureau of Employment Services’ Division of Policy and Evaluation and the State Board Program Policy Committee. Examples of immediate policy priorities include assistive technology and equipment responsibility, website/social media accessibility, programmatic and physical accessibility of workshops and events, service animal protocols, customer flow for the employment network, prohibition of automatic referrals to vocational rehabilitation, alternative formats for required tests/assessments, and consistent use of equal employment and accommodations tag lines. Program participation rules governing required orientation workshops, the RESEA program, and other mandatory programs will be examined to ensure full accessibility, especially access to alternative formats.
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and accommodations. (Page 98-99) Title I

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

In an effort to maximize training resources, staff often solicit local training resources to provide free or low cost workshops, attend trainings with a ‘train the trainer’ perspective to provide turn—around training to other staff, and share internal expertise through in—house training opportunities. In past years, DBVI has been successful at leveraging training funds through collaboration with Region I TACE center, Perkins School for the Blind training funds, and the Lovill Trust. (Page 316-317) Title IV

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

Goal 4 Maine DVR will partner with the larger workforce development system to improve opportunities and access for DVR clients as measured annually by documented collaborative activities, technical assistance, and training.

Objective: Maine DVR will continue to partner with Maine’s Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant to include 50 non—VR CareerCenter customers with disabilities in Career Exploration Workshops Strategies in FFY 2016

Strategies: a. The DEI team will include one VR Rehabilitation Counselor I who will assist in piloting a jointly—delivered Career Exploration Workshop b. DVR will participate in DEI Integrated Resource Team meetings c. DVR will work with the DEI team and others in the Bureau of Employment Services to ensure accessibility in Maine’s CareerCenter network d. DVR will partner with DEI staff in the delivery of an asset development summit in FY 2016

Objective: DVR will work with the Maine Department of Labor’s Center for Workforce Research and Information to maintain a triennial snapshot of the employment status of people with disabilities in Maine as well as a webpage where disability data can be easily accessed. (Page 255) Title II

Staff from the VA Blind Rehab, program attended a DBVI training to present on their program so staff would gain a better understanding of how the two agencies can best serve consumers who are blind or have low vision. In addition, DBVI Director met with the Blindness Rehabilitation Outreach Specialist and the Vision Impairment Services Team Coordinator to refine a more streamlined referral process….

Objective: DBVI will partner with Maine’s Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant to identify non—VR CareerCenter customers who are blind or have low vision who may require DBVI services.

Strategies: Maine DBVI will work with a designated point of contact with the Bureau of
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Employment Services. (Page 350) Title VI

In 2017, the DEI grant ended and MDOL chose not to pursue another round of funding. Even though the DEI grant has ended, DBVI will continue to work with Career Center staff to ensure referrals are made for DBVI services and to provide technical assistance for consumers who are blind or visually impaired.

Objective: To increase the number of DBVI clients achieving an employment outcome at one of the BRS Single Point of Contact businesses from one to three in the next year.

Strategies: DBVI will have direct representation on the business liaison teams utilizing the single point of entry approach and the Walgreen’s universal design model.

Update: The BRS Single Point of Contact position has been vacant. However, DBVI staff have been successful working with employers, such as the Iris Network, AAA, Cuddledown and Seafax Inc. to find competitive employment for consumers. (Page 351) Title VI

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

Use of Governor’s Set Aside Funding: Maine will utilize the Governor’s Set—Aside funds for required and allowable statewide employment & training activities to facilitate the successful transition and implementation of WIOA, Statewide employment & training activities include: o Rapid Response activities; o Providing assistance to State entities and agencies, local areas, one—stop partners in carrying out the activities described in the State plan, including the coordination and alignment of data systems used to carry out the requirements of this Act; o Disseminating the State list of eligible providers of training services, including eligible providers of nontraditional training services and of apprenticeship programs, and information identifying eligible providers of on—the—job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, or transitional jobs; o Operating a fiscal and management accountability information system and carrying out monitoring and oversight of activities; o Implementing innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of all Maine employers, as well as developing strategies for effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment and for coordinating programs and services among one—stop partners; o Improving coordination of employment and training activities with child support services, programs that serve individuals with disabilities, adult education and literacy activities, including financial literacy and activities in the corrections system that assist ex—offenders in reentering the workforce; o Conducting research and demonstration projects related to meeting the employment and education needs of adult and dislocated workers in Maine. (Page 127) Title I

Documentation of ability to connect youth participants with all fourteen required youth service elements, either through direct provision or through partnerships, MOUs, or other methods, to include provision of: a. Tutoring and/or Study Skills; b. Access to drop out recovery programs or alternative education; c. Work—based learning; d. Occupational Skills Training; e. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as occupational training; f. Leadership development; g. Adult Mentoring; h. Support Services; i. Follow—up Services; j. Comprehensive
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guidance and counseling; k. Financial Literacy; l. Entrepreneurial Skills/ Training; m. Career
guidance and counseling, including provision of local and state labor market information and
information about how to prepare to enter occupations that are in demand in the local area and in
Maine; and n. Activities that prepare youth for entry into post-secondary education. M. Evidence
of employment of professional staff, including requisite credentials and experience and
demonstration of a commitment to staff development that prepares staff to deliver the services
identified above. (Page 396) Title IV

School to Work Transition

(P) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals (Goal 1
Objective 3 d)

SRC: Is there a plan to renew this partnership? CNA and nursing positions seem to be in high
demand. It would be advantageous for DOL to pursue this further.

(P) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals (Goal 2
Objective 1a)

SRC: Can you please provide more specific data on the impact of the CEW and days to plan? It
seems that if people need to wait a month or possibly two to attend the CEW it may create a
delay in developing an IPE. The CEW seems to have become the standard practice for career
exploration. Please elaborate on other tools that can be used as an alternative rather than the
CEW. (Page 201) Title II

AGENCY RESPONSE: Section C (Cooperative Agreements) states the following: DVR does
support staff involvement in the USDA’s AgrAbility project. In Maine, the AgrAbility project is
administered by Alpha One, Goodwill Industries of New England and the University of Maine.
The liaison to the project ensures that DVR staff is knowledgeable about AgrAbility and related
resources. Grant funding for AgrAbility is ending during 2014 and DVR anticipates development
of a fee for service agreement for AgrAbility services.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

SRC: Without exception, once a DVR client, DVR has 90 days to develop the IPE. This cannot
be contingent on the student leaving school as implied in this section.

AGENCY RESPONSE: The language in this section comes from DVR’s current Memorandum
of Understanding with the Maine Department of Education. The MOU will be updated following
the issuance of new regulations under WIOA.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

SRC: DVR should not be determining the appropriateness of a referral. The onus of long term
support should be on DVR not the school. (Page 204) Title II

SRC: Can you please provide more specific data on the impact of the CEW and days to plan? It
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seems that if people need to wait a month or possibly two to attend the CEW it may create a delay in developing an IPE. The CEW seems to have become the standard practice for career exploration. Please elaborate on other tools that can be used as an alternative rather than the CEW.

AGENCY RESPONSE: Training has been completed with VRC’s that if the CEW is determined to be the best tool to use to assist with career exploration, then they can write a plan for employment that includes the use of the CEW and or other exploration. VR is also using Discovering Personal Genius™ in conjunction with DHHS, or paying for it as a stand alone service if that tool is determined to be the best fit. VR also regularly refers for on the job assessments which can be included as part of someone’s plan. (Page 213) Title II

Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency: DVR will assist in transition planning and in the development of student’s individualized education program (IEP). For students eligible for services with an agreed upon vocational goal, DVR is expected to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before the student leaves the school setting. In providing transition services, DVR will facilitate the use of available and appropriate community—based services. Services will be provided in the most cost effective manner. In recognition of the importance of promoting information sharing and in order to ensure an effective and timely system of referrals for DVR services, DVR requests that school personnel adopt the following process: When a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) begins the transition planning process prior to entering ninth grade, the student and his/her parents or guardians will receive general information about VR services. This information will introduce VR and will inform the parents/guardians when it is appropriate to make a VR referral. When the student to be referred is within two years of school graduation or exit, the services offered by VR should be re—introduced at the student’s IEP or 504 meeting. Both the student and the parents/guardians should have an opportunity to receive materials outlining VR services and to ask questions concerning the referral. (Page 220-221) Title II

When recruiting or hiring new staff, Maine DVR gives preference to qualified individuals who demonstrate a current understanding of the labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities. Maine DVR supports staff to obtain and practice 21st century skills through opportunities for training through the Technical Assistance Centers and state and local workforce development partners. (Page 230-231) Title II

Since passage of WIOA and promulgation of the final rules, Maine DVR has worked to develop, adopt and implement procedural guidance, programming and training to support the identification and registration of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. Through previously established relationships with school districts and through outreach initiatives and pilot activities, Maine DVR has sought to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services across the state. According to data from the Maine Department of Éducation, during school year 2015-16, there were 9,3338 students with a disability enrolled in grades 9-12. An additional 2,993 students grades 9-12 were identified as having a 504 plan. This is a represents a small but significant increase over figures from the previous year. Maine DVR has targeted the problem of early exiters from VR services and is collecting data and implementing targeted initiatives for transition-age youth designed to engage
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Youth with disabilities and get them involved in community-based work experiences -and other work-based learning sooner. (Page 236) Title II

State Plan Estimates for FFY 2019 & 20 During FFY 2016, DVR determined that it could no longer serve individuals in OOS Category 3 due to lack of resources. The projected number of clients to receive services after being found eligible is 10,000 of which 6,000 are expected to be served under an employment plan. Since open cases in Category 3 will continue to be served, they are included below. The expected services provision by priority category was as follows: Maine implemented an Order of Selection for Category 3 on January 18, 2016. The projected numbers of clients to be served under an IPE is 6000 in FFY 2019. The proposed case service budget is $8,400,000. The expected services provision by priority category is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OOS Category 1 55%</th>
<th>$4,620,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OOS Category 2 40%</td>
<td>$3,360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOS Category 3 5%</td>
<td>$420,000 (this reflects those already in Category 3 at the time of the OOS implementation) Maine DVR projects FFY 2019 closures goals to be the following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOS 1 55%</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOS 2 40%</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOS 3 5%</td>
<td>Total: 1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The projected number of clients to receive services after being found eligible is 10,000. (Page 238) Title II

Assistive technology services and assistive technology devices are provided to individuals with disabilities as determined by each individual’s vocational goal, and appear as prescribed services on the respective individual’s signed IPE. DVR services include assistive technology and assistive technology devices if required for the individual’s IPE, necessary for the attainment of the individual’s employment goal. DVR works closely with Maine cohorts, Alpha One and ALLTECH, assistive technology organizations which provide assistive technology technical assistance services as well as assistive technology devices. (Page 250) Title II

Many changes designed to help youth and adults with disabilities access employment education, job training and support services, have been made, including:

- Establishing a much larger role for public vocational rehabilitation (VR) as youth with disabilities make the transition from school to adult life. Public VR funds in the amount of a 15% set-aside, must now be used for transition services, specifically pre-employment transitions services that include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, workplace readiness training, and training on self-advocacy. Each local VR office must also undertake pre-employment transition coordination activities and they must involve schools and workforce development system in these activities.

- Focusing supported employment state grants to VR agencies on youth. Half the money the state
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receives under these grants will now have to be used to support youth up to age 24 with the most significant disabilities to achieve supported competitive integrated employment. (Page 258) Title II

**Objective:** To reduce the average time in plan development (status 10) from 300 days in FFY 2011 to 240 days in FFY 2012 to 210 days in FY 2013 to 180 days in FY 2014 & FY 2015.

**Strategies:**
1. Increase use of the Career Exploration Workshop, which has been shown to decrease case length time.

**REPORT ON PROGRESS:** Time to plan continues to drop across the state. At the close of FFY 2017, time from eligibility to IPE across the state was at 92.6 days, a significant improvement over past years. This trend continues into FFY 2018. DVR continues to use the Career Exploration Workshop (CEW) as a powerful tool in assisting clients to clarify their career goals. The 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 25% of clients surveyed had participated in CEW and they had an 87% favorability rating of the CEW. In training delivered during FFY 17, the DVR Director and Assistant Director offered examples for staff on how usage of the CEW could support more timely plan development. During FFY 17, the CEW was modified to allow for delivery of core elements during a 2-day administration. This approach was done to also allow for more frequent administration in the field and in more off-site locations. The goal of this is to increase easy access to the CEW for VR clients. (Page 266) Title II

BRs supports staff involvement in the USDA’s AgrAbility project. In Maine, the AgrAbility project is administered by Alpha One, Goodwill Industries of New England and the University of Maine. The liaison to the project ensures that BRS staff is knowledgeable about AgrAbility and related resources. Grant funding for AgrAbility ended during 2014 and DBVI uses AgrAbility services on a fee for service basis when these services are applicable to a client’s IPE. (Page 301) Title II

The purpose of this collaboration with DOE is to promote and establish a process that results in an effective working relationship between state agencies on behalf of, and with youth with disabilities, in order to gain the greatest benefit from their respective programs and services. Specific areas of collaboration include: consultation, technical assistance, transition planning, roles and responsibilities, financial responsibilities of each agency and procedures for outreach and identification in order to better coordinate and facilitate the process of student transition.

The MOU defines and strengthens the relationships with DOE and calls for identification of students with disabilities, both in Special Education and regular programs, in order to plan their transition before graduation from high school. The agreement focuses upon the needs of the individual student and allows for flexibility and professional judgment to be exercised by personnel. It also spells out the roles of each agency in referral, outreach, and the provision of service. The blindness—specific curriculum services that are identified in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 plans facilitate the achievement of the employment goal, which is further developed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). DBVI, the student and parent(s) develop the IPE, utilizing the interests, strengths, and needs of the
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student. (Page 303-304) Title II

Supported Employment Program — The Division has remained committed to assuring that individuals with the most severe disabilities receive supported employment services when this is appropriate. An Individual Plan of Employment (IPE) is developed that describes the services provided, the need for extended services, if appropriate, and an assurance that the individual has been able to make an informed choice in the provision of these services and the goal itself. (Page 337) Title IV

**Career Pathways**

E. A description regarding how the Local Area will utilize work-based learning approaches through such programs as Registered Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Industry and Sector Strategies, Integrated Education and Training strategies, Career Pathways initiatives, utilization of business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of businesses;

F. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area with economic development activities carried out in the Local Area to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services and training and placement of participants;

G. A description of how the Local Board will leverage and coordinate supportive services in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area, including how the Local Board will work with other providers to deliver supportive services to job seekers;

H. A description of how the Local Board intends to promote a greater business voice in the delivery of workforce development activities carried out in the Local Area. This description should include how the board will engage businesses on decisions regarding the type and content of training activities required of the local workforce;

I. A description of how the Local Board will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships and career pathways in delivery of workforce training opportunities;

J. A description of the role of faith-based or community-based organizations in the local one-stop system. (Page 403) Title IV

**Apprenticeship**

The share of long term unemployed remains elevated FIGURE 5: LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL UNEMPLOYED, 2003—2014 In an environment in which the labor force is shrinking, Maine does not have the luxury of tens of thousands of people being less than fully engaged in the workforce. The State Board’s committees for Older Workers, Women’s Employment Issues, Younger Workers, Veteran’s Employment, Apprenticeship and the Commission on Disability and Employment are charged with addressing many of these issues. Later in this plan, strategies to engage populations that tend to have lower labor participation rates including, but not limited to, people with disabilities,
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veterans, women, older workers, people without a high school diploma, ex—offenders, individuals with language barriers, female heads of households with dependent children and out of school youth are discussed. LABOR MARKET TRENDS Workforce conditions in Maine continue to improve, though there has been virtually no real economic growth for a decade. Underlying these seemingly contradictory statements is a rapidly advancing age structure of the population that is constraining growth and tightening the labor market at the same time. Through 2014, real gross domestic product (GDP) has been little changed since 2004, after relatively steady growth in previous decades. Meanwhile, the number of jobs is up since the 2010 post—recession low, but still nearly two percent short of the 2008 peak level. In the middle of 2015 the state has about the same number of jobs as in 2004. This situation is in stark contrast to the nation, which began reaching new highs in GDP in 2012 and in nonfarm payroll jobs in 2014.

...(Page 14) Title I

The SWDB has six constituent committees that make recommendations to the Board about service delivery or policy related to the cohort group they represent — Apprenticeship, Commission on Disability & Employment, Older Workers, Veterans, Women’s Employment Issues and Younger Workers. These committees meet four to eight times annually.

The SWDB and the State Workforce Agency (SWA - Maine Department of Labor) will work together to establish and convene workgroups that focus on required implementation and service delivery components of WIOA. Some groups will complete their work and be dissolved while other will need to be on going for the foreseeable future. Service Providers and Local Workforce Development Board staff will be included on each workgroup as appropriate. The workgroups include;

- Program Policy Committee (Ongoing)
- WIOA State Plan Steering Committee
- State Plan Implementation Committee
- Staff Development / Cross Training
- America’s Job Link Alliance (New database implementation)
- One Stop Certification
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Priority of Service
- Accessibility
- Employer Outreach
- Youth Service Delivery
Since passage of WIOA and promulgation of the final rules, Maine DVR has worked to develop, adopt and implement procedural guidance, programming and training to support the identification and registration of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. Through previously established relationships with school districts and through outreach initiatives and pilot activities, Maine DVR has sought to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services across the state. According to data from the Maine Department of Education, during school year 2015-16, there were 9,333 students with a disability enrolled in grades 9-12. An additional 2,993 students grades 9-12 were identified as having a 504 plan. This represents a small but significant increase over figures from the previous year. Maine DVR has targeted the problem of early exiters from VR services and is collecting data and implementing targeted initiatives for transition-age youth designed to engage youth with disabilities and get them involved in community-based work experiences and other work-based learning sooner. (Page 236) Title II

Through its collaboration with DHHS and specifically the coordination of Maine’s benefits counseling network DVR has been able to develop opportunities and overcome barriers to competitive integrated employment for individuals with visual impairments who are eligible for MaineCare, the State’s Medicaid program. DVR entered into the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus agreement with the Bureau of Employment Services in July 2014. The purpose of this agreement is to strengthen the partnerships within CareerCenters in the provision of vocational rehabilitation and employment and training services to individuals with disabilities seeking employment in Maine. This agreement expands service options and the overall capacity of Maine’s workforce investment activities and offers individuals the opportunity to achieve employment outcomes, decrease reliance on public benefits and increase personal economic assets and resources. (Page 225) Title II

Interagency Support of Benefits Counseling DBVI/DVR continue to work closely with many other state partners to ensure that Maine’s benefits counseling services remain available to beneficiaries of SSI/SSDI, and specifically, DBVI applicants and eligible clients. This allowed the services to remain intact while a resolution was determined on a federal level as to the
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continuation of this critical service in 2013. DBVI/DVR currently administer a single contract with Maine’s approved WIPA provider, Maine Medical Center’s Department of Vocational Services, which includes funding from four sources of state and federal funds, including from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, and Office of Aging and Disability Services. The contract’s scope of work includes direct service provision of benefits counseling, training of VR counselors and case managers, and service capacity building through quarterly system development network meetings, which include representatives from the Disability Rights Center’s Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) and the Bureau of Employment Services’ Disability Employment Initiative. (Page 300-301) Title II

BRS entered into the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus agreement with the Bureau of Employment Services in July 2014. The purpose of this agreement is to strengthen the partnerships within CareerCenters in the provision of vocational rehabilitation and employment and training services to individuals with disabilities seeking employment in Maine. This agreement expands service options and the overall capacity of Maine’s workforce investment activities and offers individuals the opportunity to achieve employment outcomes, decrease reliance on public benefits and increase personal economic assets and resources. (Pages 308-309) Title II

Due to these current restrictions and the fact that the success of the supported employment model, as a whole, will ultimately hinge on the ability of the system to continue to develop options for extended/long—term support, the Division focuses on greater utilization of natural supports and the various SSI/SSDI work incentives as well as trying to explore new ideas for extended support. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Act (TWWIA) offers additional support to persons in Supported Employment.

The Division participates in the state—funded Long—term Support Program, which allows us to purchase extended support for individuals who are blind or have low vision. In addition, DBVI receives state funds for extended support for individuals with brain injuries, who are also blind or visually impaired. Both of these appropriations are very limited in the number of people who can be supported. (Page 354) Title IV

Employer/Business

Maine’s Unified Plan emphasizes greater levels of integration, alignment and coordination among core programs and one—stop partners. As part of this initiative, Maine is currently piloting five integrated education and training (IET) pilots. IET is a proven training model that enhances learning comprehension by integrating classroom and occupation training and often compresses learning time frames. Based on identified local workforce needs, the pilot projects were developed with extensive employer engagement, as well as the involvement of support service providers and a variety of educational institutions. Maine Adult Education is playing the lead role in the delivery of these projects, but each partner has an appropriate role to play. Participants, many of whom are receiving public assistance, are being prepared for actual unfilled positions with local employers. Pilot projects are currently being delivered in northern Maine, Lewiston, St. John Valley, Western Maine and Bucksport/Ellsworth areas. (Page 18)
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Title I

DVR continued to assist the State Independent Living Council (SILC) to increase organizational capacity and member effectiveness by supporting SILC to maintain an Executive Director. During this past year the Executive Director resigned and the SILC is currently advertising for a new Executive Director/SPIL Coordinator. The SILC Executive Director will be responsible for conducting the work of the SPIL under the supervision and direction of the Maine SILC to accomplish tasks such as a) recruitment and management of members and volunteers b) establish and maintain partnerships with community members and organizations c) market and promote the Maine SILC d) increase and diversify the resources related to the six core areas of the SILC.

Innovation and Expansion funds are used to support the activities and administration of the Division’s State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The SRC meets monthly as a full council. The SRC has standing committees that meet regularly. These committees include, Policy/Regulations Group, Membership, Annual Meeting, Business committee, and the Executive Committee. The SRC collects information on consumer satisfaction and participated in the triennial consumer satisfaction survey. This year the SRC has increased its business outreach and employer engagement to better align with WIOA. For more information regarding the SRC, please visit www.mainesrc.org.

Data Collection

SYSTEMS Core partners of this Unified Plan utilize the following case management and management information systems (MIS): Adult Education uses MaineSTARS, Vocational Rehabilitation utilizes AWARE, and Wagner—Peyser and formula program providers utilize the Maine Job Link (MJL) a product of America’s Job Link Alliance that combines case management, performance tracking and reporting and labor exchange job match services in one system. The aforementioned systems comply with current federal reporting requirements for each program. The data elements required for each program are being collected and will be used to support the coordinated implementation of Maine’s strategic objectives. MaineSTARS is a federally approved MIS system compliant with adult education’s National Reporting System. Local adult education programs are required to use MaineSTARS for all intake, demographic, assessment, and attendance data. At the state level, aggregate numbers are compiled in MaineSTARS and used to perform data matches against Maine Department of Labor employment data, high school equivalency completion data, and the National Student Clearinghouse database for postsecondary enrollment. The AWARE system collects and reports data required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation services, as well as serving as a case management tool for the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The system is maintained by its vendor, Alliance Enterprises, and has been updated to meet WIOA reporting requirements. The Maine Job Link (MJL) system collects and dispatches the data required for current formula program performance reports. Reports are created for a variety of programs spanning formula and Wagner Peyser, to Trade and Apprenticeship. In response to this data analysis, after consulting with a stakeholder group, DVR and DBVI changed their CRP payment system. On October 1, 2016 the Divisions changed from the milestone payment system to a “hybrid” model that is a combination of a fee for service model and a bonus payment system for timely job placements and for SSI/SSDI recipients achieving Substantial Gainful
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Employment (SGA). DVR and DBVI continue to monitor expenditures and employment outcomes to inform a cost benefit analysis of the new payment model and make adjustments as necessary. (Page 265) Title II

<table>
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<td>Limiting the use of sub-minimum wage. Section 511 is specifically intended to reduce the number of transition-age youth entering sheltered workshops and working for sub-minimum wage. The emphasis is on moving young people with significant disabilities into integrated community employment. The bill prohibits individuals with disabilities age 24 and younger from working in jobs paying less than the federal minimum of $7.25 per hour unless they first apply for and receive vocational rehabilitation services, among other requirements. There are exceptions but only for those already working for subminimum wage and cases where individuals may be deemed ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Section 511 also prohibits schools from contracting for services, training or work experiences that involve the use of sub-minimum wage.</td>
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<td>• Requiring state VR agencies to have formal agreements with the state Medicaid systems, and the state intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) agency.</td>
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<td>• Adding a definition of “customized employment” in federal statute, and an updated definition of “supported employment” that includes customized employment.</td>
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<td>• Adding a definition for “competitive integrated employment” as an optimal outcome. (Page 259) Title II</td>
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REPORT ON PROGRESS: During this last year DVR has partnered with DHHS on the implementation of the discovery model for individuals with significant disabilities “Discovering Personal Genius”. DVR and DHHS issued joint guidance on DPG and presented a webinar on that guidance in September 2015. Regular DPG training was offered for interested staff and providers. During FFY 2017, in keeping with Section 511, DVR met with 47 individuals with significant disabilities who were working in sub-minimum wage settings and shared information on opportunities for them to receive services from Maine DVR leading to competitive, integrated employment in the community. (Page 267-268) Title II

REPORT ON PROGRESS: The State ADA Coordinator who is housed in DVR, has surveyed for physical accessibility compliance and consults regularly with the Bureau of Employment Services on programmatic and physical accessibility issues in the CareerCenters.

Objective: Maine DVR will work with the Bureau of Labor Standards to support integrated competitive community—based employment of people with disabilities by a review and examination of organizations paying sub—minimum wage in Maine with the goal of reducing these certificates from 17 in FY 2011 to 15 in FY 2012 to 13 in FY 2013

Strategies: a. DVR will hire three Rehabilitation Counselor II’s to serve specialty Workers’ Compensation caseloads REPORT ON PROGRESS: The pace of referrals from Workers’
### Maine (ME) WIOA Matrix

Compensation has not merited three full-time VR Counselors. During FFY 17, DVR had one full-time dedicated Workers’ Compensation VRC along with a portion of a Casework Supervisor’s time. This strategy will be discontinued going forward. (Page 270-271) Title II

### Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

To establish universal access as a policy and quality assurance initiative, the universal access coordinator will have the authority of a program manager working under the Division of Policy and Evaluation. Under the direction of the universal access coordinator, the work group will draft a five year plan to improve and sustain universal access and when indicated, make recommendations to the State Board through its program policy committee, and directly to the Commissioner of Labor, when indicated, to emphasize department wide authority and support for accessibility. If warranted and if resources allow, the work group will conduct a staff development needs assessment. Planning will include initial and ongoing staff training and an updated assessment of physical accessibility for one—stop centers, WIOA partner provider facilities, vocational rehabilitation providers, and adult education programs. Policy issues will be identified; and guidance will be provided to one—stop centers, local workforce boards, and required partners. That guidance will be refined over time as policies are developed and monitoring/certification activities occur. SECTION 188 CHECKLIST The WIOA Section 188 Checklist developed by the USDOL Office of Civil Rights will be the guiding document for the working group. The checklist is considered a comprehensive overview of requirements and provides reliable advice on achieving and sustaining universal access. (Page 97) Title I

When monitoring or other activities reveal a need for system-wide technical assistance, policy updates, or concerns related to non-discrimination and accessibility, the Bureau of Employment Services may provide or assist with providing the necessary TA.

We will use the Section 188 checklist, Promising Practices In Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide, and the USDOL’s Integrated Service Delivery Toolkit to assist system partners, providers, and local boards with guidance on developing their own monitoring tools.

Implementing and monitoring compliance with these policies will be overseen by a universal access coordinator and a core Universal Access work group of system stakeholders and subject matter experts from the larger community, including the Alpha One (independent living center), Disability Rights Maine, the state ADA coordinator, Maine CITE (designated adaptive technology provider for the Maine Department of Education), NAMI Maine, and other agencies and entities with relevant expertise in both accessibility and non-discrimination. Members of the state or local workforce boards will be included. (Page 100) Title I

Establishing WIOA Regions spells out specific requirements used to identify planning regions as required under WIOA • Accessibility Requirements to be developed and to spell out accessibility requirements as identified in the State Plan in regard to individuals with barriers such as disabilities, other languages, other cultures, and rural access. • Incumbent Worker • Underemployed Worker • Transitional Jobs • Integrated Intake to be developed by and between four core partners • Shared Assessments to be developed by and between four core partners •
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Shared Customer Service Plans to be developed by and between four core partners • Shared Infrastructure Cost Plans to be developed by the State Workforce Board to direct local areas in processes that must be implemented if they are unable to attain agreement on local workforce development system infrastructure cost sharing. • AJC Certification Criteria to be used by Local Boards in the process of development to be presented to the State Board • Youth Service Provider Procurement Requirements in the process of development to be presented to the State Board • Adult and DW Funds Transfer already developed and in the process of approval of the State Board • Co—enrollment to be reviewed and agreed to by the four core partners • Some policies that were in draft form but never fully implemented will be revised or be rescinded: • Local Board Recognition — this policy has incorporated into the Local Board Certification Policy • Use of Electronic Signature — this policy will need to be revamped to meet requirements of the new MIS system that will be in place in July 2016, the America’s Job Link Alliance or AJLA system. (Page 125) Title I

Outreach to Job Seekers —Wagner Peyser staff act as the initial interface with most job seeker participants entering the system, they conduct initial triage and provide resource navigation and referral services so it is imperative that they have the skills necessary to do this in a customer-centric way and in accordance with Section 188 and the requirements identified in the Local Area MOUs regarding referrals and access to system partner services. In addition, staff needs to be trained to effectively relay all of the required information such as that listed under Basic Career Services. To ensure all staff is adequately trained and have the professional skills necessary to provide services in this way a state-level professional development team was formed to evaluate WIOA-related staff development needs and identify and access resources to accomplish staff development goals identified. (Page 164) Title I

Meets the workforce development needs of participants through provision of services and leverage of resources; ? Meets the employment needs of local employers; ? Operates in a cost-efficient manner; ? Coordinates services among and between one-stop programs in a way that is seamless to the customer and eliminates duplication of services; ? Provides access to partner program services to the maximum extent possible; including providing services outside of regular business hours where and when there is a workforce need identified by the local board. ? Ensures equal opportunity for all individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment, to participate in or benefit from one-stop center services; ? Takes action to comply with disability-related regulations implementing WIOA Section 188, set forth in 29 CFR 38, including: o Making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities; o Making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures where necessary to avoid discrimination against individuals with disabilities; o Administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate; o Communicating with persons with disabilities as effectively as with others; o Providing appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology devices and services to afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, program activities; and o Providing for the physical and programmatic accessibility of the one-stop center to individuals with disabilities. (Page 397) Title IV

According to the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), universal access includes performance of the following functions: • Understanding local needs; •
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Marketing and outreach; • Involving community groups and schools; • Effecting collaboration, including partnerships and linkages; • Staff training; • Intake, registration and orientation; • Assessments and screenings; and • Service delivery. See the publication Promising Practices In Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide https://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/188Guide.htm

Universal design Also known as "inclusive design" and "design for all," this is a strategy for making products, environments, operational systems, and services welcoming and useable to the most diverse range of people possible. The key principles of universal design are simplicity, flexibility, ease of access, and efficiency. (Page 412) Title IV

Vets

Program SFY14 Funding ($ mil—lions) Overseeing Agency Program Description Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) $0.9 MDOL Jobs for Veterans State Grant funds are allocated to State Workforce Agencies from the Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) in direct proportion to the number of veterans seeking employment within their state. The grants support two principal staff positions: Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives. This grant provides funds to exclusively serve veterans, other eligible persons and, indirectly, employers. Federal $0.9 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) $2.8 MDOL The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to US workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The TAA program seeks to provide these trade—affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed. Federal $2.8 Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) $0.1 MDOL The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. Federal $0.1 Re-employment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) $1.5 MDOL The Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program assists unemployed workers to return to work more quickly by delivering and services to those claimants profiled as “most likely to exhaust” and all transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment compensation. Targeted claimants will be provided relevant reemployment services and Eligibility Review Interviews. (Page 19) Title I

The State Board, Maine Department of Labor and Local Workforce Development areas are jointly required to develop and issue a “priority of service to veterans” policy that applies “to every qualified job training program funded, in whole or in part, by the Department” for which they have direct oversight and responsibility. Board level area policy must adhere to 20 CFR 1010 dated December 19, 2008 and TEGL No 14—08 dated March 18, 2009, and incorporate veteran priority into current WIOA priority of service policy. Veteran’s priority of service definitions for covered and non—covered persons can be found at Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses: Final Rule (http://www.dol.gov/vets/). The State Board, Maine Department of Labor and Local Workforce Development area service providers are responsible for developing strategies and implementing the veterans’ priority of service as defined and required by 38 U.S.C 4215(b) and 20 CFR Parts 1001 and 1010. Maine’s one—stop system is the core mechanism that will support, expand and maintain services to the veteran population.
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throughout the State. Eligible veterans or eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment as defined in Veterans’ Program Letter (VPL) 03—14, Section 5, will receive “top priority.” Priority of service applies to Workforce Investment Act Adult, Dislocated and Youth Grants, National Emergency Grants, Demonstration Grants, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Wagner—Peyser, and other core programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and administered in Maine by the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL). Maine Department of Labor and one—stop providers will take the necessary actions to ensure that priority of service opportunities are clearly visible and articulated to all customers who engage in one—stop services. At a minimum, “priority of service to veterans” will include adherence to and implementation of the following guidelines: Outreach/Recruitment: • Inclusion of information regarding veterans’ priority of service in printed materials targeted to customers and employers; • Inclusion of information regarding veterans’ priority of service in presentations made to customers and employers; • Addition of veterans’ priority of service information to service providers, Maine one—stop centers and Department of Labor web sites; and • Pro—active recruitment of veterans by targeted contact strategies or other strategies that focus on employers as well as job seeking veterans, particularly when the region is not in compliance with veterans’ priority of service performance measures. (Page 94-95) Title I

Benchmarks will be established to provide a baseline to measure the impact of priority of service to covered participants: one will benchmark the covered participants using prior program year data. Many veterans face difficult labor market transitions, particularly upon reentering civilian life and may require specialized employment and training services to boost their job prospects. Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) and Maine Department of Labor have established effective program designs that include other providers such as the Togus Veteran’s Rehabilitation program. Additionally, veterans with more severe adjustment difficulties may require counseling, social services, and more in—depth support from specialists who are more familiar with their needs. Maine’s Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) are delegated the authority to generate the “Quarterly Reports on Services to Veterans.” Nonetheless, the responsibility for the content of such reports remains with one—stop center managers. These reports focus on compliance with Federal law and regulations with respect to special services and priorities for veterans. As new US Department of Labor and Maine Department of Labor veterans programs are introduced and implemented, the veterans’ team and Wagner—Peyser staff will assist in delivering these services and programs to veterans. Delivery of services through the one—stop system to veterans and eligible spouses is standardized to ensure that no veteran or eligible spouse is turned away without receiving some level of service. Stationed in key one—stop centers, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives work exclusively with veterans and eligible spouses to facilitate their access to all programs and services for which they are eligible under the priority of service policy. (Page 96) Title I

Monitoring Compliance with Priority of Service • DOL will monitor recipients of funds for qualified job training programs to ensure that covered persons are made aware of and provided priority of service. • Monitoring will be performed jointly by the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the DOL agency responsible for administering the program. • If monitoring identifies non—compliance with priority of service, the results of the monitoring: 1)
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will be handled in accord with each program’s compliance review procedures; and, 2) may lead to imposition of a corrective action plan. (Page 373) Title IV

USDOL will regularly reassess the definition to ensure it reflects the best available data and trends associated with veteran employment and continues to identify those veterans who are to be given priority and maximum emphasis for DVOP services under 38 U.S.C. 4103A (a). An eligible veteran or eligible spouse who is identified as having a SBE must be immediately referred to a DVOP specialist or, in instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, another CareerCenter provider of intensive/individualized services. For planning purposes, ETA and VETS anticipate that approximately 30 percent of veterans seeking CareerCenter services nationwide will be identified as having an SBE. Case management continues to be an appropriate service delivery strategy or framework within which intensive services may be delivered, particularly for veterans. Intensive/individualized career services should be delivered following the case management framework in most cases. However, case management itself is a process, not a service, and is therefore not to be reported as a service, intensive/individualized career or otherwise. Managing the DVOP Caseload In the event that a DVOP specialist does not have a full case—load of eligible veterans and eligible spouses who meet the criteria in paragraphs a. and b. above the DVOP specialist may perform additional activities, in the order specified below:

1. Review all open case files of current participants with an SBE or in a priority category and perform case management duties. 2. Conduct relationship building, outreach and recruitment activities with other service providers in the local area, to enroll SBE and priority category veterans. In addition, W—P, WIOA, and other partner staff will continue to provide services, including intensive/individualized career services, to veterans and eligible spouses as appropriate under the programs the staff administer. This guidance does not limit the ability of non—JVSG staff to provide intensive/individualized career services to veterans who do not have an SBE or are not in a veteran category specified by USDOL. Also, veterans with an SBE or in a specified category must have access to all appropriate CareerCenter services and are not limited to receiving services only from DVOP specialists. Those veterans not meeting the SBE definition or not within a specified category identified by DOL are to be referred to appropriate non—JVSG CareerCenter staff member(s) to receive core/basic career, intensive/individualized career, and/or training services, on a priority of service basis. MDOL will provide technical assistance to local areas to assist in the coordination of efforts between DVOP specialists and CareerCenter staff to ensure that all veterans are receiving needed services. Sequence of Priority USDOL does not interpret the VPL to require priority to be given in the order that these groups are listed in the VPL. Instead, DVOP specialists must provide the same priority to serving special disabled, other disabled and other veterans prioritized by USDOL, including those identified as having Significant Barriers to Employment in this guidance. (Page 379-380) Title VI

Mental Health

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works with other state agencies and many Councils and Committees whose focus is on individuals with disabilities. DVR has a long standing relationship and works very closely with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DVR and DHHS have two memorandums of understanding (MOU); one MOU is with the Office of Aging and Disability Services, which serves individuals with developmental disabilities; the other MOU is with the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
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(SAMHS) which serves individuals with mental health issues. The MOU’s address the combined efforts that DVR and DHHS have initiated and clarify roles to improve the successful outcomes for these jointly served populations. • DHHS Office of Aging and Disability Services and DVR/DBVI MOU (updated November 2013) “This Memorandum is intended to guide the Maine Department of Labor’s Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), through its Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) in the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), through a system change planning process for the purpose of implementing an aligned service delivery system that promotes evidence—based practices. It contains information about policies and processes that pertain to maintaining and enhancing the relationship between these two entities. (Page 217) Title II

DVR has a close working relationship with our partners at DHHS Office of Aging and Disability Services and Mental Health Services we have developed a procedural directive which spells out how waiver services will fund career planning (specifically they fund Discovering Personal Genius© as the career planning model) and once Discovery is completed (waiver services will fund up to 50 hours), a referral is made to DVR who will work with the case manager and agency to proceed with job development and perhaps further exploration as needed. Then, when an individual has been successfully placed in a job and is stable and closed out successfully (may utilize extended services for this as needed), waiver funds will then pick up again and cover long term support services (usually job coaching) which will help the individual continue to remain stable on the job. (Page 243-244) Title II

DVR will partner with the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services to explore opportunities available through the I SPA b. DVR will work with the Department of Corrections through its quarterly joint meetings to identify effective practices in referring and supporting individuals for whom mental health is a barrier to employment.

Objective: Maine DVR will maintain statewide consistency in its practices with regard to “Clubhouses” offering services to DVR clients as measured by client case review.

Strategies:

a. DVR will maintain a liaison to the local Clubhouse in each office.

b. DVR will invite Clubhouse program staff to participate in DVR training opportunities. (Page 251) Title II

The Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with other State Agencies and partners, has begun to implement the recommendations that were developed by the Employment First Maine Coalition. The Offices of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Child and Family Services, and Aging and Disability Services have committed to work together to ensure that the outcome of employment of people with disabilities is a strong focus of the services they provide. During the past year, DHHS has created new resources, developed additional employment services, and has begun to expand expectations that service providers all have a responsibility to
**Maine (ME) WIOA Matrix**

promote employment as the first and preferred outcome.

SAMHS contracts with Maine Medical Center’s Vocational Services to provide Employment Specialists that are embedded in behavioral health organizations across the state to assist individuals living with serious mental illness. They assist with career exploration and securing employment, and provide other supports as needed. In keeping with best practices, these Employment Specialists work as a team with behavioral health professionals to improve outcomes. This service is supplemental and not necessarily a replacement service for Vocational Rehabilitation services through the DOL Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. (Page 262)

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) works with other state agencies and many Councils and Committees whose focus is on individuals with disabilities, including out-of-school youth who are blind or visually impaired. BRS has a long standing relationship and works very closely with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). BRS has two memorandums of understanding (MOU); one MOU is with the Office of Aging and Disability Services, which serves individuals with developmental disabilities; the other MOU is with the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS) which serves individuals with mental health issues. The MOU’s address the combined efforts that BRS and DHHS have initiated and clarify roles to improve the successful outcomes for these jointly served populations. • DHHS Office of Aging and Disability Services and DVR/DBVI MOU (updated November 2013) “This Memorandum is intended to guide the Maine Department of Labor’s Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), through its Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) in the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), through a system change planning process for the purpose of implementing an aligned service delivery system that promotes evidence-based practices. It contains information about policies and processes that pertain to maintaining and enhancing the relationship between these two entities. (Page 301-302) Title IV

The Division continues to use Title VI—B money to provide services for individuals with the most severe disabilities as an integral part of our VR program. Securing long—term employment resources continues to be a primary challenge for the Division. DBVI continues to collaborate with Department of Health and Human Services’ Offices of Aging and Disability Services and Substance Abuse Mental Health Services to explore long—term support mechanisms for those individuals completing their VR plan and who have been utilizing Title VI, Part B funds. (Page 331) Title IV

**RTW/SAW**

During 2012, representatives of the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) and Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation worked together to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU was completed and signed, effective November 2012. DVR and the WCB are committed to working together to improve services and employment outcomes for individuals who, as a result of injury, are in need of vocational rehabilitation services to return to employment. Through the efforts outlined in the MOU, DVR and the WCB will strive to maximize employment opportunities for injured Maine workers, minimize duplication of
Maine (ME) WIOA Matrix services, improve information sharing and referrals, and coordinate activities in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations. (Page 219) Title II

*All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of June 30, 2019

Find your local state plans here:

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html