North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

Employment First State Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

The established CRP-DVRS steering committee continues to review the provision of supported employment services in North Carolina to ensure that funding is optimally utilized so that adequate funding will be available for ongoing extended services. The steering committee continues to address the issues that surround long term support funding such as inconsistencies in the levels of disability-type funding and shortages as well as looks at other best practices that can be incorporated into the NC service delivery system. In recent years, NC DMHDDSAS has partnered with DVRS to implement an ODEP grant for technical assistance. The goal of this grant was to assist NC in establishing an employment first policy, implement a plan for employer engagement, and develop a unified workforce plan. Executive leadership from DVRS met with other executive leaders from DMHDDSAS, DMA, the Department of Commerce, NCCCS, and DPI to develop the initial objectives and plan for an employment first initiative. DVRS mounted the employer engagement work group that focused on the use of technology, specifically iPads to address barriers to employment. A national subject matter expert met with select DVR and CRP staff who learned to use the iPad and related apps as well as how to speak with employers on meeting their business needs. (Pages 197-198) Title I

The continued growth of the statewide network of supported employment service providers has resulted from collaboration between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and entities such as the North Carolina Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, the North Carolina International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services, NCCDD and the Mental Health Consumers’ Organization. In addition, the North Carolina Association for Persons Supporting Employment First (NCAPSE) provides a forum for focusing on supported employment standards and expanded choices for individuals with the most significant disabilities in the state. (Page 198) Title I

Customized Employment

In March 2017, DVRS and DSB jointly entered an intensive technical assistance agreement with WINTAC to receive technical assistance with implementation and performance enhancement in the areas of the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services, Customized Employment and related services; Extend the provision of services to unreached youth with disabilities in Juvenile Development Centers; linking individual staff performance with corporately collected Common Performance Measures; and Improving systems integration with the NCWorks Career Centers across the state. (Page 252) Title IV

Braiding/Blending Resources

The DVRS VR program is collaborating with community rehabilitation programs and other
### North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

agencies and organizations to provide extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. Because DVRS will only utilize community rehabilitation programs that give written commitment that they will provide extended services compliant with Federal regulations as supported employment vendors, many of those community rehabilitation programs providing SE services also provide extended services under their service contract at no additional cost to DVRS when other resources for extended services are not available. The Request for Application (RFA) is one of the key tools DVRS utilizes for contract and program development, in which the entity submitting the application has completed much of the foundational work in leveraging and braiding resources from other public and private funds. And, through its continued participation on interagency committees and collaboration efforts, DVRS will continue to work with community rehabilitation programs, LME/MCOs, and other organizations to leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. (Page 244) Title IV

The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) VR program is collaborating with community rehabilitation programs and other agencies and organizations to provide extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. Because the DSB VR program will only utilize community rehabilitation programs that give written commitment that they will provide extended services compliant with Federal regulations as supported employment vendors, many of those community rehabilitation programs providing SE services also provide extended services under their service contract at no additional cost to the Division when other resources for extended services are not available. The Request for Application (RFA) is one of the key tools utilized for contract and program development, in which the entity submitting the application has completed much of the foundational work in leveraging and braiding resources from other public and private funds. And, through its continued participation on interagency committees and collaboration efforts, DSB will continue to work with community rehabilitation programs, LME/MCOs, and other organizations to leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. (Pages 328-329) Title IV

### DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

### Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

### School to Work Transition

DPI consultants are providing transition training to LEAs to promote student-led IEPs, and NC DVR plans to provide training to VR counselors and LEA representatives in the Spring of 2016
Finally, DVRS casework policies require that transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student’s individualized plan for employment. In order to plan effectively for the transition needs of students with disabilities in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, DVRS rehabilitation counselors are expected to be active participants addressing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting transition issues when possible. Counselors are expected to participate both directly in IEP meetings and indirectly by other means in planning for the needs of VR consumers. A copy of the transition portion of the IEP is required to be maintained in the case record. Prior to developing the IPE, the VR counselor reviews the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) component for the Individual Education Plan and records any relevant ITP objectives as part of the IPE. The intent of this review is to coordinate educational programming and vocational programming for the benefit of the VR consumer. (Page 185) Title I

Additionally, the Division’s policy stipulates that the development of the IPE with a student must be based on interests, aptitudes, capabilities, strengths and informed choice. The job choice on the IPE for a student in transition may indicate a family of jobs rather than a specific job code, for example, Health Care Worker, Office Work, and Protective Services such as police, firefighter, or security guard. DVRS policy does require career exploration to be provided and documented in order to determine a more specific goal, and this process and expectation has been further emphasized by recent policy revisions concerning development of the IPE within 90 days of the VR eligibility determination. Amended job choices, including amendments at closure, must be accompanied by documentation reflecting the process and services that had an impact on the final job choice, including job shadowing, job sampling, guidance and counseling. Moreover, DVRS casework policy stipulates that the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment must be completed as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, by the time each student determined to be eligible for VR services leaves the school setting. This includes students with disabilities who are eligible for VR services including eligible students served by the school under an IEP.(Page 185) Title I

In order to ensure effective facilitation of the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, DVRS maintains both a joint formal agreement with the Exceptional Children and Career Technical Education Divisions of DPI and also maintains 99 separately held TPCAs with local education agencies (LEA’s) or school programs. The agreement with DPI will be revised upon issuance of the final regulations for Title IV to account for new mandates concerning PETS, serving the “potentially eligible,” Section 511 impacts on contracted services between schools and programs operated under a subminimum wage certificate, and a number of other new requirements. Additionally, in that the agreement is not only with the Exceptional Children’s division of the SEA, but also the Career and Technical
### North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

Education division, NC DVR hopes to leverage partnerships that create more opportunity for students with disabilities to advance along a career pathway and to participate in work-based experiences beginning in high school. Within the current formal interagency agreement between DVRS and DPI, mutual interagency responsibilities include:

- Mutual participation of appropriate personnel in the development of the transition component of the Individualized Education Program and the Individualized Plan for Employment for students with disabilities.

- Designation of an individual from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Exceptional Children and Career Technical Education Divisions to serve as liaison with each other to represent the services of the two agencies.

- Exchange of information deemed pertinent and of mutual concern regarding service delivery.

- Interagency cooperation in transition planning for students with disabilities.

- A mutual system to be developed and maintained to ensure that appropriate referrals are made to each party. (Page 186) Title I

The current interagency agreement between DVRS and the state education agency stipulates that transition planning for students with disabilities will be a cooperative effort. Furthermore, the agreements specifically require mutual participation of appropriate personnel in the development of the transition component of the Individualized Education Program and the Individualized Plan for Employment for students with disabilities. The sharing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) at the local level is strongly encouraged. DVRS VR counselors are required to review a student’s transition component of the IEP and incorporate, as appropriate, a description of relevant objectives in the IPE. Furthermore, a comprehensive evaluation will be completed by the State agency on each eligible individual, to the degree necessary, to determine the vocational goal and scope of VR services to be included in the IPE. The agreements state that the student with the disability is expected to fully participate in the development of the plan and any plan amendments. The agreements specify that the DVRS VR counselors will provide the individuals with information sufficient to make an informed choice among alternative goals, objectives, services, entities providing such services and methods to procure such services. Additionally, the agreement requires that the VR counselor is to review the IPE with the individual or his/her representative at least once each year. (Page 189) Title I

- As part of the agreement, DVRS Rehabilitation Counselors will provide individuals with information sufficient to make an informed choice among alternative goals, objectives, services, entities providing such services and methods to procure such services. The counselor is to review the IPE with the individual or his/her representative at least once each year. The VR counselor will provide each eligible individual an IPE Handbook wherein there is an appeals process outlined. Information pertaining to the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is included in the
North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

handbook. The VR counselor agrees not to close an individual’s record as having achieved a successful employment outcome until the person exits school and is determined that the individual has successfully completed the IPE. (Page 190-191) Title I

On—going support provided during extended services must include a minimum of twice—monthly monitoring at the work site to assess job stability unless under special circumstances, especially at the request of the individual, the IPE provides for off—site monitoring and based upon that assessment, the coordination or provision of specific services at or away from the work site, that are needed to maintain employment stability. If off—site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, it must, at a minimum, consist of two (2) face—to—face meetings with the client and one employer contact monthly. These activities apply to all supported employment clients and not only those whose services are provided through funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities. (Page 244) Title IV

Currently, NC’s Capacity Building Plan is focused on improving student involvement in the individualized education program (IEP) process so that planning is more meaningful and associated with a student’s post-school goals. The state is continuing to work on a Transition Toolkit for teachers and anticipates the development of toolkits for parents, students, and agencies that will be individualized at the local level. DPI consultants are providing transition training to LEAs to promote student-led IEPs, and NC DVR plans to provide training to VR counselors and LEA representatives in the spring of 2016 to focus on the role of the VR Counselor in the IEP process. (Page 250) Title IV

DSB currently offers a wide variety of services to students with visual impairments or blindness in transition to the world of work. Each student served by the DSB VR program must have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) approved by a qualified DSB rehabilitation counselor. The IPE incorporates transitional elements of the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), along with the student’s plans for transitioning from secondary school to employment. DSB transition staff and VR counselors are expected to participate in student IEP meetings pertaining to transition matters. Local school systems provide students services that are within its legal responsibility and customary practice. These services are provided without cost to the Division. DSB provides transitional and supportive services that are not available through the local school systems. All costs for services for which a student is found eligible is paid for through DSB VR case service funds. A formal cooperative agreement exists with the NC Department of Public Instruction, which consists of 115 local education agencies (LEA’s), 128 charter schools, 1 regional school and 2 education entities. The emphasis of the Memorandum of Agreement with DPI is on students who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired, being served by local education agencies (LEA’s) and the schools who are of transition age (14 to 21) and who need VR services to become employed. This agreement acknowledges the role of DSB in providing these services and encourages local LEA’s and schools to develop working relationships with the
North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

staff who cover their corresponding areas and encourages referring students, sharing information and facilitating joint involvement in IEP meetings. DSB shares information about the transition program and provides technical assistance and consultation to DPI, LEA’s, and schools regarding accommodations and assistive technology that will help facilitate the education and VR of students who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired. (Page 289) Title IV

Each student served by the DSB VR program must have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) approved by a qualified DSB rehabilitation counselor (this is not required for the receipt of Pre-Employment Transition Services). The IPE incorporates transitional elements of the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), along with the student’s plans for transitioning from secondary school to employment. DSB transition staff and VR counselors are expected to participate in student IEP meetings pertaining to transition matters. Local school systems provide students services that are within its legal responsibility and customary practice. These services are provided without cost to the Division. DSB provides transitional and supportive services that are not available through the local school systems. All costs for services for which a student is found eligible is paid for through DSB VR case service funds. (Page 291) Title IV

DSB has also enlarged the transition rehabilitation services presently offered for students 14-21 years of age in North Carolina who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired by adding specific Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): (1) Student Counseling on Transition/Higher Ed Training Opportunities- Required Student Workplace Readiness Training; (2) Student Self-Advocacy Training; (3) Student Job Exploration Counseling; (4) Student Job Exploration Counseling Materials; and Student Work Based Learning Experience Maintenance. These services are provided to all students with visual impairments, blindness, or deaf-blindness whether they are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. (Page 294) Title IV

Career Pathways

North Carolina has a strong career pathway strategy in place that expanded on the work done over the last decade by the K-12 and community college systems. The current strategy includes a certification process by the NCWorks Commission that requires eight key element be in place to ensure pathways are comprehensive with multiple entry and exit ramps for in-demand occupations. Specific strategies to continue to strengthen and use career pathways are listed below.

- Continue to support and promote the development of NCWorks Certified Career Pathways for critical industry clusters.

- Require workforce development partners use the career pathways to target resources towards helping individuals gain the skills and experience needed for in-demand occupations.
North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

- Provide programs that link low-skilled adults and individuals with barriers to employment to career pathways and job-ready skills along with basic skills. (Page 36) Title I

- Support collaborative efforts under the vocational rehabilitation program to provide individuals with disabilities the rehabilitative services, training, and supports needed to obtain or maintain employment, including utilization of career pathways.

- The vocational rehabilitation programs will incorporate, to the maximum extent possible, career pathways within their services to individuals with disabilities through approaches to include increase emphasis and reference of career pathways during comprehensive assessment of individuals’ skills, interests and aptitudes and during counseling and guidance sessions with individuals.

- Program leadership will promote to staff and service recipients the use of established resources highlighting information about career pathways and in-demand occupations; increase emphasis on established career pathways and career growth when developing employment goals and individualized plans for employment with services and training that directly support the employment objectives; remain actively engaged with workforce partners in the collaborative development of career pathways and identify particular issues or challenges individuals with disabilities may encounter when adopting a career within an established career pathway or enhancements that may be particularly favorable for the populations served by the state’s vocational rehabilitation programs. (Page 47) Title I

OJT is a viable and compatible part of North Carolina’s Integrated Services Delivery services. Local workforce development board OJT policy is critical for consistency, institutionalizing services the local board seeks to deliver, and managing and leveraging OJT funds. Local OJT policy also provides guidance on how to comply with federal and state OJT requirements and leverage other hiring. (Page 62) Title I

DVRS staff plan to expand the role of employers in vocational evaluation and career development services. DVRS will be enhancing policies around internships and OJT services so that the service procedures are consistent with employer practices while still preparing the individual for competitive employment. DVRS plans to work towards a service definition that is complementary to other internship and OJT programs available in the state through our workforce system partners. (Page 65) Title I

Provision of Transition Services through Coordination with Employers

While youth and students with disabilities have access to the same VR services as adults, there are some VR services reserved for or targeted to transition-aged youth for the purposes of assisting them with leaving high school and preparing for competitive employment. The division plans to focus on program development in the coming year in order to meet the 15% required spending allocation for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities. A number of areas of program development are focused on increased engagement with employers in order to implement PETS. These include: summer internships for students and youth with disabilities including on-the-job supports, increased utilization of OJT for students.
and youth, and increasing the number of Project Search sites. (Pages 65-66) Title I

DVRS will work on enhancing OJT utilization for students and youth with disabilities as well by engaging business in the development of young talent. DVRS plans to streamline OJT processes, revise policies so that they are complementary to similar OJT programs, and improve marketing and tracking materials and processes so that the materials are engaging to both student/youth participants and potential business as well as easy to complete and accessible. (Page 66) Title I

By enhancing and incorporating new programs that promote and support work-based experiences, DVRS will continue its commitment to students in pursuit of a high school diploma through the Occupational Course of Study (OCS), a pathway established by the NC Board of Education for students with IEPs to achieve a high school diploma by completing occupational coursework and work experiences. DVRS has recently revised policies for In-School Work Adjustment services to students with significant or most significant disabilities. The service is coordinated through school-based agreements to incentivize a student’s participation in school-coordinated work experiences by providing guidance and counseling as well as an incentive payment to students for improvements in work behaviors and attitudes. The Division continues to offer internship and OJT services to students, but hopes to increase utilization and improve feasibility for students, schools, and partnering businesses through policy and procedure revisions and collaboration with workforce system partners. Other PETS programs/services under consideration are intended to address students’ expectations around pursuing employment and to improve their preparedness for participating in additional rehabilitation services, such as training and placement. (Page 184) Title I

Beyond increasing consumers’ participation in career-oriented post-secondary education/training, some of the other strategies that DVRS has established under this goal are to develop and build quality relationships with businesses that offer strong salaries and benefits and to continue offering the internship services, which, compared to an OJT experience, are geared more toward individuals who have completed their specialized training and need work experience to get their careers established. This service has been very well received by staff and consumers and we expect to continue the service. Another strategy that DVRS is employing to increase the earning potential of individuals who have entrepreneurial skills is through the support the Division has made available through a dedicated Small Business Specialist on staff who helps support staff and consumers in their assessment of this option as a fit and when it is mutually determined as such, coordination of local resources and ongoing supports for the consumer pursuing this option. (Pages 251-252) Title IV

Objective 1.1.1. The total number of individuals exiting the VR program in employment will exceed that of the prior year: One of the strategies for achieving this increase is for the DVRS VR program to utilize on-the-job training (OJT) without supports. Wage subsidies for OJT are funded at a reduced amount relative to when additional funding for these services was available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and both greater utilization of OJT and number of corresponding employment outcomes through OJT was achieved. A full wage subsidy and making the process more convenient for employers would increase OJT utilization and outcomes. (Page 266-267) Title IV
### North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprenticeship</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The current referral process is to have the veteran complete a questionnaire upon their arrival in the NCWorks Career Center. They are asked to check if they have any of the following (barriers):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o disabilities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o homelessness;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o unemployed for at least 27 weeks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o criminal background (released within the last 12 months);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o no high school diploma or GED;</td>
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<tr>
<td>o low income; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o between 18—24 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans with any of these barriers are then referred to a DVOP, or in the limited locations without a DVOP, the veteran will be given a priority of service and will be assisted by another career center staff. Included in career counseling conversations with veterans, staff inform veterans of the Registered Apprenticeship program and the eligibility and utilization of GI Bill Benefits for the apprenticeship program. (Page 108) Title I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Incentives and Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Incentives and Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A separate data file exchange process is maintained for uploading VR participant information to the SSA portal for the SSA Ticket-to-Work program. This file exchange process isn’t fully automated and is limited to establishing VR participant in-use status and eligibility for agency cost reimbursement. An interface with Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security provides quarterly State unemployment insurance wage records and related information to establish whether a former VR participant is working at the level of substantial gainful activity for agency cost-reimbursement under the Ticket-to-Work program. (Page 83) Title I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Major service gaps or barriers DVRS experiences when fulfilling this need most generally in terms of: (a) consumers’ needs for VR services, but lack of motivation to become employed, some of which is driven by disincentives to work, including the potential loss of SSI, SSDI or other public benefits; and(b) the lack of resources, including time, additional counselor positions, and expertise required for better counseling and guidance. The lack of resources was said to be in part due to counselor vacancies, lack of support staff, and attention to non-counseling related activities, such as focusing on meeting performance measures and processing paperwork. |

| Recommended solutions for DVRS to increase its capacity for counseling and guidance and help further motivate consumers to enter or reenter the workforce, particularly those receiving SSI or SSDI benefits included increasing VR counseling capacity through: (a) smaller caseloads; (b) |
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paperwork reduction; (c) a decreased focus on performance measures and increase attention to holistic counseling; (d) hiring additional counselors and support staff; and increasing the quality of VR counselors through training and higher salaries. These were said to attract and retain high quality counselors and allow the counselors more one-on-one time with the consumer to provide counseling and guidance, including motivational counseling. The most frequently mentioned solution for increasing client motivation for our consumers receiving public benefits, such as SSI or SSDI, was to increase benefits counseling services. (Page 225) Title IV

Through NC DVR's participation in the RSA- funded Technical Assistance Project "E3TC" Empower Educate Employ Targeted Communities, the need for an expansion of the certified Work Incentive and Planning Assistance (WIPA) counselors network was identified as an area where NC DVRS and NC DSB will plan to utilize innovation and expansion funds to help accomplish this during the 2018 and 2019 program years. (Page 258) Title IV

Employer/Business

DVRS plans to increase the quantity and improve the quality of business partnerships in the future with the expectation that an increased number and depth in business relationships will result in increased opportunities to assist individuals with disabilities with vocational evaluation and career development, job seeker preparation, and job development and job placement. DVRS plans to identify methods for capturing information on employment relationships within our case management system in order to map out the presence of business partnerships and identify opportunities for growth and means for leveraging peer-to-peer marketing of VR business services. (Page 65) Title I

DVRS will continue to explore unique business partnerships that benefit the unique training and recruitment needs of students and youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities. DVRS plans to continue partnering on Project Search © sites where there is a need and willingness by community partners. This model places business in the middle of the training and employment of young people by hosting student interns at the business and seeking placement opportunities within the business where they may exist. Project Search © host businesses can not only support the students enrolled in projects on their site, but can also be business advocates for people with disabilities in their industries. (Page 66) Title I

The established CRP-DVRS steering committee continues to review the provision of supported employment services in North Carolina to ensure that funding is optimally utilized so that adequate funding will be available for ongoing extended services. The steering committee continues to address the issues that surround long term support funding such as inconsistencies in the levels of disability-type funding and shortages as well as looks at other best practices that can be incorporated into the NC service delivery system. In recent years, NC DMHDDSAS has partnered with DVRS to implement an ODEP grant for technical assistance. The goal of this grant was to assist NC in establishing an employment first policy, implement a plan for employer engagement, and develop a unified workforce plan. Executive leadership from DVRS met with other executive leaders from DMHDDSAS, DMA, the Department of Commerce, NCCCS, and DPI to develop the initial objectives and plan for an employment first initiative. DVRS mounted the employer engagement work group that focused on the use of technology, specifically iPads to
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address barriers to employment. A national subject matter expert met with select DVR and CRP staff who learned to use the iPad and related apps as well as how to speak with employers on meeting their business needs. (Pages 197-198) Title I

With regard to the need for more employers to hire and accommodate people with disabilities, barriers included: (a) lack of funding to educate business on the hidden workforce available; and (b) lack of employer knowledge of available accommodations that can be made. Solutions proposed included: (a) continued partnerships with agencies that specialize in providing services for individuals with disabilities; and (b) for other workforce agencies to train staff, educate employers, and promote hiring of individuals with disabilities to employers. With regard to the need for transportation and other Support Services, the barrier was mainly limited funding and lack of coordination. The proposed solutions were to leverage additional funding sources and improve coordination of services. Lastly, the barrier regarding the need for training and resources related to assistive technology for NCWorks Career Centers was a lack of funding and the solution proposed was to leverage resources to purchase, build infrastructure, and install technology that assist individuals with disabilities. (Page 233) Title IV

Data Collection

In March 2017, DVRS and DSB jointly entered an intensive technical assistance agreement with WINTAC to receive technical assistance with implementation and performance enhancement in the areas of the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services, Customized Employment and related services; Extend the provision of services to unreached youth with disabilities in Juvenile Development Centers; linking individual staff performance with corporately collected Common Performance Measures; and Improving systems integration with the NCWorks Career Centers across the state. (Page 252) Title IV

511

The Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities report to the North Carolina General Assembly for 2016 establishes WIOA as foundational federal legislation upon which the state policies and practices concerning system needs are established and aligned. Specific elements of the Unified State Plan and Opportunities Act that have been incorporated include the earmarked Title IV funding, representing roughly $16 million, for pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities who are eligible or ‘potentially eligible’ for the VR program; the restrictions on subminimum wage employment so that individuals with even the most significant disabilities are encouraged and permitted to pursue competitive integrated employment; the expansion of the triennial statewide comprehensive needs assessment under Title IV to focus on the vocational rehabilitation needs of youth with disabilities; and performance measures aligned with the WIOA Performance Accountability measures for youth as statewide indicators of North Carolina’s success. (Page 52) Title I

In order to ensure effective facilitation of the transition of students with disabilities from school
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to the receipt of VR services, DVRS maintains both a joint formal agreement with the Exceptional Children and Career Technical Education Divisions of DPI and also maintains 99 separately held TPCAs with local education agencies (LEA’s) or school programs. The agreement with DPI will be revised upon issuance of the final regulations for Title IV to account for new mandates concerning PETS, serving the “potentially eligible,” Section 511 impacts on contracted services between schools and programs operated under a subminimum wage certificate, and a number of other new requirements. Additionally, in that the agreement is not only with the Exceptional Children’s division of the SEA, but also the Career and Technical Education division, NC DVR hopes to leverage partnerships that create more opportunity for students with disabilities to advance along a career pathway and to participate in work-based experiences beginning in high school. (Page 186) Title I

Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

Cooperative agreements or memorandum of agreements have been established with all local area workforce boards. The agreements provide for the following strategies:

- Provision of inter-component staff training and technical assistance with regard to the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for vocational rehabilitation services; and the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities receiving workforce development system services in all of the states NCWorks Career Centers in the state through the promotion of accessibility; the use of non-discriminatory policies and procedures; the provision of reasonable accommodations; auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology for persons with disabilities. (Page 57) Title I

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) currently utilizes a dual customer approach by providing services to both businesses and individuals with disabilities. The division emphasizes the definition and marketing of business services to ensure the dual customer approach is recognized and implemented. Business services include recruitment, hiring, consultation on Section 503 compliance, sensitivity/diversity training, accessibility consultation, internships, on-the-job training (OJT), education on tax incentives, and follow-up and job retention services. (Page 64) Title I

Both physical and programmatic accessibility are essential for all individuals to participate in services offered by the NCWorks Career Centers and the collaborating community partners. With employment as the ultimate objective, accessibility to facilities and programs offered as legislated by the Americans with Disabilities Act is essential to support individuals with significant barriers to employment to achieve employment.

The physical accessibility of facilities is systematically addressed across the state. The State maintains a Methods of Administration which details how compliance with WIOA Section 188 will be maintained. The Methods of Administration is a “living” document which ensures current
North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

Federal regulations and directives are implemented at the state and local level as quickly as possible. NCWorks Career Centers also utilize the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Review Checklist to ensure access to the entire range of services at each location. As a part of the certification process to become an NCWorks Career Center, each site is required to obtain a letter of ADA compliance from the host agency. ADA compliance is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the NC Department of Commerce and the host agency. Sites are required to maintain and update accessibility as ADA regulations are revised and NCWorks Career Center Certifications are renewed. (Page 109) Title I

Career Center Certification Accessibility Criteria:

- Adequate handicapped parking with compliant curb ramp(s) connected to the accessibility route into the Center(s).
- Handicapped parking must be clearly marked.
- Entrance and exit must be accessible and free of obstacles with appropriate signage.
- Pedestrian routes inside the host agency facility must be accessible and free of obstacles.
- Entrance and exit doors are required to be equipped with hardware that is usable with one hand without tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist.
- Furniture inside the Center must be arranged to allow wheelchair access.
- Computer and desk workstations must be wheelchair accessible.
- Restrooms must be appropriately accessible.
- Auxiliary aids and services must be available upon request as are interpreter services for ESL customers.
- Emergency drills are to be conducted annually and staff is to be provided with host agency procedures. (Page 110) Title I

During program year 2016 Career Center staff will receive training to follow established procedures to ensure inclusion and programmatic accessibility to center services. This training, comprised of eight half—day sessions across the state, will allow staff to better understand the different types of disabilities, how to handle issues of disclosure and disability identification with sensitivity at program intake, and how to determine the most effective mix of services and referrals to make when a disability is identified. These trainings will be presented by subject matter experts and include such topics as: federal, state, and local disability policies; identifying barriers/hidden disabilities; disability awareness and etiquette; website accessibility; providing reasonable accommodations; assistive technology accommodations and resources; Section 503
North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

for federal contractors; and simulation training. (Page 110) Title I

Assistive Technology services and devices are provided to eligible individuals statewide who require them. Rehabilitation technology and assistive technology services are sponsored and provided to the degree necessary to complete the rehabilitation program. Included are services and devices which can supplement and enhance an individual’s functions such as adapted computer access, augmentative communication, specialized seating and mobility, vehicle modifications, and services which can have an impact on the environment, such as accessibility, job re-design, work site modification and residence modification. Application of the available engineering and assistive technology services and technologies is important when making determinations of eligibility particularly for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. Rehabilitation engineering evaluations and services are not subject to an individual’s financial eligibility; however, devices, equipment and modifications recommended by the engineer are subject to financial eligibility. (Page 179) Title I

E. The Department of Health and Human Services through the DSB will provide technical consultation and assistance to both the LEA and to the DPI regarding the accessibility of hardware and software for use by students with visual impairments, modifications that can be made to better facilitate the education and vocational rehabilitation of students with visual impairments. Orientation and mobility services for students will be addressed on a student-by-student basis at the local level. (Page 293) Title IV

Vets

The Department of Commerce provides a Veteran Services Program across the state to assist veterans with employment. The Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) assist veterans with overcoming barriers through intensive, targeted services. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) reach out to employers to advocate for hiring Veterans. Recent changes to the federal policies concerning the roles of these staff that serve veterans have been made to ensure that eligible veterans and eligible spouses receive the best combination of services, according to their needs. The agency determined that to accomplish this refocusing, Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists will serve only those veterans and eligible spouses most in need of the intensive services to address significant barriers to employment. As a result, DVOP specialists will serve fewer veterans and eligible spouses, but will be able to provide more intensive services.

The current referral process is to have the veteran complete a questionnaire upon their arrival in the NCWorks Career Center. They are asked to check if they have any of the following (barriers):

- disabilities;
- homelessness;
- unemployed for at least 27 weeks;
### North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix

- Criminal background (released within the last 12 months);
- No high school diploma or GED;
- Low income; and
- Between 18—24 years old.

Veterans with any of these barriers are then referred to a DVOP, or in the limited locations without a DVOP, the veteran will be given a priority of service and will be assisted by another career center staff. Included in career counseling conversations with veterans, staff inform veterans of the Registered Apprenticeship program and the eligibility and utilization of GI Bill Benefits for the apprenticeship program. (Page 108) Title I

Since 2015 DVRS has progressively increased their collaborative efforts with NCATP and other AgrAbility partners to provide assistive technologies and related services to farmers and farmworkers within the state. There have also been joint outreach efforts to Veterans with disabilities who may be interested in pursuing agriculturally-oriented occupations. (Page 180) Title I

In addition, DVRS represents the agency on the “Governor’s Working Group on Service Members, Veterans, and their Families,” which is a collaborative monthly meeting that serves as a resource clearinghouse for addressing issues of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and other service members. Outreach efforts between DVRS, the Veterans Administration, and other military operations have occurred to ensure that veterans and their family members are aware of services available to them through DVRS.

An agreement between DVRS and Veterans Administration’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program was implemented in late 2014, which is intended to maximize mutual services for Veterans and ensure a more streamlined referrals process between the two agencies. (Page 199) Title I

**Goal 4.3.** DSB will identify ways by which DSB can assist veterans with disabilities to become able to obtain, maintain or regain employment.

**Strategy 4.3.1.** DSB will meet with officials working with veterans who are visually impaired, blind or deaf blind to educate them regarding services that are available to veterans with disabilities through DSB. (Page 339) Title I

### Mental Health

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Services (DVRS) has developed a cooperative agreement with both NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS) and NC Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) for the purpose of establishing cooperative guidelines to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to employment services, a continuum of employment services, and independent community living.
The relationship among the divisions continues to improve services for both individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders and individuals with developmental disabilities has been enhanced over the past several years through changes in personnel at DMHDDSAS as well as a change in their focus towards a recovery oriented system of care which incorporates employment as a goal for consumers. Due to continuously changing staff, ongoing efforts are required to maintain an effective working relationship between both divisions. (Page 196) Title I

DMHDDSA has also developed a state definition for supported employment and long term vocational support using the IPS model of supported employment as well as increased the hourly rate to meet the needs of the providers. North Carolina’s definition calls for the inclusion of Peer Support Services as a mandatory service available to individuals with services paid through funds from the local management entity. Through this definition, if an individual with mental health disabilities chooses DVRS as their supported employment provider and the person is served through the Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) system, they will be able to receive long term vocational supports (LTVS). Each VR office will have a liaison specifically for those CRP agencies providing IPS model of SE. (Page 197) Title I

DVRS continues to partner with the DMHDDSAS in implementing individual placement and support supported employment (IPS SE) throughout the state. Currently, there are 35 IPS SE programs throughout the state and DVRS contracts with 13 of them. DVRS offers such programs the opportunity to apply to become and IPS contractor through an ongoing RFA. DVRS also works alongside the DMHDDSAS and the University of NC Chapel Hill Institute for Best Practices staff to conduct onsite fidelity reviews of the IPS SE programs, training of IPS Teams, including DVRS field staff, statewide IPS learning collaborative, provider steering committees, monthly calls with the Rockville Institute (formerly the Dartmouth Supported Employment Center), as well as the annual IPS SE Rockville Institute’s Learning Collaborative. DVRS also works with DMHDDSAS to inform providers and beneficiaries on the impact of employment on federal and state benefits and have collaborated in efforts to increase capacity of benefits counseling experts in the state. (Page 204) Title IV

• The development of effective collaborative efforts with the NC DHHS-Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS) to provide consistent funding for extended supported employment addressed the need for VR Program participants to receive follow-along services, even after their case was successfully closed. (Page 235) Title IV

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) is partnering with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services
**North Carolina (NC) WIOA Matrix**

(DMHDDSAS) and other divisions and departments in developing competitive, integrated employment opportunities. DVRS establishes and maintains contracts or agreements with over 120 private for profit and non-profit VR service providers providing an array of services to DVRS consumers. One hundred two (102) private-non-profit VR service providers have established performance-based contracts with the Division, where the organizations are administered funds when an individual receiving services within their program has achieved designated goals or "milestones" on their way toward their ultimate goal of competitive employment. Almost all supported employment and work adjustment services provided through community rehabilitation programs were transitioned from a fee for services hourly rate payment system to a milestone payment system. Additionally, performance-based cooperative agreements engaging non-profit organizations encompass brain injury support services, multiple (currently 14) Project SEARCH™ sites and the provision of Pre Employment Transition Services. This system and its implementation were developed in collaboration with the community rehabilitation provider community through representation via the CRP-DVRS steering subcommittee and other means of stakeholder input.  

DSB has reached out to the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to begin discussions regarding how our agencies might work together to better serve the needs of North Carolinians with multiple disabilities.  

**RTW/SAW**

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

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