



## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

### Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)

#### Theme 1: Building Career Pathways with a focus on Industry-Valued Credentials

Through a common definition of career pathways, a newly created list of industry-valued credentials, literacy standards and a renewed commitment to Employment First for all persons with disabilities, New Jersey will ensure that all workforce investments are enabling individuals to access greater economic opportunity and to build on their skills throughout their careers. These efforts will expand the number of career pathways, at all levels of education and workforce services, which will help more individuals obtain industry-valued credentials and degrees. (Page 9)

#### EMPLOYMENT FIRST FRAMEWORK AND CAREER PATHWAYS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

In April 2012, Governor Chris Christie declared that New Jersey would become the 14th Employment First state in the United States. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires states and their Local WDBs to invest prescribed resources to promote the creation and implementation of workforce development and training programs and services designed specifically for individuals with significant disabilities. A unified Employment First Definition for New Jersey ensures that the workforce system has a singular focus and vision that ensures all workforce development and training resources dedicated for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, have the potential for yielding the highest return on investment.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST is a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that all citizens with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. Individuals with disabilities are a multi-skilled workforce resource for employers. An inclusive workplace promotes diversity, expands the tax base and creates an expanded pool of qualified candidates for available jobs. 'Employment First' is about creating an environment for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, that empowers them with choices for their future, reduces poverty, eases demand on state and community based social service agencies and provides workers with a sense of achievement. (Page 62)

DVRS subscribes to the Employment First principles adopted by Governor Christie, and the agency believes that these principles should be accomplished in the context of long-term career pathway development.

DVRS is committed to working with all WIOA partners, and currently 16 of the 18 Vocational Rehabilitation offices throughout the State of New Jersey are co-located at One-Stop Career Centers. They collaborate on a range of activities, and the goals and recommendations within this section outline the main priorities for collaboration and integration of these services within the WIOA system.

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DVRS has information on its website, developed in conjunction with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired that is standard and reciprocal across the two programs, and that information also provides common language and references to services and programs delivered by LWD that the populations served by the two organizations can access.

### Goals to Further Align Vocational Rehabilitation with WIOA Title I One-Stop System:

**1. Goal 1: By September 30, 2017, the number of individuals with DD, including ASD applying for DVRS services will increase by 50%. Strategic objectives to meet this goal include the following:**

- a. Provide education and communication - All identified stakeholders will know about the DVRS Employment First (EF) initiative by the end of year one. Surveys will be used to determine initial training needs for DVRS staff members and CRPs.
- b. Collaborate with interagency partners - Identify key state partners and research how other states are collaborating on EF initiatives. Design the process, roles and responsibilities for partners. (Page 103)

**6. Goal 6: By September 30, 2016, DVRS will hold public forums to report on specific topics related to its service delivery and integration with the WIOA system, such as how DVRS is performing at the Employment First goal, and how services are succeeding with the deaf and hard of hearing population.**

### *State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations*

Specific SRC recommendations for the Plan are provided in Section VI. Program Specific Requirements for Core Programs in the section on the Vocational Rehabilitation, item (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council. (Page 105)

CBVI subscribes to the Employment First principles adopted by Governor Christie, and the agency believes that these principles should be accomplished in the context of long-term career development.

CBVI is committed to working with all WIOA partners, including One-Stop Career Centers, to provide technical assistance that will help guarantee that general employment focused services are provided in accessible forms to consumers who are blind, vision-impaired, and deaf-blind.

Services are integrated with wider DVRS services and the entire One-Stop system through a number of mechanisms. Currently, CBVI's programs are not generally co-located with One-Stop Career Centers or other Vocational Rehabilitation services. As noted, the majority of services are by itinerant staff who deliver services directly to blind and visually impaired New Jersey residents in their homes or other community locations most suitable for delivery of those services. New Jersey confident that successful coordination and collaboration can occur through referral and partnership. (Page 106)

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DVRS subscribes to the Employment First principles adopted by Governor Christie, and the agency believes that these principles should be accomplished in the context of long-term career pathway development.

DVRS is committed to working with all WIOA partners, and is currently co-located in 16 of the 18 offices throughout the State of New Jersey.

The New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides oversight and advises the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the designated state unit (DSU) within the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). LWD is the designated state agency (DSA). The SRC is a partnership of people with disabilities, advocates, and other interested persons who are committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation, and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient, and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in gainful employment. Representing the myriad of diversity that is New Jersey, council members believe that individuals with disabilities are the “untapped resource” to the business community and assert that disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes a person’s right to fully participate in all aspects of American life. Members of the SRC in New Jersey believe in a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it; they believe that competitive jobs generate tax revenue and enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to spend discretionary income which contributes to the state’s economy. (Page 228)

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) believes that collaboration with stakeholders is essential to assisting people with disabilities to successfully become employed. Such an ongoing effort maximizes resources and addresses the quality of life issues that can impact the ability of a person with a disability to obtain and maintain employment.

The DVRS is part of Workforce Development within LWD and is a strong partner with the One-Stop Career Center Workforce Investment System throughout the state. The agency also enjoys a cooperative relationship with state and community-based agencies to collaborate on programs that will promote the empowerment and economic independence of individuals with disabilities in an effort to encourage employment. The agency arranges memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for the purpose of carrying out activities that require a formalized response or protocol in the delivery of services. Since the Governor has declared through Executive Order, that New Jersey become the 14th Employment First state, the DVRS is reexamining all of the current MOUs in order to ensure policy aligns with the intent of Employment First. (Page 233)

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) The DDD serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who meet the functional criteria of having a developmental disability, are eligible for and maintain Medicaid eligibility, and are at least 18 years of age at the time of application and 21 years of age to receive services. Conditions generally considered developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spina bifida, and autism. Part of DDD’s implementation of the Employment First Initiative includes an annual discussion with individuals served, family members, and Support Coordinators providing care management services to identify each individual’s current employment status and identify how to assist the individual in reaching his/her employment outcomes. In addition, an employment-

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related outcome is required within the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) of every individual served through DDD. When an individual is not pursuing employment, a statement explaining why the individual is not pursuing employment at that time is included in the ISP. When an individual is in need of employment services to assist him/her in obtaining and/or maintaining employment, he/she must seek those services through DVRS initially. DDD provides other needed services while the eligibility determination is being made with DVRS or in addition to the employment services provided through DVRS. Once an eligibility determination is made with DVRS, DDD is able to provide employment services not available through DVRS, as well as the other services that are available through DDD. Because the DDD has transferred all of their children services to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), the DVRS will be reaching out to the DCF to develop an MOU for the purpose of supporting students in transition who will need DVRS services in order to access employment. (Page 235)

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) understands the critical relationship that exists among education and employment that in turn affects independence and quality of life. Transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities is a top priority for the DVRS. The Division has had a long-standing formal interagency agreement for transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities. This agreement is with the DVRS, the Office of Special Education Programs and the Office of Career and Technical Education in the New Jersey Department of Education, and the CBVI in the New Jersey Department of Human Services. Since the Governor has declared through Executive Order, that New Jersey become the 14th Employment First state, it is critical that the DVRS reexamine this agreement to ensure policy aligns with the intent of Employment First. The DVRS will identify policy alignment with the SEA to ensure that employment is the first and presumed outcome for students with disabilities. (Page 238)

New Jersey is an Employment First State, and particular attention is given to youth with the most significant disabilities who, through informed choice, wish to pursue competitive integrated employment. DVRS has approved supported employment vendors who also vendor with DDD. The DDD system provides support coordinators to their participants who identify the individualized services needed and help arrange for those supports. DVRS counselors meet with DDD support coordinators and identify supported employment vendors common to both agencies in order to ensure a smooth transition of funding. DVRS is piloting "discovery" throughout the state in order to provide counselors with the tools to address the needs of this unique population. (Page 243)

New Jersey is also an Employment First state, and DVRS has identified goals to increase the number of individuals with significant ID/DD to avail themselves to DVRS services that result in an integrated competitive employment outcome.

In October 2010, LWD secured grant funding from USDOL for a youth-centered Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). DVRS was identified as the lead division to increase the capacity of pilot Workforce Development Board areas to serve youth with disabilities (ages 16 – 26), in particular youth offender populations and returning veteran youth. This funding also includes ability to promote universal design in One-Stop Career Centers throughout the entire state. (Page 246)

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A revised 5 year MOU was executed on July 1, 2015 by DVRS, CBVI, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities within the New Jersey Department of Human Services with the objective to define the roles and responsibilities of State agencies primarily involved in assisting individuals with disabilities in finding and maintaining competitive integrated employment and will assist the State agencies to operate in an efficient and successful manner to improve employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities by operating consistently across agencies ensuring quality service provision. The agreement is in alignment with the New Jersey's Employment First initiative proclaimed by Governor Christie on April 19, 2012. (Page 247)

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DVRS continues to recruit highly qualified candidates with master's degrees in vocational rehabilitation counseling or closely related field for the counselor I position. DVRS is currently allowed to have 140 counselors statewide, and keeps an ongoing list of qualified candidates. DVRS only hires candidates with master's degrees for this position. The division supports its staff through a number of continuing education opportunities, and provides in-house training on a regular basis. The New Jersey Rehabilitation Association, the Garden State Employment and Training Association, and the Association for Persons Supporting Employment First each sponsor continuing education credits with their respective yearly conferences, and DVRS supports a significant number of counselors for these conferences yearly. DVRS predicts a need to hire staff specifically for the coordination of pre-employment transition services and plans to submit this request in 2016. (Page 251)

- Stakeholder meetings/listening tours of the One-Stop Career Center staff members in May 2014; and
- Stakeholder meetings with the Deaf community held September 28, 2013 and October 12, 2013.

Highlights of the survey results indicated a need to improve services/access to:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in particular individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), aligning the New Jersey Employment First Initiative;

The DVRS identified key issues pertaining to meeting the intent of Employment First:

- How should DCF (Division of Children & Families, DOE (Dept. of Education) and other state entities be aligned as partners in serving this consumer base?
- State partners may have their own vision of Employment First which may or not be in alignment with DVRS.
- Data Collection is difficult due to federal code restrictions and DVRS's current case management system (WORCS).

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- Need for Stakeholder analysis to identify and utilize internal and external partners.
- Identify and engage “the Voice of the Customer.”
- Strategic objectives to meet the DVRS Employment First initiative include the following:
- More individuals with significant developmental disabilities (DD) and ASD will have greater access to become DVRS consumers. (Page 260)

Employment First (EF) identifies individuals with the most significant disabilities who historically have not been served appropriately by the public VR system. A typical outcome for this group was placement in segregated settings with little or no ability to obtain employment services that would increase the likelihood of self-sufficiency or community integration. Goals for EF are identified specifically to address this. (Page 263)

- Provide education and communication - All identified stakeholders will know about the DVRS Employment First (EF) initiative by the end of year one. Surveys will be used to determine initial training needs for DVRS staff members and CRPs.
- Collaborate with interagency partners - Identify key state partners and research how other states are collaborating on EF initiatives. Design the process, roles and responsibilities for partners.
- Improve DVRS access for individuals with significant disabilities - Work with sheltered workshops to support individuals who wish to move into integrated employment. Develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD are served by the DVRS. Create a plan to prioritize students with DD to be linked to DVRS two years prior to exiting the school.
- Develop innovative and expanded services that offer increased employment opportunities - Verify successful Innovation and Expansion grantees for possible expansion. Determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH Pilot.
- Engage employers - Take advantage of the new 503 regulations. Engage LWD talent networks. Find options for work trials through internships. Replicate the Schedule A targeted hiring events throughout the state. (Page 268)

**GOAL 6: By September 30, 2016, DVRS will hold public forums to report on specific topics related to its service delivery and integration with the WIOA system, such as how DVRS is performing at the Employment First goal, and how services are succeeding with the deaf and hard of hearing population.**

DVRS is developing a Business Outreach Unit to strengthen the relationships with employers as a dual customer of the VR program. The members of the unit will work with businesses throughout the state to assist in addressing their need for qualified candidates, provide the lead for DVRS with targeted hiring events, help pre-screen candidates as warranted, liaison with other business services representatives throughout the workforce system, provide technical assistance regarding the ADA, and provide education on disability-related topics. (Page 270)

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The goal of the DVRS is to create an effective, coordinated system of SE work opportunities throughout New Jersey to meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities. SE funds are tracked separately to ensure reporting for individuals with the most significant disabilities that are served under the SE program. New Jersey became the 14th state to embrace the concept of Employment First (EF). This initiative identifies that every person, including persons with the most significant disabilities have the right, through informed choice, to have equal access to employment services.

Of individuals with a SE outcome, the DVRS will increase the number of outcomes each year. The agency utilizes supported employment funds through a fee schedule based authorization process. That fee schedule ensures that the DVRS funds are spent on specific designated services. (Page 276)

DVRS and CBVI recently entered into a new MOU with DDD. The MOU identifies that resources to expand extended services and supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities will be allocated for youth being served by DDD through individualized budget allocations specific for employment support in competitive, integrated settings. This agreement further supports New Jersey's emphasis on Employment First. DVRS has also secured state funds to provide long-term follow-along (LTFA) to ensure job retention during any changes related to disability or environment. One reality to consider is that the number of people in LTFA increases every year as individuals secure employment in competitive settings. The DVRS state funds have not been able to keep up with the need. The DVRS updated its MOU with DDD to reflect DDD's commitment to provide the LTFA once a consumer has been rehabilitated through the DVRS. The division also plans to create an MOU with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to be able to transfer LTFA for individuals with serious psychiatric illness to them. (Page 277)

- Identify and provide targeted hiring events throughout the state; and
- Analyze client data via dashboard approach for assessment purposes on a monthly basis.

In order to increase the number of DVRS consumers with DD/ASD, the DVRS will apply the following strategies:

- DVRS will identify stakeholders and develop an education and communication plan that promotes Employment First (EF);
- DVRS will research how other states' agency partners are collaborating on EF strategies;
- DVRS will develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD/ASD are served by DVRS;
- DVRS will create a plan to allow transition students with DD/ASD to have open cases two years prior to exiting school; and
- DVRS will determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH pilot. (Page 278)

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DVRS is committed to establishing Employment First initiatives throughout the state. Strategies include establishing Project SEARCH and developing targeted hiring events for qualified candidates with disabilities. The business outreach unit will lead these efforts. Additionally, DVRS identified goals to improve services to Deaf/hard of hearing consumers. Strategies to reach these goals include establishing regional Deaf language specialist positions throughout the state, improving the direct access for Deaf consumers via video phones in the offices, updating the DVRS hearing aid policy that includes best practices regarding individuals with cochlear implants, and working with the three Deaf centers to increase outreach to this population. DVRS also plans to contract with the Boggs Center, New Jersey's Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, to provide technical assistance for the following: (Page 283)

- Updating the extended employment guidelines;
- Standardizing vendor reporting forms;
- Monitoring required vendor accreditation and staff development;
- Meeting with the APSE board;
- Continuing the liaison meetings with ACCSES–NJ;
- Outreaching to the DDD to provide employment services to individuals affected by deinstitutionalization;
- Encouraging CRPs to become employment networks; and
- Participating as a lead member to implement the Employment First initiative in the state. (Page 284)

New Jersey became the 14th state to embrace the concept of Employment First (EF) in April of 2012. EF is a framework that is centered on the premise that all citizens are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. This initiative identified that competitive employment in an integrated setting is the preferred first choice for every individual seeking employment in New Jersey. This effort shifts assumptions about whether individuals with certain categories of disabilities can work to one of determining the supports and services necessary so that these individuals will be successful in competitive employment. The DVRS adheres to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. An individual with a disability must want and qualify for the services.

Counselors in all the offices received training on trial work experiences (TWE) in the spring of 2014. CRPs were also given access to the same training. TWE will be utilized when the DVRS counselor needs clear and convincing evidence regarding whether an individual with a disability will benefit from VR services. (Page 290)

CBVI subscribes to the Employment First principles adopted by Governor Christie, and believes that these principles should be accomplished in the context of long-term career development. CBVI is committed to working with all WIOA partners, including One-Stop Career Centers, to provide technical assistance that will help guarantee that general employment focused services are provided in accessible forms to consumers who are blind, vision-impaired, and deaf-blind. (Page 308)

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The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) - DVRS and CBVI entered into a formal MOU with DDD in FFY 2015. The MOU outlines the process for DDD consumers who are interested in competitive integrated employment to access VR services. DDD serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who meet the functional criteria of having a developmental disability, are eligible for and maintain Medicaid eligibility, and are at least 18 years of age at the time of application and 21 years of age to receive services. Conditions generally considered developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spina bifida, and autism. Part of DDD's implementation of the Employment First Initiative includes an annual discussion with individuals served, family members, and Support Coordinators providing care management services to identify each individual's current employment status and identify how to assist the individual in reaching his/her employment outcomes. In addition, an employment-related outcome is required within the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) of every individual served through DDD. When an individual is not pursuing employment, a statement explaining why the individual is not pursuing employment at that time is included in the ISP. When an individual is in need of employment services to assist him/her in obtaining and/or maintaining employment, he/she must seek those services through DVRS initially. DDD provides other needed services while the eligibility determination is being made with DVRS or in addition to the employment services provided through DVRS. Once an eligibility determination is made with DVRS, DDD is able to provide employment services not available through DVRS, as well as the other services that are available through DDD. Because the DDD has transferred all of their children services to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), the DVRS will be reaching out to the DCF to develop an MOU for the purpose of supporting students in transition who will need DVRS services in order to access employment. (Page 312)

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In addition, the agency recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the DVRS, the general VR agency, and DDD, a sister agency within the New Jersey Department of Human Services and an agency that provides a full array of employment supports including extended services to individuals with a wide array of developmental disabilities, with the goal of furthering Employment First principles in the state by increasing access to supports needed to obtain and maintain employment. (Page 339)

DVRS and CBVI recently entered into a new MOU with DDD. The MOU identifies that resources to expand extended services and supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities will be allocated for youth being served by DDD through individualized budget allocations specific for employment support in competitive, integrated settings. This agreement further supports New Jersey's emphasis on Employment First.

The DVRS has organized the provision of SE through the use of community rehabilitation programs on a fee-for-service basis generally requiring up to 100 hours of intensive job coaching.

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The DVRS is currently reviewing the provision of SE services to determine that it is being offered to those in the most need and that there is a true collaboration among the three parties; the consumer, the DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselor and the vendor. (Page 340)

New Jersey became the 14<sup>th</sup> state to embrace the concept of Employment First (EF) in April of 2012. EF is a framework that is centered on the premise that all citizens are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. This initiative identified that competitive employment in an integrated setting is the preferred first choice for every individual seeking employment in New Jersey. This effort shifts assumptions about whether individuals with certain categories of disabilities can to work to one of determining the supports and services necessary so that these individuals will be successful in competitive employment. The DVRS adheres to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. An individual with a disability must want and qualify for the services.

Counselors in all the offices received training on trial work experiences (TWE) in the spring of 2014. CRPs were also given access to the same training. TWE will be utilized when the DVRS counselor needs clear and convincing evidence regarding whether an individual with a disability will benefit from VR services. (Page 357)

## Customized Employment

- TA to designated institutes of higher education in order to establish programs for youth with ID/DD that will provide industry-recognized credentials and a Career Pathways approach for their skill development; and
- TA to designated sheltered workshop staff for training in Customized Employment and Person-Centered Planning.

Strategies to reach all transition students with disabilities are significant as well. They include establishing a PETS unit to coordinate activities with LEAs and CILs as well as developing an MOU with the SEA to help DVRS achieve the requirement of providing PETS to all students with disabilities in transition. DVRS also posted a notice of funding for PETS activities to work with vendors to reach this goal.(Page 248)

CBVI will continue to provide professional staff with developmental instruction that will enhance the delivery of VR services. Specifically, CBVI has and will continue to provide its staff with instruction in Customized Employment practices, the use of labor market information in career planning, leadership development programs, and other VR-specific opportunities and courses, as they are made available.

CBVI is the designated State Licensing Agency to administer the Federal Randolph-Sheppard program, an entrepreneurial program for qualified, legally blind candidates, who are interested in operating and managing businesses on Federal, State, and municipal properties. ( Page 310)

Greater communication with the Division of Developmental Disabilities has helped to identify additional individuals with the most significant disabilities who may benefit from supported employment services to gain employment in integrated settings. The agency also recently expanded

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its collaborations with the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities to expand cross training opportunities with community rehabilitation providers who provide supported employment services and agency staff. The agency also participates annually in the New Jersey Association for Persons in Supported Employment statewide conference to present on agency services as an outreach effort to additional communities that serve or advocate on behalf of individuals with the most significant disabilities and those that are unserved or underserved. Finally, CBVI undertook a comprehensive training of all VR staff in the skills of Customized Employment, strengthening the agency's ability to cater well to the diverse needs of the most significantly disabled among its consumers. (Page 344)

- Maintain the EDGE program (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement) a year-round program for transition-aged youth (14-21) eligible for vocational rehabilitation services emphasizing employment development, mentoring by employed blind/vision impaired adults, and experiential learning experiences to promote independence.
- Establish a Business Relations Unit, charged with educating employers about blindness and catering to the unique needs of business as a secondary customer of CBVI services, in alignment with provisions in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Redesigning and strengthening the Randolph-Sheppard program in New Jersey (Business Enterprises New Jersey - BENJ)
- Develop competencies for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Supervisors in utilizing evidence-based practices, including incorporating motivational interviewing techniques and customized employment methodologies into the counseling relationship to increase employment outcomes.
- Expand vocational exploration, experiential programs, and other career planning opportunities for consumers. (Page 349)

## Braiding/Blending Resources

Under the DVRS EF strategy, long-term SE services will be provided by the DDD and the DMHAS for consumers who qualify for these services after a DVRS consumer is successfully placed in employment. This braiding of funding provides supports to a higher number of consumers. The DVRS continues to partner with the DDD and the DMHAS in order to do this.

DDD – DVRS and CBVI successfully negotiated a new MOU with the DDD in FFY 2015. The DDD recently changed its policy and now requires all individuals who receive DDD services to apply for services with the DVRS as a condition to receiving DDD funding. While the DVRS is very willing to provide services to individuals who qualify and want services, the division will adhere to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in WIOA. ability related information found. (Page 291)

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Title II providers, including the community college system, to move people seamlessly from English as a Second Language and/or basic literacy skills training through to a postsecondary credential, including integrated basic skills alongside workforce career exploration and planning, and a transition to skills training and credentials.

LWD is in the process of providing planning grants to local workforce development areas for consolidation of literacy funds with workforce development and a more seamless transition from basic skills training to occupational training. The solicitation for providers of both Title I and Title II programs will include clear expectations for how to integrate these services, including Bridge Program models as well as more comprehensive blending of the curricula. (Page 101)

LWD provides TANF grant and support services reimbursement to the Division of Family Development for WorkFirst NJ TANF recipients who have been approved by the One-Stop system to pursue a college level program leading to an AAA/AAS or BA/BS degree. The grant and support services reimbursement is through NJ Workforce Development Program funds and stops the five (5) year TANF eligibility clock while the TANF participant is pursuing their college level degree.

This innovative collaboration is another example of New Jersey's close collaboration among programs and deep commitment to blending funding to the greatest extent possible within existing law and regulations in order to best serve New Jersey residents. (Page 109)

## Section 188/Section 188 Guide

How the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

In August 2010, LWD reorganized its structure to include the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) within the workforce development system. This provides a solid foundation to work with the State's workforce investment system. DVRS is a core participant in the One-Stop system and maintains an active presence in the 17 local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) as well as the SETC, New Jersey's State WDB. This close involvement ensures that physical and programmatic accessibility is at the forefront of all efforts of the WIOA system. (Page 154)

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### DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

In October 2010, LWD secured grant funding from USDOL for a youth-centered Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). DVRS was identified as the lead division to increase the capacity of pilot Workforce Development Board areas to serve youth with disabilities (ages 16 – 26), in particular youth offender populations and returning veteran youth. This funding also includes ability to promote universal design in One-Stop Career Centers throughout the entire state. (Page 246)

### Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment

- c. Improve DVRS access for individuals with significant disabilities - Develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD are served by the DVRS. Create a plan to prioritize students with DD to be linked to DVRS two years prior to exiting the school.
- d. Develop innovative and expanded services that offer increased employment opportunities - Verify successful Innovation and Expansion grantees for possible expansion. Determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH Pilot.
- e. Engage employers - Take advantage of the new 503 regulations. Engage LWD talent networks. Find options for work trials through internships. Replicate the Schedule A targeted hiring events throughout the state. (Page 104)

DVRS is also supporting the establishment of Pilot SEARCH programs in three counties through its innovation and expansion funding, and requests a waiver of statewideness to implement them. Our eventual goal is to support sites in every county; however, it is critical that DVRS pilots this effort before moving to a statewide implementation. (Page 231)

New Jersey is fortunate to have state-appropriated funding for post-employment services which is referred to as the long-term follow-along (LTFA) program. The LTFA funding of approximately \$5.4 million went out under an NGO for the third time in FY 2015, and 71 supported employment programs were given contracts to provide extended services. (Page 241)

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- Provide education and communication - All identified stakeholders will know about the DVRS Employment First (EF) initiative by the end of year one. Surveys will be used to determine initial training needs for DVRS staff members and CRPs.
- Collaborate with interagency partners - Identify key state partners and research how other states are collaborating on EF initiatives. Design the process, roles and responsibilities for partners.

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

- Improve DVRS access for individuals with significant disabilities - Work with sheltered workshops to support individuals who wish to move into integrated employment. Develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD are served by the DVRS. Create a plan to prioritize students with DD to be linked to DVRS two years prior to exiting the school.
- Develop innovative and expanded services that offer increased employment opportunities - Verify successful Innovation and Expansion grantees for possible expansion. Determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH Pilot.
- Engage employers - Take advantage of the new 503 regulations. Engage LWD talent networks. Find options for work trials through internships. Replicate the Schedule A targeted hiring events throughout the state. (Page 268)
  - Partner with other state agencies (i.e. the DDD, the CBVI) to make sure the DVRS services information is distributed as warranted;
  - Identify and provide targeted hiring events throughout the state; and
  - Analyze client data via dashboard approach for assessment purposes on a monthly basis.

In order to increase the number of DVRS consumers with DD/ASD, the DVRS will apply the following strategies:

- DVRS will research how other states' agency partners are collaborating on EF strategies;
- DVRS will develop a plan for obtaining valid statistics of how many individuals with DD/ASD are served by DVRS;
- DVRS will create a plan to allow transition students with DD/ASD to have open cases two years prior to exiting school; and
- DVRS will determine possible sites for a Project SEARCH pilot (Page 278)
  - Information and demonstration;
  - Community outreach;
  - Equipment recycling; and
  - Technical consultation.

Assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis through a renewed and expanded contract with Advancing Opportunities using the following methods:

- Allowing the DVRS clients to try out equipment before purchase to determine best match for their specific needs;
- Continuing a pilot program with local offices to focus on organization and project management strategies among professional staff; ( Page 279)

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

### CBVI Goal 2: Work Skills Prep: Post-Graduation Follow Along

CBVI will improve employment outcomes for its consumers who attended the Work Skills Prep program and graduated from their secondary school program from the current success rate of 22.22% to 30% of all those who exit the VR program. This goal is scheduled to be completed by 9/30/2013. This is a one year pilot project. If successful, the agency will look to expand the strategies to continue to improve employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

**Update:** The job developer hired for this position was able to achieve three additional closures of Work Skills graduates, but unfortunately found other employment before the end of the project year. A new job developer was hired, and began to work with counselors in the services centers and consumers around job development activities. The program has experienced another setback; as the new job developer was diverted to another project. The agency had decided to redesign the program and will roll out the new program in FFY 2016. ( Page 351)

### Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

No specific disability related information found.

### Benefits

D/HH individuals will have increased opportunities to become DVRS consumers, obtain job skills, and obtain competitive employment that matches their interests, skills & capabilities.

- Qualified interpreters will accompany D/HH consumers at job interviews rather than job coaches.

The DVRS identified key issues regarding the need to improve community rehabilitation programs within New Jersey:

- Ensuring that DVRS consumers in supported employment have access to qualified employment specialists.
- Defining the role of New Jersey's set-aside programs that employ individuals with DD.
- Transforming the current system of sheltered programs to a system that supports movement into competitive employment for individuals with DD/ASD.
- Fear of family members to allow family members with DD/ASD to become competitively employed.
- Families need information from qualified SSI/SSDI benefits counselors.
- Strategic objectives to improve community rehabilitation programs within the state include the following:
  - Increased oversight from DVRS program development specialists will identify individuals currently in extended employment who should have DVRS cases opened; (Page 262)

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

- Updating the extended employment guidelines;
- Standardizing vendor reporting forms;
- Monitoring required vendor accreditation and staff development;
- Meeting with the APSE board;
- Continuing the liaison meetings with ACCSES–NJ;
- Outreaching to the DDD to provide employment services to individuals affected by deinstitutionalization;
- Encouraging CRPs to become employment networks; and

The DVRS plans to work with the CRPs to develop integrated employment strategies for individuals with disabilities who currently attend sheltered workshop programs who, through informed choice, choose to access competitive employment. DVRS implemented reporting requirements in 2016 that identify extended workers who currently make above minimum wage in order to provide counseling, including benefits counseling, and encouragement for them to pursue competitive, integrated employment. (Page 284)

## School to Work Transition

DVRS assigned a lead transition counselor to each office. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinate all the transition activities throughout the catchment area.
- Support transition fairs
- Provide training on a local county–wide basis

Additionally, each counselor is assigned to specific public high schools. They provide technical assistance to the schools in the following ways:

- Attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings
- Provide TA to the schools as warranted
- Meet with individual schools
- Confer with parents
- Referral to benefits counseling when appropriate (Page 280)

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

The LWD has established four priorities for the next three years:

1. Reemployment – What steps can LWD take to decrease the amount of time that people receive UI?
2. Opportunity – How can LWD assist more people to move from government benefits (SSI, SSDI, GA, and TANF) to work?
3. Alignment – How can LWD increase the number of people who have an industry recognized, post-secondary credential?
4. 4. Accountability – What data and information about program performance would help us to improve services? (Page 283)

## Data Collection

The DVRS identified key issues pertaining to meeting the intent of Employment First:

- How should DCF (Division of Children & Families, DOE (Dept. of Education) and other state entities be aligned as partners in serving this consumer base?
- State partners may have their own vision of Employment First which may or not be in alignment with DVRS.
- Data Collection is difficult due to federal code restrictions and DVRS's current case management system (WORCS).
- Need for Stakeholder analysis to identify and utilize internal and external partners.
- Identify and engage “the Voice of the Customer.”
- Strategic objectives to meet the DVRS Employment First initiative include the following:
- More individuals with significant developmental disabilities (DD) and ASD will have greater access to become DVRS consumers.
- DVRS staff members, vendors, and state partners will have the expectation that employment is the first and preferred option for adult activity for those with DD. (Page 260)

### Data Collection from National Databases

As part of the assessment process, the agency gathered data from sources connected to the United States Census Bureau, specifically data that was originally gathered via the American Community Survey (ACS). The three main data sources used and that were available during the assessment process were the 2011 Disability Status Report for New Jersey published by the Employment and Disability Institute at Cornell University (published 2012), 2013 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium published by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (published November 2013), and the American Foundation for Blind - Prevalence Rates of Visual Loss (updated January 2014), which provided a further breakdown of data points obtained from ACS methodology. (Page 331)

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

### Small Business/Entrepreneurship

No specific disability related information found.

### Career Pathways

No specific disability related information found.

### Employment Networks

DVRS will work with sheltered workshops to assist individuals to obtain competitive employment;

- DVRS will identify staff members in all local offices who will coordinate the provision of pre-employment transition services in partnership with LEAs.
- DVRS will develop partnerships with schools to provide technical assistance to students with DD/ASD that will identify community-based integrated work opportunities prior to exiting school; and
- DVRS will encourage and provide TA to CRPs who wish to become an employment network.

DVRS is currently assessing the community rehabilitation programs within the state to determine strategies that will result in the following outcomes:

- Nationally recognized credentials for supported employment specialists;
- Ability of CRPs to deliver customized employment strategies; • Ability of CRPs to provide community-based appropriate assessments to individuals with disabilities; and
- Capacity of CRPs to use a discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabilities when appropriate. New Jersey currently supports center-based segregated programs using non-federal dollars; DVRS is actively involved with these programs to provide technical assistance to vendors who are engaged in business transformation for their program. (Page 281)

Strategies to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program include the following:

- Updating the extended employment guidelines;
- Standardizing vendor reporting forms;

## New Jersey (NJ) WIOA Matrix

- Monitoring required vendor accreditation and staff development;
- Meeting with the APSE board;
- Continuing the liaison meetings with ACCSES–NJ;
- Outreaching to the DDD to provide employment services to individuals affected by deinstitutionalization;
- Encouraging CRPs to become employment networks; and
- Participating as a lead member to implement the Employment First initiative in the state. (Page 284)

\* All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of February 23, 2017

Find your local state plans here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>