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Employment First State Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

The state of RI recently negotiated a Consent Decree (CD) and Interim Settlement Agreement (ISA) with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure that Employment First Principles and practices are utilized in planning and service delivery to adults, in-school youth and out-school youth with significant intellectual disabilities (I/DD) who need access to the continuum of Supported Employment Services in order to work. The DOJ court order requires three state agencies: (1) Office of Rehabilitation Services or ORS, (2) the Rhode Island Department of Education or RIDE and (3) the Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals or BHDDH to develop and implement a service delivery system that ensures individuals, adults and youth, with I/DD have access to integrated competitive employment opportunities in order to make fully informed choices about work. The three state agencies are developing Cooperative Agreements, Data Exchange Agreements, and joint Continuous Quality Improvement efforts as elements/requirements of the CD and ISA.

While the consent decree represents one instance of deficiency in providing adequate training and employment opportunities to populations with disabilities, in the future Rhode Island will ensure that this issue is addressed more broadly beyond the consent decree. The state recognizes its short comings with respect to the consent decree and is actively working to address the needs of those with physical, emotional, developmental or other disabilities. The DOJ settlement with the state created an opportunity for Governor Chaffee to proclaim RI as an Employment First state. This proclamation clearly articulated a commitment to all individuals, regardless of type of disability, to have the same access to integrated competitive employment opportunities afforded to non-disabled adults and youths. (Page 20) Title I

Two Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are in place for RIDE, ORS, and the state Developmental Disability agency - Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). One MOU defines the working relationship between the three parties, and the other MOU addresses data sharing for the state agencies. The Department of Justice (DOJ)/State Consent Decree required that each of these MOUs be developed and implemented to ensure that the responsibility for services and implementation of Employment First principles occurs within RI in a manner consistent with the mandates of the DOJ/State Consent Decree. In-school youth with significant intellectual disabilities are entitled to access to an array of transition planning, career exploration/discovery services, and community-based work experiences prior to graduation from high school. The MOU describes the relationship between the parties and data collection to demonstrate that deliverables of the DOJ/State Consent Decree are occurring as prescribed. (Page 208) Title I

The State of RI recently negotiated a Consent Decree (CD) and Interim Settlement Agreement (ISA) with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure that Employment First principles and
practices are utilized in planning and service delivery to adults, in-school youth, and out-school youth with significant intellectual disabilities (I/DD) who need access to the continuum of Supported Employment Services in order to work. The DOJ court order requires three state agencies: (1) Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), (2) the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and (3) the Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) to develop and implement a service delivery system that ensures individuals, adults and youth, with I/DD have access to integrated competitive employment opportunities in order to make fully informed choices about work. The CD obligates ORS to (1) provide in-school youth with I/DD a 120-day Trial Work Experience prior to leaving high school, (2) CRP personnel providing Supported Employment job coaching and job placement services to meet certain criteria/credentials to provide services, and (3) establishment of a Continuous Quality Improvement review of each agency providing SE services. (Page 213) Title I

•The DOJ/State Consent Decree with the state of RI created a state-wide commitment to Employment First principles in planning and service delivery for in-school youth and adult with significant intellectual disabilities. ORS has had a long-standing commitment to Integrated Competitive Employment for all individuals with disabilities. However, continued financial support by other state agencies of sheltered workshops impeded resources being re-directed to employment and long-term supports. The DOJ/State Consent Decree mandate forced a realignment of service delivery, funding, and collaboration among state agencies. (Pages 256-257) Title IV

ORS has employment services that are available to adults and in-school youth found eligible for Supported Employment Services. The values and principles of ORS to make integrated competitive employment available to all individuals with disabilities has been reinforced by a state of RI DOJ/State Consent Decree. The Consent Decree (CD) and Interim Settlement Agreement (ISA), between RI and DOJ, resulted in a Governor’s proclamation declaring that RI is an Employment First state. The principles and practices of Employment First, consistent with the mission of ORS and the mandate of the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA), are utilized in planning and service delivery to adults, in-school youth, and out-of-school youth (Page 260) Title IV

ORS has taken the lead on identifying and establishing qualifications for employees of mental health agencies and developmental disability agencies to ensure that staff have the expertise appropriate for the vocational services being provided to ORS clients. ORS has been working with the Sherlock Center for Disabilities and VocWorks in order to identify, develop, plan, and execute training for employees of ORS-approved provider networks. Attending to the training needs of CRPs is an ongoing commitment. The CRP Supervisor actively meets with providers/vendors who provide Supported Employment (SE) services in order to re-enforce the philosophy of Employment First. (Page 262) Title IV

Customized Employment

No disability specific information found regarding this element
### Braiding/Blending Resources

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Utilize participation on Governor’s Workforce Board, Workforce Investment Boards, and other advisory groups to gather current information about business sector needs and state responses

- Establish a system to disseminate information to VR Counselors
- Encourage WIOA partners to devote 7% of grant to partnership with ORS and target individuals with disabilities in Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements
- Explore development of consistent processes and methodology of On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Explore opportunities with all State Partners for braiding and blending of funding for service delivery.
- Explore options under Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) for business sectors. (Page 234) Title IV

### B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Enlist Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), BHDDH, Department of Human Services (DHS), and ORS to braid funding to support the provision of SE services as part of Transition and Pre-ETS.

Establish increased knowledge about each state agency’s responsibility for funding, adults and youth, SE services in collaboration with each state partner, and the SE vendor community.

Maximize existing youth resources, such as DLT Youth Centers. (Page 244) Title IV

The SCSEP program collaborates and leverages resources with many organizations to provide training and supportive services for the participants. Some of these entities include host training sites, educational organizations, veteran representatives, vocational rehabilitation activities, and social service agencies. In addition, RI SCSEP coordinates with many agencies to help participants in need of services such as subsidized housing or temporary shelters; no-cost medical and prescription programs; Catholic Charities; energy assistance; utility discounts; food stamps; Supplemental Security Income; reduced fares on transportation; the RI Food Bank; church-provided food and clothing; and, nutrition programs provided through the Older Americans Act. For participants who will exit SCSEP without a job, referrals will be made to programs such as Foster Grandparents. Those exiting participants who wish to volunteer will be
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referred to opportunities such as through the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters and other organizations who seek people to contribute on a voluntary basis. (Page 343) Title IV

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI): This program provides an integrated service system that creates a “One-Stop” entry point for individuals with disabilities to gain entrance to competitive and/or self-employment. This is accomplished by improving coordination and collaboration among employment and training programs implemented at state and local levels, including the “Ticket to Work” program under the SSA that enables disabled individuals to access employment services at an employment network site and other effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. The array of services provided to DEI participants include; placement in suitable jobs, job search workshops, counseling, core, intensive, and training services, referral to supportive services, outreach to employers, and outreach to individuals with disabilities by providing services at various locations around the state. (Page 25) Title I

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

Other criteria the grantee must meet includes the ability to provide services related to media literacy, financial literacy, exposure to emerging career choices, linkages with local after school opportunities, links to post high school opportunities, connection to Regional Vocational Centers, disability service provider and all other required WIOA activities. The grantee must also be capable of providing such services for all youth populations, including younger in-school youth (ages 14-18), younger out-of-school youth (ages 16-18), and older youth (ages 19-24). (Page 145) Title I

School to Work Transition

The SRC encourages the Office of Rehabilitation Services to remain committed to assisting all students with significant disabilities to gain the necessary skills, preparation, exploration, and supports to enter the workforce. The ORS Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services Program requires that all students who are found eligible in Category I for services will have an ORS-approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) developed within 90 days of eligibility after coming off the Wait List, and updated as appropriate, and again prior to graduation. The SRC is supportive of this requirement and encourages ORS to continue the success of this program by maintaining the development of the IPE within the 90-day timeframe. Additionally, the SRC encourages and supports ORS’ continued commitment to dedicate the required 15% of funding to this program. (Page 199) Title I

The IPE establishes an employment goal and the associated steps/services needed to reach that goal. The IPE goal for in-school youth is considered exploratory, as it will probably change with increased exposure to career information and work experiences. The ORS Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services provided to in-school youth may include Counseling & Guidance, Vocational Evaluations/Exploration and Assessments, Community-Based Work Experiences, Transition Academy participation, Summer Work, Project Search, ORS/LEA Community Employment Projects, and travel training. (Page 208-209) Title I
RIDE has contracts with the Regional Educational Collaboratives to support transition, planning, and information about adult services within each high school. So each fall, the ORS Rehabilitation Counselor, in collaboration with the local Regional Educational Collaboratives and BHDDH staff, provide an orientation to Special Education/Transition personnel about adult services in general and Vocational Rehabilitation services in particular. This Orientation meeting serves as an opportunity to reinforce the referral process to ORS (including information about potential Wait List).

In addition to the school-based interventions and consultation with the LEA, ORS is involved in each region’s Transition Advisory Committee (TAC), the statewide Transition Council, and a myriad of other system development efforts to enhance work experiences and transition for in-school youth with disabilities, regardless of IEP/504 status.

Each high school has an identified ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor as a liaison available to consult, provide technical assistance, review student progress, attend IEP meetings, discuss Pre-ETS, Order of Selection/Wait List, and accept referrals. The ORS Rehabilitation Counselor establishes a schedule with each school so that IEPs, referrals, and consultation can be arranged on the days that the counselor is physically present at the school, if possible. (Pages 209-210) Title I

ORS and each Local Education Authority (LEA) collaborate to meet the transition needs of youth with significant disabilities. Each high school has an identified ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor as a liaison available to consult, provide technical assistance, review student progress, attend IEP meetings, discuss Pre-ETS, Order of Selection/Waitlist, and accept referrals.

The ORS Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services provided to in-school youth may include Counseling & Guidance, Vocational Evaluations and Assessments, Community-Based Work Experiences, Transition Academy participation, Summer Work, ORS/LEA Community Employment Projects, and travel training. The results of these interventions are shared with the student, families, and school personnel so that planning and academic programming in school is influenced by the findings and needs identified through ORS transition services. These services are provided based on the individualized needs of each student as identified by the team, family, and student. Any career exploration, internships, or volunteer activities completed by the LEA provide valuable vocationally relevant information to the discussion and planning process. These activities are considered work experiences, and so are important to consider as ORS and the LEA plans next steps and post high school objectives and needs. (Page 210) Title I

The LEA identifies students with disabilities who may be eligible for transition services with ORS, and facilitates a formal referral to the agency with parental approval. The LEA provides education records as part of the referral packet to ORS. Upon receipt of the referral packet, approved by the parents, the ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor schedules a meeting with the student and family to explain the program, become familiar with the student, and plan next
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steps. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will explain Pre-ETS services, Order of Selection/Wait List, and provide informed choice options, including whether to apply for services. Eligibility determination must occur within 60 days of application, and IPE must be developed within 90 days of eligibility Category I.

At times, school personnel may request Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor presence at an IEP meeting prior to a formal referral to ORS. (Page 211) Title I

As a component of the Pre-ETS program, ORS, in collaboration with other partners, has instituted several Project Search programs within the health care industry sector. The State emphasis and commitment to Employment First principles for individuals with significant intellectual disabilities has helped to facilitate RI Project Search, a nationally recognized program with successful outcomes for persons with I/DD, becoming a reality. The first Miriam Hospital Project Search - 2014, was a success, and the program was replicated with Blue Cross in 2015, and an additional site in 2016 at Newport Hospital.

In addition, ORS funds summer work experiences for youth since 2010. ORS has also developed two other Pre-ETS work initiatives, Summer Employment Alliance and twelve Tri-Employment programs for work experiences to potentially eligible students with disabilities. All of these work experiences are in integrated community-based work settings at minimum wage or above.

As Pre-ETS is a highly prescriptive set of services under WIOA, ORS can report on the overall numbers as identified in census as registered for Pre-ETS. Current ORS census has 1,262 identified Pre-ETS individuals. (Page 215) Title I

•ORS will encourage and reinforce, with ORS approved Supported Employment providers and other state entities, Employment First and Recovery Principles and Practices into service delivery in order to increase expectations that individuals with significant intellectual and behavioral health disabilities can obtain quality employment outcomes in integrated settings at competitive wages (Page 245) Title I

A Cooperative Agreement (CA) between RIDE and ORS, an RSA Best Practice, has been the foundation of a robust collaborative relationship focused on school-to-work transition for over 16 years. Incorporated into the ORS Transition and Pre-ETS Program is an expectation that all students who are found eligible for services not subject to Order of Selection (OOS) will have an ORS-approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) developed within 90 days of eligibility. Transition and Pre-ETS focuses on employment-related information and services to in-school youth with significant disabilities, including those students with an IEP or 504 plans. In addition, the State of Rhode Island is obligated to provide an array of transition services based on a Department of Justice (DOJ)/State Consent Decree/Interim Settlement Agreement to in-school youth identified as having a significant intellectual disability (I/DD).

Each high school has an identified ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor as a liaison available to consult, provide technical assistance, review student progress, attend IEP meetings,
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and accept referrals. ORS contributes to this process through Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attendance and/or consultation to the transition team meetings. A referral system is in place for students with disabilities, and each fall ORS, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Collaboratives, provides an orientation to Special Education staff at each Rhode Island High School. Transition and Pre-ETS services include: Counseling & Guidance, Vocational Evaluations and Assessments, Community-Based Work Experiences, Transition Academy participation, Summer Work, ORS/LEA Community Employment Projects. These services are provided based on the individualized needs of each student as identified by the team, family, and student. Any work activities already completed by the LEA such as volunteer positions, work tryouts, and internships provide valuable information to the discussion and planning process. These activities are considered trial-work experiences, so are important to vocational planning. (Page 248) Title IV

Transition and Pre-ETS incorporates services for the DOJ/State Consent Decree identified youth with significant intellectual disabilities, as well as for all in-school youth potentially eligible for ORS. In addition, the DOJ/State Consent Decree requires each high school to develop Career Development Plans (CDP) with all in-school youth with I/DD beginning at age fourteen and reviewed annually. The team, including the student and family, determine the additional school/home/community experience needed to augment the employment exploration services already provided by the LEA. These ORS opportunities for in-school youth may include such services as: Vocational Evaluations and Assessments; Community-Based Work Experiences; Participation in Transition Academies; Summer Work Experiences for In-School youth (Employment Alliance - an extended school year paid work experience supported by ORS & an LEA as well as the four-week paid work experience funded by ORS to an ORS approved provider); Project Search, and a pilot of a summer internship program specifically designed for young adults in 2 year and 4 year degree programs. (Page 248) Title IV

• ORS continued to conduct quarterly VR meetings with SE vendors to reinforce and strengthen Employment First principles and practice. (Page 255) Title IV

• ORS also has expanded its Pre-ETS programming and service delivery, and created new innovative summer work experiences, work based learning opportunities, and educated staff, schools, and families about options. (Page 257) Title IV

Career Pathways

Career Pathway Planning for youth goes beyond the connection to the K-12 system and will include all programs and services necessary to assist the youth participating achieve their education and career goals. The career planning for participating youth should address all elements that effect their ability to meet their career and educational goals. Such elements include leveraging activates to support the success of youth populations with disabilities, such as those provided in partnership with the Office of Rehabilitation Services, while the youth pursue both the educational and career goals. In addition, the provisions of adult education for youth who are not attending school and who have not attained an equivalency credential will be included in the planning process. Ensuring those youth who receive TANF services are included in this planning is also imperative to the success of this strategy. This work is already underway
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in the Community Action Plans (CAP) that operate the youth centers around the state. Such inclusionary practices go beyond the scope of this plan to include other services outside those directly connected to career and education activities such as medical care. Overall, the career pathway strategy intends to eliminate silos among core programs and coordinate the services available to the youth in a way that is centered around helping the individuals meet their own goals. Such efforts will require the day to day collaboration of programs and partner staff across organizations both governmental and non-governmental. The mechanisms to be used to foster such collaboration are described in the implementation section. (Page 54) Title I

### Apprenticeship

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

### Work Incentives and Benefits

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI): This program provides an integrated service system that creates a “One-Stop” entry point for individuals with disabilities to gain entrance to competitive and/or self-employment. This is accomplished by improving coordination and collaboration among employment and training programs implemented at state and local levels, including the “Ticket to Work” program under the SSA that enables disabled individuals to access employment services at an employment network site and other effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. (Page 25) Title IV

The VR program also has a contract with the Sherlock Center of Rhode Island College to build Rhode Island’s capacity of Certified Benefits Counselors for individuals receiving SSI and/or SSDI. (Page 207) Title IV

Considerable CRP development will be necessary to meet the needs of all ORS adult and in-school youth eligible for Supported Employment services and expand on CRP access to funding source options such as Ticket to Work. (Page 213) Title IV

ORS recognizes the importance of ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and abilities to provide quality services in a professional and timely manner. Examples of areas identified for training included: Motivational Interviewing, Substance Abuse, Ethics in Rehabilitation Counseling, disability specific training, Cultural Diversity, Supported Employment, Ticket to Work, Relationship Building with the Business Community, Social Security Reimbursements, Employment Networks Partnership Plus, 21st Century Best Practices for Job Development and Placement for VR staff, as well as for VR Vendors. (Pages 222-223) Title IV

ORS will provide access to information about SSA Work Incentives, Ticket to Work, and other State-specific benefits to customers and their families, CRPs, support staff, and ORS staff in order to support informed choice and employment decisions. (Page 245) Title IV
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A hardship extension may be granted to all otherwise eligible families who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Has a documented significant physical or mental incapacity and can verify/document a pending application for SSI or SSDI and has submitted an application for or is active and making progress in her/his Employment Plan with the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) (Page 275) Title IV

Employer/Business

ORS continues to partner with the business community and a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) to identify the specific training needs of large and growing businesses. ORS has identified two businesses, CVS and Alex and Ani, with whom to partner. The programs that have been developed prepare job candidates for the skills specifically required by the employer, and results in successful job matches. The partnership not only offers community integrated competitive employment opportunities for ORS customers, but is also producing a qualified and specifically trained pool of candidates for two nationally and internationally known businesses located in Rhode Island. (Page 201) Title IV

Over the next year, ORS will enlist its state partners and the SRC to develop a marketing plan that targets specific business sectors. Collaboration with the Governor’s Workforce Board, the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), and Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) is essential as the State implements the Comprehensive System Change Plan (CSIP). (Page 201) Title IV

ORS concurs with the recommendation of including in description (g) Coordination with Employers, the numbers of individual who received services through the business partnerships ORS has developed with RI businesses. One of the business partnerships is in the initial phase of accepting referrals, so data is not available now. The other RI business has accepted 17 individuals, of which 9 completed the on-site training, with 8 becoming and maintaining competitive integrated employment. (Page 204) Title IV

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) collaborates with programs and agencies providing services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach an employment goal. Types of agencies that ORS collaborates with include: hospitals, medical and disability support organizations, educational institutions (both public and private), professional associations, domestic violence and homeless shelters, community centers, community mental health agencies, local educational authorities, substance abuse treatment facilities, private medical offices, state agencies, federal agencies, private businesses, and advocacy groups. (Page 205) Title IV

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) has several existing partnerships and services that involve the business community. On a fee-for-service basis, Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) vendors provide Community-Based Work Experiences (CBWEs) to offer clients paid,
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Community-based, integrated work experiences consistent with client interests. This service provides a unique opportunity for ORS to assess an individuals’ work skills and behaviors within a business environment. The employer provides feedback to the agency and the client about their skills and potential in a particular occupation. Some of these assessments have resulted in a job match, while others have provided information to justify on-going education/training in the field or in some cases exploration of alternate careers. In addition, ORS coordinates with employers and potential hires in On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities. Title IV

In addition, ORS partners with the business community and a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) to identify the specific training needs of large and growing businesses. ORS has identified two businesses, CVS and Alex and Ani, to partner with. The trainings, almost a boot camp model, provides two weeks of classroom work, followed by a third half week classroom and half week in employment setting, and nine weeks of paid work-based training within the actual business facilities. This prepares job candidates for the exact skill set required by the employer, and thus a successful job match. The partnership not only offers community integrated competitive employment opportunities for ORS customers, but it is also producing a qualified and specifically-trained pool of candidates for two nationally and internationally known businesses located in Rhode Island. One of the business partnerships is in the initial stage of accepting referrals, so no data is available at this time. The other RI business has accepted 17 individuals, of which 9 completed the on-site training with 8 becoming and maintaining competitive integrated employment.

The Workforce Development Supervisor has developed more than 30 business partners with a myriad of companies in Rhode Island. When provided with job openings from these partners, alerts are forwarded to the 45 counselors who share this information with appropriate job seekers. Once a qualified job seeker has applied and after a confidential release has been obtained, ORS contacts the employer and job develops on the qualified job seeker’s behalf. Upon the retirement of the Workforce Development Supervisor, ORS incorporated the duties with those of the Community Rehabilitation Program Supervisor. ORS sees this alignment as a strategy to better align our Community Rehabilitation Program vendors and services with WIOA workforce development efforts. (Page 214) Title IV

ORS has developed an Employment CADRE to function as Business Ambassadors, agency marketers, advocates, and educators to the business community. The Employment CADRE members also provided employment and labor information back to their regions at monthly regional meetings. (Page 223) Title IV

ORS will utilize the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC/Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to strengthen its knowledge of the business community and use of Labor Market Information in the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

ORS has enlisted the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to assist...
ORS in addressing the following WIOA requirements: (1) Establish performance measure data collection; (2) Establish relationship with DLT; and (3) Establish relationship with Business Community. (Page 224) Title IV

OBJECTIVE 3: Develop, implement, and replicate the successful business partnerships already operating

• Implement and coordinate Project Search sites already in process and new one in development for adults with IDD. Utilize Viability, a current ORS vendor, to coordinate the two Business/ORS training-employer partnerships.

• Partner with an emerging, high wage business sector (Page 234) Title IV

ORS plans to expand and improve services through: (1) improved relationships with the business community, (2) staff training focused on client preparation for an employment outcome, (3) increased marketing and accessibility of information about the agency; (4) analysis of internal processes and methods to improve operational systems and overall services to clients; and (5) Continuous Quality Improvement Activities.

The overall purpose of ORS, as reinforced by WIOA and the RI Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB) system-change initiatives, is to increase the competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through partnerships with and responsiveness to the needs of the business community. Efforts over the next year will include collaboration with other state agencies to develop a coordinated approach to implementing a business needs and customer driven service delivery system, as described in the GWB’s Comprehensive System Improvement Plan (CSIP). This revised service-delivery system is to be based on the identified personnel needs of the business community and the identified training and job preparation needs of the ORS customer.

• ORS will enlist its partners to identify local businesses to develop targeted training programs to meet the specific needs of local business sectors.

• ORS will continue to participate on the Governors Workforce Board (GWB), Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), Common Performance Measures Task Group, and other advisory groups to gather current information about business sector needs and state responses. In addition, ORS will advocate for the Vocational Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities as the state re-aligns its workforce development resources.

• ORS will encourage WIOA partners to include an RFP requirement that 7% of grants must be devoted to partnership with ORS and target individuals with disabilities.

• Several successful business partnerships, Project Search, and Viability will continue to be supported by ORS. (Page 245) Title IV
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### Data Collection

Two Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are in place for RIDE, ORS, and the state Developmental Disability agency - Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). One MOU defines the working relationship between the three parties, and the other MOU addresses data sharing for the state agencies. The Department of Justice (DOJ)/State Consent Decree required that each of these MOUs be developed and implemented to ensure that the responsibility for services and implementation of Employment First principles occurs within RI in a manner consistent with the mandates of the DOJ/State Consent Decree. In-school youth with significant intellectual disabilities are entitled to access to an array of transition planning, career exploration/discovery services, and community-based work experiences prior to graduation from high school. The MOU describes the relationship between the parties and data collection to demonstrate that deliverables of the DOJ/State Consent Decree are occurring as prescribed. (Page 208) Title IV

ORS has enlisted the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to assist ORS in addressing the following WIOA requirements: (1) Establish performance measure data collection; (2) Establish relationship with DLT; and (3) Establish relationship with Business Community. (Page 224) Title IV

ORS and the SRC identified (Goal 3) that ORS will need to develop data collection and reporting methods that meet the new WIOA performance measures and RSA standards of practice. ORS is currently in Year 1 of building the baseline for new WIOA performance measures. Year 2 will begin 7/1/2018. In order to meet this goal, ORS plans to continue to participate on the RI DOA common performance measures committee, to determine the “what and how” of contributing ORS data to state reporting requirements, to educate staff to the new data elements that are required and need to be maintained, to obtain guidance from RSA to establish specific numerical targets, to determine how to collect baseline data on performance measures and to enlist Technical Assistance opportunities on capturing performance measures. (Page 236) Title IV

- ORS will continue to participate on the Governors Workforce Board (GWB), Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), Common Performance Measures Task Group, and other advisory groups to gather current information about business sector needs and state responses. In addition, ORS will advocate for the Vocational Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities as the state re-aligns its workforce development resources. (Page 245) Title IV

- ORS maintains a consistent presence on the RI Department of Administration (DOA) Common Performance Measures Committee. Partners have focused on their readiness to capture the new WIOA requirements, therefore discussions have been ongoing among the WIOA partners in the state as to what data and how the data will be reported to state partners. (Page 256) Title IV

511

No disability specific information found regarding this element.
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Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

Rhode Island’s One-Stop Career Centers (netWORKri Offices) are fully accessible and in compliance with both WIOA Section 188 regulations on non-discrimination and Rhode Island General Laws Section 28-5 Fair Employment Practices. Each One-Stop Career Center has been monitored and inspected bi-annually by the Rhode Island Governor’s Commission on Disabilities and has been found to be in compliance. Rhode Island has had policy in place for many years dictating that when deficiencies are identified, One-Stops are informed in writing of the findings and a corrective action plan is put into place. There are currently no outstanding issues.

The Department of Labor and Training has been committed to making One-Stop Centers and programs more accessible to individuals with disabilities. In the past much of our Adaptive Technology has been upgraded using the Disability Employment Initiative Grant and the Office of Rehabilitation Services Assistive Technology Program. These Assessments of accessibility which allowed upgrades in Adaptive Technology and increased staff development when serving customers with disabilities. (Page 111) Title I

All of the centers provide universal access to their services including registration, skills assessment, career counseling, job search, assistance in filling out unemployment claims and evaluation of eligibility for training programs to people with disabilities. Alternate formats for all information and application materials are offered. These include large print documents and use of various assisted technology devices and tools including TTY, Captel, Zoom Text, Magnifier, Pocket Talkers, Jaws and Magic. All staff in the One-Stops have been trained on the use of these tools and educated as to methods of communicating all services to individuals with disabilities. ORS personnel are periodically enlisted to provide training on Disability related topics. (Page 111) Title I

In order to improve services and meet the minimum requirements, this agency will ensure that all One-Stop netWORKri staff has been properly trained in the proper identification and coding of MSFWs as well education on the multiple barriers of employment many MSFWs confront. The SMA will continue to conduct on-site monitoring of the netWORKri Centers to ensure compliance with federal requirements and to offer technical assistance to staff as needed. RIDLT is committed to achieving full compliance with the federally mandated minimum requirements for providing services to MSFWs during the coming year. (Page 170) Title IV

ORS personnel provide consultation to the One-Stop staff on disability issues, accessibility considerations, and assistive technology. ORS will provide One Stop Staff with resources to support individuals with disabilities. Resources including the ATAP partnership and state independent living center are key supports in providing consultation and training to One Stop Staff. ORS also works with other pertinent assistive technology professionals through fee for service and comparable benefits that may benefit the needs of One Stop Staff. (Page 218) Title IV

ORS personnel provide consultation to the One-Stop staff on disability issues, accessibility considerations, and assistive technology. ORS will provide One-Stop Staff with resources to
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support individuals with disabilities. Resources including the ATAP partnership and state independent living center are key supports in providing consultation and training to One-Stop Staff. ORS also works with other pertinent assistive technology professionals through fee for service and comparable benefits that may benefit the needs of One-Stop Staff. (Page 250) Title IV

Vets

JVSG: JVSG funds are provided to states to fund two staff positions; Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) which are fully integration in each American Job Center (AJC). Our integration strategy includes a streamline referral process to all partner programs such as WIOA and other combined state plan partners. Furthermore, DVOP specialists provide intensive services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. DVOP Specialists refer eligible veterans and eligible persons to all partner programs as determined in their comprehensive assessment. Additionally, DVOP Specialist receive referrals from other state partner programs such as; WIOA Title 1B for those eligible veterans and eligible persons who have been determined to have one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) outline in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14. In addition, LVER staff must perform only the duties outlined in 38 U.S.C. 4104(5), which are related to outreach to the employer community and facilitation within the state’s employment service delivery system. Therefore, LVERs must be assigned duties that promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans. LVERs are also responsible for facilitating employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in the State under the applicable State employment service delivery system such as the delivery of training to other state plan partner staff with current employment initiatives and programs for veterans. (Page 25) Title I

As required by 38 U.S.C 4215 (b) and 20 CFR part 1001 and 1010, priority of service is provided to ensure that all eligible veterans and covered persons receive priority access for all career service opportunities for which they qualify within the employment service delivery system and any sub-grantee funded in whole or in-part by the US Department of Labor. Rhode Island’s two local workforce development boards the Workforce Partner of Greater Rhode Island and the Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston, include the priority of service requirements in their local plans. In every one of our four American Job Centers (AJC) we have visible signage that is posted at the AJC point of entry that clearly describes priority of service an effort to encourage individuals to self-identify their veteran status. Furthermore, AJC staff are provided training by the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) on a quarterly basis to review priority of service regulations, veteran referral processes and guidance on the “Initial Veteran Assessment Tool.” At point of entry, AJC staff are required to verbally ask every customer which enters the center “Are you a veteran, spouse of a veteran or caregiver of a veteran.” When a veteran or eligible persons status is self-attested, all eligible veterans and eligible person are made aware of: •Their entitlement to priority of service; • The full array of
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employment, training and placement services available under priority of service; and • Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services. Subsequently, at the point of entry all eligible veterans or eligible persons are given opportunity to be screened by AJC staff member using the “Initial Veteran Assessment Tool.” When an eligible veteran or eligible person has indicated to one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) outlined in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14, then a referral is made to a Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist (DVOP) for intensive services and the AJC staff member will enter an “Initial assessment” in Employri. (Pages 109-110) Title IV

In an event that a DVOP is unavailable the eligible veteran and/or eligible person is afford the opportunity to be seen by next available AJC staff member. In addition, the eligible veteran and/or eligible person’s information is referred to the AJC managers who are responsible for ensuring he or she will be outreached by a DVOP for intensive services at a later time. If a eligible veteran and/or eligible persons, at a point of service does not have the documentation verifying his or her eligibility for priority of service, he or she is afforded access on priority base to all services provided by program staff (including an intensive service) while awaiting verification. If a veteran or eligible person completes an online registration on Employri, our web-based system Employri includes content that explains priority of service, as well as provides veterans and eligible persons the opportunity to self-identify veteran status through virtual self-service registration. In Employri there are questions that are embedded at initial enrollment that will act as the screening tool to identify a Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) outlined in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14. When an eligible veteran or eligible person has indicated having one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) it will generate a notification that will be sent to the closes geographical located AJC to be outreached by a DVOP. For USDOL funded training at within the local AJCs, priority of service is given to veterans and eligible person over non-covered persons. (Page 110) Title I

The Veteran Service Coordinator will assist AJC managers in the verification process of veterans and/or eligible persons by providing expertise in veteran documents and priority of service. In such cases where a veterans or eligible persons is unable to produce supporting documents at point of enrollment they will be able to gain access to training funds as a non-covered person till supportive documentation are verified. During this time, DVOP specialists and/or AJC staff members will continue to render career services to the veteran or eligible person per self-attestation as first indicated at point of entry. In addition, DVOP Specialist and AJC staff will provide assistance and provide these veterans or eligible persons with resources to recover these documents, while continuing providing services. (Pages 110-111) Title I

In all netWORKri Career Centers at point of entry all customers are screened for veteran status by an American Job Center (AJC) staff person by verbally asking “Are you a Veteran?.” Once the veteran or covered status is identified a quick assessment is conducted by the AJC to identify
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Significant Barriers to Employment. At point of contact, if one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) is indicated as outlined in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14, a referral or “Warm Handoff” is made to a Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP). However, if no SBE’s are indicated during the screening/intake process the veteran or covered person will be referred to an AJC staff person to render appropriate employment, training and job placement services. In addition, after a SBE has been identified by a AJC staff person, a Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) will render intensive services to eligible veterans or eligible persons with one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE), identified by the Secretary of Labor outlined in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14. DVOP Specialists will conduct a comprehensive assessment of education, skills, and abilities of each referred eligible veteran. This will include the development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that identifies employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veterans to meet their employment goals. If training has been identified in the Individual Employment Plan either by DVOP Specialist or an AJC counselor, they will make an appropriate referral to a suitable training program including but not limited to the following: occupational skills training; on-the-Job training; job readiness training; adult education and employer customized training. When an eligible veteran or eligible person is determined job ready and/or completes training services; DVOP Specialist or AJC staff will collaborate with Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) and the Business Service Unit (BSU), for information on job orders and job development opportunities for veteran. The LVER’s principal duties are to conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in our state’s career service delivery systems. LVER staff will conduct follow-up activities with employers to ensure veterans and/or eligible persons are successful throughout the hiring process. (Pages 300-301) Title IV

Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists as an integral part of the State’s Labor Exchange System the Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists primary duties are to meet the needs of eligible veterans and eligible persons that have one or more (SBE), as per outlined, Veteran Program Letter (VPL) No. 03-14, VPL 03-14 Change 1 &2, VPL No. 04-14 and VPL No. 08-14. DVOP Specialist will provide intensive services and facilitate the employment needs of eligible veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). DVOP Specialists will conduct a comprehensive assessment of education, skills, and abilities of each referred eligible veteran. This will include the development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that identifies employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the eligible veterans to meet their employment goals. In addition, DVOPs will continue to provide intensive service, in combination with follow-up activities. DVOP specialists will continue to monitor veteran’s progress throughout training. Eligible Veterans or eligible persons in need of intensive services will be assigned to a DVOP Specialist after receiving an initial intake assessment conducted by
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the identified AJC staff member. This will include the development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that identifies employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veteran to meet his or her employment goals. (Page 301) Title IV

In order to maximize services to those eligible veterans and eligible persons, DVOP staff conducts outreach activities at a variety of sites including, but not limited to:

- Vocational rehabilitation and employment programs;
- Homeless veterans retention project grantees;
- Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Vets Center;
- Homeless shelters;
- Community Stand Down Events; and
- State vocational rehabilitation agencies. (Page 302) Title IV

DVOP specialist and LVER staff are fully integrated within the career center network to ensure eligible veterans receive a streamline access to all eligible services and veteran employment opportunities. This may include partner programs such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or the State Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) and/or ongoing activities including job recruitments, workshops, computer classes and job fairs. DVOP specialist and LVER staff are fully embedded into the AJC system, and are required to actively participate in all AJC activities so their customers can take full advantage of all available employment and training services. Staff meetings and training sessions amongst AJC partner programs and agencies such as WIOA, Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA), Rapid Response, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), and Employment services to partner programs including ORS, and RI Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA), Department of Human Services (DHS), is critical to the professional development of DVOP and LVER staff. DVOP Specialist and LVER staff participation in these partner staff meetings broaden their knowledge of programs and resources, thus improving their capacity to effectively serve their customer base. Veteran customers benefit from the team approach to service delivery and internal networking among staff. (Page 303) Title IV

DVOP Specialist will provide intensive services and facilitate the employment needs of eligible veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). The targeted veteran population is as follows:

1. A special disabled or disable veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C 4211(1) and (3);
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Special disabled and disabled veteran are those:
   a. Who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitle to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs; or,
   b. Were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability;

2. A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. I 1302(a) and (b), as amended;

3. A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months;

4. An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration;

5. A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or

6. A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36))

7. Transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of intensive services;

8. Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units; and

9. The spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members (Page 304)

Title IV

DVOP specialist are able to outreach veterans with one or more Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE). Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training strategies have also been developed to address veterans that do not qualify for federal homeless programs and/or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services. DVOP Specialist will continue to conduct outreach to Veterans’ Service Organizations (VSOs), homeless shelters, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers and Vet Centers, food pantries, correctional institutions and residential treatment houses throughout the state as part of community networking strategy to locate veterans with SBEs. A DVOP specialist will provide assistance once a week at the Providence VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VAVR&E) office to provide and coordinate services to Disabled veterans look to use Chapter 31 benefits. (Page 305) Title IV

DVOP Specialist activities may include referrals to other agencies, supportive services, and/or career workshops to overcome employment barriers identified in the comprehensive assessment. Additional DVOP specialist and AJC staff activities include individual Job Search Planning, Résumé Preparation Assistance, and Labor Market Information for veterans and/or eligible
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persons. Job development services will be facilitated by LVER staff and the Business Services Unit to coordinate veteran referrals to employers. (Page 306) Title IV

All eligible veterans and eligible persons referred to DVOP specialist will receive the following intensive services:

1. Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment DVOP Specialist activities may include referrals to other agencies, supportive services, and/or career workshops to overcome employment barriers identified in the comprehensive assessment. Additional DVOP specialist and AJC staff activities include individual Job Search Planning, Résumé Preparation Assistance, and Labor Market Information for veterans and/or eligible persons.

Job development services will be facilitated by LVER staff and the Business Services Unit to coordinate veteran referrals to employers. All job postings within EmployRI will provide veterans and eligible persons a priority of service.

DVOP Specialist and AJC staff will refer veterans and eligible persons to applicable training programs based on training needs identified in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Veterans and eligible persons will be provided a priority of service on all considerate training program funded in whole or in part by U.S Department of Labor. (Page 307) Title IV

DVOP Specialist and AJC staff will refer veterans and eligible persons to applicable training programs based on training needs identified in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Veterans and eligible persons will be provided a priority of service on all considerate training program funded in whole or in part by U.S Department of Labor. (Page 308) Title IV

Mental Health

BHDDH partners with licensed Behavioral Health Organizations (BHO), which focus on mental health and/or substance abuse disorders, and Developmental Disabilities Organizations to provide supportive employment services to clients. Community based organizations (CBO) network with local businesses to develop relationships and build a referral/job pool. Depending on the needs of the individual, CBOs often provide on-site coaching and job retention services. BHDDH and its partner agencies work closely with the Business Leadership Network to help link individuals with disabilities to employers. (Page 29) Title I

Community Mental Health Center (CMHO) Employment Supports: Activities to support employment for Severely Mentally Ill (SMI) clients of the Community Mental Health Organizations include a variety of client-specific supports to prepare them for work, including coaching their job-search efforts and supporting job retention by helping individuals to overcome the barriers presented by their illness. Services are delivered either by certified Supported Employment Specialists or by Certified Community Support (CSP) Case Managers. Although specific outcomes are not required as a condition for funding, and access to Supported Employment Services is just one of the variables determining whether CSP clients get and keep employment, the goal of the service is to increase the number of clients in competitive, gainful
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employment. In FY 14, of 7,024 CSP clients, 633 were gainfully employed. (Page 30) Title I

The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) collaborates with programs and agencies providing services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach an employment goal. Types of agencies that ORS collaborates with include: hospitals, medical and disability support organizations, educational institutions (both public and private), professional associations, domestic violence and homeless shelters, community centers, community mental health agencies, local educational authorities, substance abuse treatment facilities, private medical offices, state agencies, federal agencies, private businesses, and advocacy groups. (Page 205) Title I


ORS has a long-standing history of collaboration with the RI agency responsible for services to individuals with mental health issues - Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). ORS funds an array of Supported Employment services for adults and youth with Behavioral Health issues through a fee-for-service arrangement with a network of ORS-approved Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP). Many of these Supported Employment CRPs are also licensed by BHDDH to provide support services to individuals with behavioral health disabilities. (Page 217) Title IV

The Jobs for Veterans’ State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four “rolling quarters”) on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually. In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans’ Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, (Page 300) Title IV

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