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Employment First State Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Customized Employment

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Braiding/Blending Resources

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

School to Work Transition

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.

Many employers in the Territory have identified skill gaps in the workforce in three specific categories: Soft Skills -to include customer service, punctuality and time management Basic Academic foundational Skills -specifically math, writing and verbal language efficiency Low Technological Skills -limited basic fluidity, limited knowledge of applications and web based navigation Utilizing this information, VIDDRS is at the table with stakeholders of the local education agency to complete the development of a collaborative Transition Services Procedure. VIDDRS and the LEAS continue to work collaboratively to develop a seamless process which will clearly identify the procedures for application, eligibility determination and provision of transition services, including pre-employment transition services for VR eligible students. The process ensures the Development and Approval Process for the IPE prior to students exiting school. (Page 84) Title I

VIDDRS will implement a plan for identifying cases at day 45 for which eligibility has not been determined as follows: Transitioning applicants will be identified and flagged upon receipt of referral; cases that have been in applicant status for over 30 days will be reviewed and
appropriate action taken Once eligibility has been determined;

DRS will monitor IPE development based on 90 days as stated in our policy manual Quarterly
case reviews will be conducted within the last two weeks of December, March, June, September
to determine compliance with requirements for timely determination of eligibility and
development of IPE. The goal is for 100% of IPEs will be developed within 90 days of eligibility
determination. (Page 85) Title I

VIDDRS is committed to building its capacity to provide extended services for individuals with
the most significant disabilities, including youth, to achieve the employment outcome of
supported employment in competitive integrated employment. VIDDRS is in the trial stages of
partnership with the University of the Virgin Islands to develop innovative pathways that will
allow individuals to access support services in "non-traditional" ways, while helping to build the
foundation for achievement of sustainable accomplishments. Independent job coaches may
provide supported employment services for up to 24 months, with the option to increase as
needed in special circumstances. VIDDRS policies and procedures will be updated to reflect
updated WIOA authorizations for extended services. (Page 85) Title I

This Joint Interagency Agreement for Secondary Transition Services (hereinafter “Agreement”)
is designed to improve cooperative and collaborative efforts between the Virgin Islands
Department of Education, as the State Educational Agency, through the State Office of Special
Education (“VIDE/SOSE”) and the Department of Human Services, through the Division of
Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services (herein after “VR”). The Agreement shall ensure that
each student with a disability in the territory who needs special education and/or vocational
rehabilitation services is promptly identified and the appropriate transition services are made
available. (Page 85) Title I

VR is the agency responsible for implementing the Vocational Rehabilitation Program as
authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, which includes
the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as Title IV; and an individual, including a student, is eligible to
receive Vocational Rehabilitation services (hereafter “VR services”), including transition
services, if he or she is “an individual with a disability,” including eligible students under IDEA
and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, meaning that the individual has a physical or mental
impairment that results in an impediment to employment and can benefit in terms of an
employment outcome from VR services; and to be eligible, an individual also must require VR
services in order to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment; and the Rehabilitation Act
and its implementing regulations require Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to enter into formal
interagency agreements with State Education Agency (SEA) describing how they will
collaboratively plan and coordinate transition services for students with disabilities needing those
services (Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.22(b)). (Page 86) Title I

It is the overarching goal of this Agreement that, to the maximum extent possible, all eligible
students with disabilities exit high school prepared to go directly into employment and/or post–
secondary training programs, and independent living. In furtherance of this, VIDE/SOSE and VR
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shall work together to accomplish the following:

Implement practices in secondary school programs that include pre–employment transition services, that will prepare eligible students with disabilities for competitive and, where appropriate, supported employment; integrated recreation and leisure activities; college or postsecondary training, and personal management skills that allow for the greatest level of independence in social, recreational, residential and employment settings;

Ensure that all eligible students with disabilities and their parents/guardians are provided the necessary tools and resources to be actively engaged in planning their high school experiences and future post high school goals;

Coordinate activities among all involved segments of the community toward the purposes stated in this Agreement. (Pages 86-87) Title I

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs

The VI Department of Education, State Office of Special Education is responsible for the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities, including transition services. The VIDOE is responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of the student’s IEP. Staff of the VI DOE and VIDDRS Transition Unit work collaboratively to facilitate interagency planning as well as collaboration with other agencies to assist in referring students to appropriate pre–employment transition services and develop strategies that support the career development pathways of students with disabilities leading to career and college readiness.

C. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services

The Interagency Agreement outlines roles and responsibilities for both education staff and VR staff. VIDDRS staff is actively engaged in the implementation of the student’s IEP collaborating in the planning and referral development and facilitating identification of students with disabilities who may benefit from VR services as early as possible in the transition process. This ensures that transition services and goals on a student’s IPE are aligned. VR services should compliment services provided by schools but not replace those services.

D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services

VIDDRS is engaged with the LEA to participate in IEP meetings. VIDDRS is also a member of the SEA/LEA Capacity Building team and we are working together to develop a territorial plan for transitioning students that will be inclusive of required Pre Employment Transitioning
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requirements. The plan will include action steps that each agency’s responsibility to promote the core principles for transition. Transition planning for youth requires a multi-agency collaboration with early dialogue between the student with their families and other stakeholders (VR, DOE and DOL). This coordination will ensure consistent information and guidance about VR program and the availability of services between partner agencies. (Page 89) Title I

2. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

Development and Approval Process for IPE prior to students exiting school VIDDRS will provide technical assistance to counselors on strategies for timely determination of eligibility and development of IPEs for youth with disabilities to ensure that the IPE is developed before the student leaves high school. (Page 92) Title I

The Virgin Islands Department of Education shall:

- Ensure that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination is in effect between each non-educational public agency and the DOE, as required by the IDEA, and its implementing regulation at 34 CFR § 300.2(a)and (b) [20 USC § 1412(a)(12)], in the provision of a free appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities; and

- Coordinate with the Department of Human Services –VIDDRS for dissemination of information to local education agencies regarding effective, results-based practices for students with disabilities to be prepared for postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment including supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation;

- Ensure that the collaborating parties to this Agreement meet quarterly or as needed to evaluate the transition process and recommend system changes;

- Coordinate with DHS to provide professional development and technical assistance activities for DOE staff, the LEAs, other public and private agencies, and parents/guardians/students/surrogates on topics related to transition planning and adult service activities;

- Provide training in conjunction with DHS regarding transition services and interagency service linkages; and

- Coordinate with DHS to distribute the “DHS Information Packet” for LEAs to provide to students referred to DHS by age (16). The Information Packet will include DHS program and contact information and DHS brochure. (Pages 93-94) Title I

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) The Department of Human of Services, as a State Agency federally mandated to collaborate with the Special Education Division of the Department agrees to Designate at least one member from its respective divisions that may provide services to the eligible client as an IEP team participant for the purpose of attending conference meetings pertaining to the implementation of this Interagency Agreement, and for
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Planning for transition planning and implementing the services required by the student’s IEP. The DHS’s Division of Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services agrees to:

- Develop guidelines on the implementation of this agreement and train state and local–level staff regarding those guidelines;
- Provide vocational rehabilitation services to students who meet the eligibility criteria of DHS; Attend IEP meetings for eligible students beginning at age 14 and at a minimum by age 16, to identify and anticipate service needs;
- Provide consultation and technical assistance to aid LEAs in planning for the transition of eligible students as needed;
- Conduct educational/informational workshops to interested students, parents/advocates on the Vocational Rehabilitation Process and where referrals may be accepted;
- Develop an Individual Plan of Employment (IPE) with eligible clients, before the student leaves the school setting. Notify relevant transition team participants of student eligibility determination and appeal process;
- Provide exploratory opportunities in community–based businesses for students identified by Vocational Rehabilitation and DOE throughout the school year; (Page 94) Title I

E. Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services; The youth with disabilities with the most significant challenges are students with intellectual disabilities. There is a need for more coordination with the LEA to coordinate job readiness training and engagement of the workforce system to facilitate on the job training opportunities that have the potential of career opportunities for this population. (Page 107) Title I

VIDDRS is very interactive and transparent as it relates to the sharing information about operation and programmatic challenges with the SRC that affect the effectiveness of the VR Program. With the implementation of WIOA the SRC leadership has been at the table during meetings with core partners and has provided input that it believes will help the VIDDRS with WIOA mandates. Specifically as it relates to:
- Outreach and marketing to impact access to VR services for the unserved and underserved.
- Improving transition services for students and youth with disabilities
- Implementation of an electronic client case management system
- Development of the Business Engagement Plan. (Page 112) Title I

The VR Transition Units (one each on St. Thomas and St. Croix) provide coordinated activities for transitioning students to assist them in preparing for jobs in integrated work settings. Transition Unit staff will assist with the implementation goals of the IPE as developed by the student’s VR Counselor. VIDDRS will engage in collaborative initiatives to facilitate provision of pre–employment services as required. (Page 114) Title I

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities,
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including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services). The VR Transition Units (one each on St. Thomas and St. Croix) provide coordinated activities for transitioning students to assist them in preparing for jobs in integrated work settings. Transition Unit staff will assist with the implementation goals of the IPE as developed by the student’s VR Counselor. VIDDRS will engage in collaborative initiatives to facilitate provision of pre-employment services as required.

Students leaving for college will be provided with those assistive or technological devices necessary for their successful achievement of their post-secondary educational goals. Similarly, those clients entering the workforce will be assisted with the provision of assistive technology services to improve their performance in the workplace.

The State Agency will partner with the Department of Education to hold joint training sessions for parents of students in the Special Education Program and plan educational and informational meetings with teachers, counselors and coordinators of the education Department. VIDDRS will provide information about the Vocational Rehabilitation program. (Pages 115-116) Title IV

Career Pathways

VIDDRS, in collaboration with the partners of the workforce system, will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in–demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B),(D) Workforce development activities revolve around the build out of Industry sectors. The Territory’s current demand sectors based on current hiring trends are: Administrative and Support Services, Allied Health, Construction Trades and Information Technology. VR counselors will receive training to better assist clients to develop employment plans that will enable them to be employed in areas that provide opportunities to earn a living wage and in demand sector industries that afford them opportunities for professional growth and career development. (Page 115) Title IV

Apprenticeship

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

Work Incentives and Benefits

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act. (Page 126) Title IV

Employer/Business

The Virgin Islands Job Centers also serve as a portal to the business community. The Employer Engagement Team assists business, small to large with solutions to their workforce needs. Employers can schedule access to the Job Centers facilities for screening, interviewing or providing workshops for their current or potential employees; they may request assistance with
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the administration of testing or career assessments; work with business service representatives to develop job fairs or information dissemination; post their job vacancies; or schedule hiring events. Employers can also take advantage of a range of business training solutions that help their employees ascend the career ladder within their organization. Those solutions include incumbent worker training that allow current employees to upgrade their skills or customized training for new and current employees who need to master a specific skill set. (Page 18) Title I

As mandated by WIOA, VIDDRS is engaging in an initiative with the Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) and Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), to facilitate employment for individuals with significant disabilities. The intervention will serve as a pilot led by VIUCEDD and the results will be documented and used to improve employer engagement, outreach efforts and employment outcomes for the most significantly disabled individuals. (Page 90) Title I

1. VR services; and

VIDDRS is working in collaboration with the Department of Labor Employment and Training Division to implement a seamless system for employer engagement to facilitate career opportunities in the demand occupations in the territory which include Administrative and Support Services, Allied Health, Construction trades, Information Technology, Leisure and Hospitality, Retail and Transportation and Logistics. (Page 92) Title I

As mandated by WIOA, VIDDRS is engaging in an initiative with the Virgin Islands Department of Labor (VIDOL) and Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), to facilitate employment for individuals with significant disabilities. The intervention will serve as a pilot led by VIUCEDD and the results will be documented and used to improve employer engagement, outreach efforts and employment outcomes for the most significantly disabled individuals. (Page 116) Title I

Data Collection

The Virgin Islands Electronic Workforce System (VIEWS) is the tool used for data collection to produce quarterly and annual reports for Titles I and III. With the addition of Vocational Rehabilitation three of the four core programs will be able to generate joint and agency specific reports through this system. (Page 35) Title I

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The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act. (Pages 124-125) Title IV
Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

8) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

The Department will provide whatever reasonable assistance may be deemed necessary to assure programmatic and architectural accessibility including, but not limited to ensuring that:

- Customers and staff with disabilities will be provided access to assistance deemed necessary to accommodate their needs, including assistive technology and alternate barrier-free work locations.

- Assistance to disabled customers to include testing (if applicable) and placement support is reasonably accessible. Such services and support may include providing interpreters, readers and other accommodations deemed necessary. (Page 49) Title I

The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; (Page 50) Title I

The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); (Page 51) Title I

The Disability Rights Center/CAP of the Virgin Islands provides advocacy and referral services. This ensures accessibility to services and community resources. They also conduct workshops for parents of students with disabilities and education officials. They facilitate presentations on various disabling conditions; and information relation to transitioning. The VR staff has been invited to make presentations at these workshops also. (Page 90) Title I

Vets

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, the VI Workforce System offers covered Veterans and eligible spouses ‘Priority of Service’. The designation requires that these individuals are given first consideration for program participation and they receive access to services ahead of “non-covered” persons or, if resources or space is limited. In order to receive Veterans Priority of Service for a specific program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must meet the statutory definition of a “covered person” as well as any other statutory eligibility requirement applicable to the program. Additionally, ‘Veterans Priority of Service’ designation shall take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and those who are basic skills deficient. (Page 46) Title I

DVOP Program

Veterans who meet the eligibility criteria as defined in 38U.S.C. Sub Section 4211(1) and (3) are identified and referred to Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists for intensive services. These specialists provide case management services to veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans with ‘significant barriers to employment”. Veterans’ eligibility for these services
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**includes:**

1. Veterans between the ages 18 to 24.
2. A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211 (1) and (3): Special disabled and disabled veterans are those:
   - Who are entitled to compensation (or who but for receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or,
   - Were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

In an effort to assist veterans to overcome their Significant Barriers to Employment, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist will collaborate with Veterans Organizations and community-based organizations such as:

- The Methodist Training & Outreach Center
- Catholic Charities
- Bethlehem Shelter
- Eagle’s Nest Shelter
- My Brother’s Table Soup Kitchen
- Veterans Affairs Clinic
- Salvation Army
- Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation
- Local Office of Veterans Affairs
- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)
- Virgin Island National Guard State Family Program Office
- Women/Men’s Coalition

Under the Wagner Peyser program veterans receive preference for all new job postings received within the System and are afforded preferred access to a range of other services. Application of this designation and requirement is monitored through the ViEWS database and is evidenced by the established 72 hour “vet hold” on each job order. All staff are provided with a range of...
comprehensive information on the services available through the WIOA program and are prepared to disperse to the veterans they serve. Additionally, the DVOP specialists are fully integrated into the American Job Center and all staff are aware that veterans identified or self-attesting to meeting one or more of the criteria defined to signify a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), are eligible to receive individualized services from the DVOP. Once eligibility is established, the veteran is referred to the DVOP and this activity is also recorded in the database. (Page 48) Title I

Veteran’s Referral Protocol

The Military Veterans’ Customer Flow chart provides a visual representation to JVSG and non-JVSG staff about the veterans’ referral process.

Veterans who walk-in and require staff assistance are registered and provided with an orientation on the Workforce System. The veterans are also provided with an intake form which indicates the various Significant Barriers to Employment. According to the responses on the intake form, veterans are either served by the AJC staff or referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist for service. Only veterans with SBE are referred to and are served by the DVOP.

DVOP also receive referrals from other community partners who are serving veterans with SBE. Eligibility is determined through assessments.

Veterans who apply for Unemployment Insurance have to register with the Workforce System. If the veteran self-registers, he or she will be asked a series of questions through the online registration that will determine if he or she possesses a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE). If the veteran does possess an SBE, the DVOP Specialists will receive an email alert indicating that a qualifying veteran registered on Virgin Islands Electronic Workforce System. Follow-up action will then be initiated by the DVOP. (Page 48) Title I

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. (Page 51) Title I

The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; (Page 58) Title I

Mental Health

The Virgin Islands is experiencing significant challenges with the level of services available to persons who are mentally ill. Due to a retirement of professional staff, we are experiencing challenges in services to clients. Currently, VR is utilizing private vendor to ensure that
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diagnostic services and treatment are provided for VR eligible individuals. (Page 95) Title I

VIDDRS has implemented a transition unit that provides some assistance to youths, however, there remains a significant gap in services when these individuals require the services of a job coach. These transitioning youth are mostly individuals with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities and mental illnesses. Some counselors also expressed that transitioning youths are unfamiliar with VR services; therefore does not follow through with services. It was discussed that more outreach should be considered on different platforms to ensure that transitioning youths and their families have frequent opportunities to be fully aware of services; this may favorably influence the amount of closures before employment outcomes. 504 youths were another population that was considered underserved due the amount of referrals. Counselors stated that referrals are only received when teachers or guidance counselors attempt to find resources for particular students. (Page 105) Title I

Specific disability and demographic groups that are underserved or un-served: transitioning youths, US Virgin Islands minority populations, homeless individuals, individuals with moderate to severe cognitive impairments, physical disabilities and mental illness, and migrants with language barriers. (Page 107) Title I

The Virgin Islands has experienced significant challenges in serving individuals diagnosed with mental illness as well as individuals with significant intellectual disabilities. In an effort to address these challenges, VR is engaged with the Department of Health address the barriers that the mentally ill face in maintaining stability. The Workforce system is job driven and focuses on developing talent with specific employment outcomes in local demand sectors as a goal. VR counselors will provide counseling and guidance to assist clients in identifying career opportunities that matches their skills and abilities. (Page 107) Title I

The purpose of VIDDRS Supported Employment Program is to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities to, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve supported employment outcomes in competitive, integrated employment by developing and implementing collaborative programs with entities that can provide some extended supports. The populations that we will focus on initially are:

Students in special education programs transition to community employment and individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who have traditionally been unsuccessful in obtaining integrated employment. (Pages 113-114) Title I

### RTW/SAW

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

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

Find your local state plans here:

[https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html)
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U.S. Virgin Islands state plan here: