

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix
Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)
No specific disability related information found.
Customized Employment
No specific disability related information found.
Braiding/Blending Resources
No specific disability related information found.
Section 188/Section 188 Guide
Gen. Section 188 provisions cited but no further implementation strategy throughout document (Page 81,85)
DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators
No specific disability related information found.
Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment
No specific disability related information found.
Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement
<p>FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION such as helping participants create household budgets, initiate savings plans, manage credit and debt and navigate the financial aid process for post-secondary education;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS training such as discussing characteristics of entrepreneurs, developing business ideas, creating a business plan and inviting local entrepreneurs to speak to youth.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- **LABOR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION** services about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- **PREPARATION ACTIVITIES** for transition to postsecondary education and training. (Page 23)

Benefits

Employer outreach by these providers is coordinated through the CWS Business Account Managers. Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) In order to meet the requirements of PETS, DVR has established a cadre of fourteen VR counselors assigned to work exclusively with students in high school. Each counselor has an assigned Youth Employment Specialist to develop real work-based learning experiences. DVR has the capacity to provide PETS services for eligible students in all 60 supervisory unions. Supported Employment for Youth and Adults DVR partners with the Division of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health to provide supported employment services for adults with developmental disabilities and youth with emotional behavioral disabilities. Rehabilitation Services for the Deaf (RCD) DVR has four Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf to provide specialized employment services to adults and students who are deaf or have hearing impairments. Work Incentive and Benefits Planning Approximately 30% of individuals in the DVR caseload receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Individuals on SSDI or SSI often need assistance understanding and managing the effects of earned income on their benefits. DVR Benefits Counselors provide this guidance to beneficiaries and assist them in taking advantage of available work incentives. Short Term Industry Recognized Training DVR data has indicated that consumers who complete industry recognized short-term certification programs achieve higher wage employment outcomes. (Page 25)

STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

A. Strengths of Workforce Development Activities Vermont sees the following as strengths to the workforce development system in the state:

- **Intimate, Individualized Services** — core partner programs are highly accessible to individuals and program participants would rarely encounter wait times in program centers across the state. Additionally, the state has highly ranked education and training programs. For example, DVR has been ranked number one nationally in per capita individuals served, in employment per capita outcomes achieved, and in access to services for individuals with the most severe disabilities and determined eligible for Social Security disability benefits based on Ticket to Work participation rates.
- **Strong Employer Engagement** — The state workforce programs have a strong emphasis on the employer as a customer. These business services come through engagement with businesses, economic development partners, and community organizations and leaders. The DVR, through CWS has over 2,500 active employer accounts in a Salesforce Strong database. Additionally, the core partners have successful employer engagement opportunities such as the Vermont Tech Jam, an annual career fair/tech expo showcasing the state's most tech and bioscience companies, which provides a unique matchmaking opportunity for tech-based employers and job seekers.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- **Program Accessibility** — Core partner programs are already available statewide. Additionally, many required one-stop partners are already collocated within the twelve state career resource centers, including the following programs: unemployment, trade adjustment, jobs for veterans, Wagner Peysner, and registered apprenticeship. Because of the collocation of Wagner–Peysner services, all career resource center staff receive labor market information training that enables better informed services to program participants and information seeking customers.
- **Education Opportunities** — There are 27 colleges and universities in Vermont, including one research university, five universities conferring master’s degrees, an art school, a culinary school, a law school, and 14 undergraduate colleges conferring associate’s and bachelor’s degrees. These colleges are considered national leaders and this has resulted in a net positive migration of college–age people into Vermont. (Page 27)

VR Counselor works with an Employment Consultant (VABIR), who provides assistance in work search, job placement and post employment services. For individuals presenting multiple barriers to employment, an individualized service model is utilized. The approach focuses on progressive steps to employment including company tours, informational interviews, work experiences, community service placements, work assessments, and job shadowing. A large number of non-custodial parents with disabilities have never been helped in any way by the State. Reaching out to and assisting this population has produced positive outcomes. DVR has assisted many Work 4 Kids participants in securing employment. To date, non-custodial parents referred to the Work4Kids program are paying approximately five times the amount of child support compared with those not referred to the program. Vermont DVR has been assisting individuals to apply for Social Security disability benefits for more than a decade. Assistance has focused on individuals with very severe disabilities, often undiagnosed and untreated, that prevent them from being successful in employment. The goal is to assist those with severe disabilities to receive a more stable source of support that allows them to pursue treatment options that may lead to reengagement with DVR to work on employment goals. Populations being served are those receiving TANF benefits, those on DVR caseloads, offenders exiting prison, non-custodial parents engaged in the Work4Kids program, and individuals receiving General Assistance, an emergency benefit program for individuals with medical and other barriers to employment. In FFY 2015, 202 individuals were successful applicants for Social Security disability benefits. (Page 161)

Choices. DVR Benefits Counselors will utilize knowledge gained from prior experiences in working with students, as well as available technical assistance resources, to work closely with the DVR Transition Counselors in their regions. These teams will identify eligible individuals for referral, and find creative ways to engage students and their families in benefits planning in order to enhance students’ possibilities of employment and their development of independent living skills. (Page 164)

Full Time Equivalent Position Titles and Functions 1 Division Director 6.8 Senior Central Office Managers including the Field Services Manager, Employment Services Manager, Quality Assurance and Business Systems Manager, Staff Development and Training Coordinator, DVR Administrative Services Manager, Budget and Policy Manager, and the Transition Program Director 7 Regional Managers overseeing the 12 district offices 14 DVR Transition Counselors serving an in-school youth caseload 13 DVR Young Adult Counselors serving a youth caseload 30 DVR Counselors Serving an adult caseload 7 Benefits Counselors 4 Rehabilitation Counselors for the

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

Deaf 15.5 Program Techs and Administrative Support Staff 12 Employee Assistance Manager and Specialists 6 Special Project Coordinators 2 Data Management and Program Evaluation Staff 3 Business Account Managers 2 Assistive Technology Staff and Manager 3 Miscellaneous Central Office Staff

DVR served 9,618 consumers in FFY 2015, or 76 consumers for each FTE. (Page 171)

One such meeting is comprised of employment staff connected by Creative Workforce Solutions, a DVR initiated collaboration of Agency of Human Services funded employment programs, which promotes cooperative job placement and employer relationships. Training related to rehabilitation technology is provided initially through the DVR services training program for new hires. Additional training and staff development is provided in collaboration with the Assistive Technology Program through on-site, video conferenced, and webinar based trainings, information sessions, and regularly scheduled staff meetings. A specific staff group, the DVR Benefit Counselors, receive specialized training to ensure the provision of quality services in working with customers who receive monetary or medical benefits. Ongoing training and support is provided by a DVR Project Manager. The local Social Security Administration (SSA) Area Work Incentives Coordinator provides quarterly trainings to the Benefits Counselors on a variety of SSA Work Incentives issues. SSA also provides training and technical assistance for Benefits Counselors through contracts with Cornell and Virginia Commonwealth University. DVR is the SSA Work Incentives Planning and Assistance grantee for the State of Vermont. The six Benefits Counselors working under that project are certified by SSA as Certified Work Incentive Counselors (CWIC). (Page 175)

The DVR training coordinators are the primary hub for dissemination of research and training resources to field staff. Program managers, including the Transition Services Manager, the Employment Services Manager and the Benefits Counseling Program Coordinator collect and disseminate information from local and national resources. Program managers and staff are encouraged to become members of national organizations in their fields. Organizations like the National Skills Coalition or the National Association of Benefits Planning and Work Incentive Counseling (NABWIS) and excellent resources for managers and front line staff. (Page 176)

Additionally, DVR provides transition services to youth; a program for youth with severe emotional/behavioral disabilities and corrections involvement; a program for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits; individuals with disabilities receiving General Assistance benefits; benefits counseling; assistance with Social Security disability benefits applications; the Vermont Assistive Technology and Reuse Program; and assistance to individuals with disabilities who are offenders or who are veterans. Additionally, DVR funds supported employment services to designated agencies serving individuals with severe and persistent psychiatric disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. (Page 188)

B. AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Vermont DVR is by far the largest provider of employment services for individuals with disabilities. Either directly providing services or through grants to community rehabilitation partners, DVR has sustained growth even as it continually assesses the needs of the community. For example, as evidence of disability within the TANF population grew, DVR established a unique partnership with the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) to serve individuals with disabilities

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

receiving TANF benefits. DVR has many similar partnerships that allow DVR to effectively use its resources to expand its reach to other populations. The JOBS program is a partnership between the Departments of Corrections (DOC), Mental Health (DMH), DCF and DVR to provide supported employment and case management services for at risk youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities. The VR General Assistance Program provides DVR services to eligible individuals receiving emergency assistance. The Vermont DOL provides some services to individuals with disabilities, and the 14 designated agencies across Vermont provide supported employment services to individuals with severe and persistent psychiatric disabilities and those with developmental disabilities. Below is a table of current employment services providers for individuals with disabilities. (Page 189)

At DVR's request, Market Decisions pulled out responses from individuals within the VR General Assistance Program, the DVR Reach Up Program (TANF) and Transition program for youth under age 22. DVR wanted to see what effect any one of these groups might have had on the small downturn in satisfaction levels. The Division was particularly interested in the responses from General Assistance (GA) program consumers since it was a newly established program and not part of the previous surveys. As it turned out, GA customers were less satisfied than other customers across all measures. There is probably some misunderstanding related to these responses since some GA recipients may be confusing DVR with the actual GA benefits that are administered. There was little difference in the responses from the TANF population, and there was a higher than average satisfaction level among youth in transition. (Page 194)

Adults of Working Age Receiving Social Security Disability Benefits Another way to assess potential unmet need is to look at population data for adults receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits. Individuals who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are categorically eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. To be eligible for SSI or SSDI benefits an individual must be determined to be too severely disabled to work at a substantial level. In general, individuals who receive SSI or SSDI benefits have more significant barriers to employment than individuals with disabilities who are not eligible for these benefits. The most accurate way to assess the level of participation in vocational rehabilitation services by state is through the SSA Ticket to Work program. State VR and Blind Agencies are required to report to SSA the names of beneficiaries for whom the Ticket is "in use." These data are used to determine payment to the VR agencies under the Ticket to Work or Cost Reimbursement programs.

TABLE 12: SSA DISABILITY BENEFICIARIES SERVED Total Working Age SSI and SSDI Population Number Receiving VR Services Percentage Served National 13,449,039 315,049 2.3% Vermont 32,172 2,857 8.8% (Page 197)

- A. Vermont DVR has implemented an in school Transition Counselor model providing PETS services. DVR has reassigned 20% of the programs VR counseling capacity (14.5 FTEs) to work exclusively with students. This provides coverage to all 60 supervisory unions and high schools in the state.
- B. DVR has worked with its primary CRP VABIR to implement the Youth Employment Specialist (YES) model. A full time YES will be paired with each in school VR counselor to provide a range of PETS services including the development of real work based learning experiences.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- C. DVR has reassigned supported employment resources to serve high school students who need supported employment services. PETS services will be provided through the JOBS supported employment programs serving students with psychiatric disabilities and the Developmental Services supported employment programs serving individuals with developmental disabilities,
- D. DVR will implement self advocacy services for students through a grant agreement the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)
- E. DVR will implement benefits planning for students. DVR has six Certified Work Incentive Counselors (CWICs) on staff. (Page 210)
 - a. Explore use of post-employment services to support DVR consumers advance in their current employment or access a new higher wage.
 - b. Explore outreach to closed cases to determine if individuals could benefit from re-engagement with DVR. (Page 211)
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- B. DVR has worked with its primary CRP VABIR to implement the Youth Employment Specialist (YES) model. A full time YES will be paired with each in school VR counselor to provide a range of PETS services including the development of real work based learning experiences.
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- D. DVR will implement self advocacy services for students through a grant agreement the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)
- E. DVR will implement benefits planning for students. DVR has six Certified Work Incentive Counselors (CWICs) on staff. The CWICs will provide benefits planning for students who receive SSI as part of PETS.
- F. DVR will expand substantially summer youth employment opportunities for students through the Vermont Youth Conservation Corporation and other vendors. (Page 213)
 - The high proportion of consumers served through supported employment. Many of the individuals served through supported employment programs have very significant developmental or mental health disabilities. A high proportion work very part-time to supplement their benefits.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- DVR serves a significant proportion of consumers who are already working and who are already self-supporting. These individuals cannot be included in the calculation. (Page 217)

School to Work Transition

All DVR Transition Counselors use the Guide to Secondary Transition services: Helping Students with Disabilities Move From School to Work, with special educators in each of the high schools they serve. They also use the Transition Counselor Role and Responsibilities for guidance. They facilitate a “meet and greet” in the fall with special educators to identify specific needs, issues and obstacles in their schools, and create a plan to address them. Local Core Transition Team meetings are being reinstated around the state to support the work of PETS in WIOA. (Page 165)

1. DBVI Services for Students who are blind or visually impaired DBVI is committed to the successful transition of young adults who are blind or visually impaired from school to work or further education or training. DBVI is required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, see 29 U.S.C. §720 et seq. and pertinent federal regulation, see 34 CFR §361.22; the IDEA, and pertinent federal regulation, see 34 CFR §§300.347 (b) and 300.348; and the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, see 29 U.S.C. §3001 et seq., to coordinate policies and procedures with education officials that facilitate the transition of students who are blind or visually impaired from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services from the DBVI agency.

Data Collection

The 12 career resource centers are operated by the VDOL. All VDOL programs, which includes WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs, Title III Wagner Peyser and other one-stop partner programs, operate using the Vermont Job Link (VJL) intake and case management system. This system is an integrated, technology-enabled system that provides individuals with access to labor market information and job training opportunities. The core partners are working together to develop a universal referral process and data sharing MOUs to help facilitate and explore data collection and sharing opportunities for participation tracking purposes. Vermont has also advocated for data alignment and integration resolution at the federal level. (Page 74)

Small Business/Entrepreneurship

No specific disability related information found.

Career Pathways

Strategy B: Expand workforce development and training initiatives and programs for Vermonters in high-demand and high-wage jobs. This will include:

- The development and expansion of sector based training programs.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- The development and expansion of training, certification programs, and industry recognized credentials in high demand sectors.
- Ensuring Career Pathways have entrance points for lower-skilled adults that connect to adult education programs with outreach specific to this population.

Strategy C: Explore opportunities to address disincentives to work built into state and federal benefits programs, such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

- Seek federal waivers to test alternative benefit structures and work incentives to make work pay.
- Promote state policy adjustments designed to incentivize employment for individuals who receive public benefits.

Strategy D: Utilize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) grant as comprehensive pilot to experiment on how the workforce system can effectively serve beneficiaries effectively.

- The SNAP E&T grant is a partnership between Vermont DCF, VDOL, DVR and Community College of Vermont to provide comprehensive return to work services for beneficiaries who are recent offenders, have substance abuse disorders, and/or are homeless. The partnership will test new strategies to support return to work for these populations who have significant barriers to employment. (Page 32)
- The development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system, including:
 - Identification of barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system.
 - Development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.
 - Development of strategies for providing effective outreach to and improve access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system. (Page 41)

DVR recognizes one of the goals of WIOA is help consumers retain employment and develop career pathways to higher wage employment. The DVR management team had a two day retreat to consider strategies to achieve this goal. One for those approaches is to engage consumers post closure to determine if they could benefit from additional services to help them advance in their current employment. These might include:

- A. Explore use of post-employment services to support DVR consumers advance in their current employment or access a new higher wage.

Vermont (VT) WIOA Matrix

- B. Explore outreach to closed cases to determine if individuals could benefit from re-engagement with DVR.

Strategy 6: Expand employer outreach and engagement efforts through Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) to effectively meet the needs of employers. Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10

As described in Section (g) of the State Plan CWS is the primary employer outreach and engagement infrastructure for DVR. CWS and in particular the Business Account Managers have been a very effective approach to engaging employers and developing employment opportunities for DVR consumers. DVR will expand these efforts through the following strategies. (Page 211)

Employment Networks

Employment Network section located but nothing specific to disability stated. (Page 362)

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

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