

Attachment 4.11(d)
STATE'S STRATEGIES

The following strategies have been identified to support the needs identified in the FFY 2007 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment as described in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and the Agency goals and priorities. These strategies will be implemented in order to achieve Agency goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

These strategies are subject to change due to the nature of the strategies and the continuous evolution of concerns related to disability issues in the state. The Agency continuously monitors these strategies based on current circumstances, striving to stay in tune with the needs of Idahoans with disabilities.

Attachment 4.11(d)(1)(A):
EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES

Strategy 1: Assistive Technology Services and Devices

In January 2007, IDVR revised the Agency Field Services Policy Manual for the express purpose of standardizing service delivery statewide. The manual states:

“Rehabilitation technology services (assistive/adaptive technology) may be provided as compensatory strategies to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Rehabilitation technology services may be provided at any time in the rehabilitation process, including the assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, extended evaluation, services provided under an IPE, and post employment services. Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits. If, however, comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the individual, IDVR must use those resources to meet in whole or part, the costs of the vocational rehabilitation services. (For further information, please review the series of comprehensive fact sheets provided by Idaho Assistive Technology Project located on the IDVR internet web site. There are also direct links to the Idaho Assistive Technology Project web site at that location).”

In 2007, the Idaho Assistive Technology Project received a demonstration grant for the purpose of recycling and reutilization of durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs and scooters. IDVR has agreed to provide assistance in picking up equipment and transporting it to the various recycling centers that will be established throughout the state. VR staff can be utilized when the task of acquiring this equipment is compatible with the counselor's travel plans on particular days.

IDVR will continue to focus upon efficient usage of rehabilitation technology enhancements as they become available on the market. This equipment will be utilized to overcome barriers that would otherwise impede the achievement of a desired vocational outcome.

Strategy 2: Expansion and Improvement of Services to Individuals with Disabilities

- IDVR will create a new review instrument to be used for internal casework audits that will identify current practices that do not meet Agency or Federal standards as well as identify examples of “best case practice”. The Agency recognized a need to create a better evaluation tool as a direct outcome of the last Federal 107 review, which identified specific casework requirements that were not adequately addressed or documented.
- IDVR has developed a series of Critical Caseload Templates that each counselor is utilizing as a desk aid. These templates, along with ongoing Regional training, will ensure that staff is familiarized with a broad range of services and devices. The success of this strategy will be measured by client satisfaction surveys conducted at the closure of cases after the provision of an IPE, including outcomes that involved the acquisition of assistive technology.
- Collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to address disability related issues as they arise.
- IDVR staff will participate on regional or statewide transportation committees that are developed to expand or create options for public transportation and to represent the interests of Idahoans with disabilities.
- Actively support IDVR clients in their participation in Mental Health Court in communities where this program has been implemented.
- Invite community rehabilitation partners to attend relevant trainings sponsored by IDVR, including the annual in-service training when appropriate.
- Extend invitations to the Tribal VR representative to attend quarterly IDVR management meeting and staff trainings.

Strategy 3: Expansion of community college training opportunities for individual with significant disabilities.

IDVR has identified a specific need for affordable secondary instruction at community colleges across the state for individuals with significant disabilities. It is proposed that IDVR enter into third party match agreements with the Professional Technical Education agency as well as individual community colleges across the state. These memoranda would be negotiated on an annual basis and would include an agreed upon financial appropriation that would offset tuition costs for eligible VR participants.

As a result of a review documenting that only half of the students with disabilities at Boise State University were clients of Vocational Rehabilitation it is proposed that IDVR enter into an agreement with respective community colleges to provide campus based disability services to eligible IDVR clients. The key elements of this agreement would include providing access to IDVR services and assisting with educational access for clients at community colleges. This effort is expected to yield an increase in the number of individuals referred from the community colleges as well as increase the successful rehabilitation outcomes resulting from the expanded targeted services to clients enrolled in community colleges.

**Attachment 4.11(d)(1)(B):
OUTREACH TO SERVE THE MOST SIGNIFICANTLY DISABLED WHO
ARE MINORITIES OR UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED**

Strategy 1:

The triennial needs assessment recently conducted specifically identified as underserved, individuals requiring long-term supportive employment services. A major emphasis is being undertaken as evidenced by the Agency's stipulated intent identified in Goal #4 (see section 4.11(c)(1)) to recruit other organizations and state agencies with similar objectives to advocate for help in securing additional resources. These resources will be used to increase the percent of individuals participating in community based, integrated, supported employment.

Strategy 2:

Because of the homogeneity of Idaho's population base, there are very few minorities. Overall, the population of Idaho is being served equitably across the state. The primary minority and underserved population is the Hispanic population, many of whom enter the state on a seasonal basis to work in agriculture. IDVR will continue to outreach and serve the Hispanic and well as the Migrant and Seasonal worker population. The Agency will implement an effective radio advertising campaign in the regions that experience a high density of this population in order to increase community awareness of this population and identify community resources available as comparable benefits. This particular demographic population experiences a large number of individuals with the most significant disabilities based upon the labor intensive nature of the work and other occupational hazards related to seasonal and migratory farm work as well as cultural and education barriers. All of these areas of need will be taken into consideration in the development of comprehensive rehabilitation plans.

Strategy 3:

Another underserved population is the American Indians. In Idaho, there are currently three Section 121 Vocational Rehabilitation projects. General IDVR counselors meet minimally on a monthly basis with the three projects mentioned above. IDVR general counselors will open tribal cases periodically when requested by an individual or a project representative.

**Attachment 4.11(d)(1)(C):
DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATE COMMUNITY
REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRPs)**

Strategy 1

It has been identified in the Triennial Needs Assessment that there are particular rural areas of the state in which adequate Community Rehabilitation Program coverage is not available. In order to rectify this deficit, the agency has initiated a round table discussion with interested stakeholders to address this particular need and strategies intended to resolve the current deficit of service providers in some rural areas of the state.

Strategy 2:

In Idaho, the CRP programs function as independent vendors structured on a fee for service basis. In order to assure the highest quality service outcome to Agency clientele, each vendor must be certified by one of two National Certification entities. The first is the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The second is the Rehabilitation Services Accreditation System (RSAS).

Strategy 3:

A pilot project was developed in 2005 to provide an installment payment incentive for participating CRPs rather than the traditional method of fee-for-service. The intent is to increase efficiency in service delivery and encourage a positive employment outcome for the client. The payments for services are based upon certain milestones being achieved in the job search process, with the greatest financial reward to the CRP coming at the time of successful closure. The cost to the agency remains neutral when compared to fee-for-service but the emphasis has been shifted for the CRPs to a successful employment outcome rather than merely the provision of vocational services. To date, the program is still in pilot status with the prospect of expansion statewide within the next three years as more CRPs are able to financially accommodate the initial start up of an incremental payment schedule. Currently, there are four CRPs participating with others expressing an interest. Overall, the outcomes have met expectations by expediting the outcomes in a more efficient manner than the traditional hourly fee for service.

Strategy 4:

Based upon the 2007 Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, it was concluded that there remains a need to expand the nature and scope of vocational services with strategically located CRPs across the state. These services will include expanded vocational skills development, disability adjustment, work adjustment, vocational evaluation, SSA benefit planning, job development and job placement services as well as potential facility construction, remodel and/or purchase in order to fulfill the objectives of this strategy.

The method contemplated for funding the expansion and development of services will be focused around third party match agreements, which will be compliant with federal statutes. Matching funds obtained from any source related to CRPs, projects and services, will meet all state requirement for purchase, contracting, and bid guidelines.

Attachment 4.11(d)(1)(D):**IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATE'S FEDERAL EVALUATION STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS****Strategy:**

In FFY 2008, IDVR failed to meet standard 1.1. The Agency continues to closely monitor monthly performance levels to ensure that the outcomes for FFY 2009 will reflect compliance with all indicators.

Additionally, IDVR regularly educates management and staff regarding their responsibilities towards meeting these goals. Progress is monitored regularly by the Field Services Chief.

Attachment 4.11(d)(1)(E):

STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Strategy 1:

In 2005, Governor Kempthorne consolidated six former Workforce Investment areas into two. The Workforce Development Council is now the sole Workforce Investment Board in the state to oversee a statewide regional planning area. This requires the Council to exercise special responsibility for development and oversight of the state's workforce development infrastructure and program.

IDVR is actively involved as a Workforce Development partner in Idaho. A representative from IDVR regularly attends meetings with other Workforce Development partners to help set the agenda for the Quarterly Workforce Development Council meetings to ensure relevant topics are included for discussion or vote, to share important information regarding agency/community resources for mutual clientele, and provide information to the Board on selected issues. The partners promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through the cross training of staff and participation in a continuous improvement process designed to increase outcomes and customer satisfaction. IDVR will strive to maintain this high level of cooperation and participation.

Strategy 2:

Currently, IDVR staff has a close working relationship in each of the One-Stop Centers across the state. A survey was conducted in 2006 to determine the current level of participation and interaction IDVR staff has in each of the One-Stop Centers. While each region's participation is customized to the needs and culture of the particular region, it was evident that a close working partnership exists with the One-Stops and WIA partners. At least one IDVR staff member is assigned at each of the local One-Stop Centers. The staff member has a regular schedule of attendance at the One-Stop or is on call with a five-minute response time due to the close proximity of the offices. The partners share resources where possible in accordance with each agency's guidelines when working with common clientele. IDVR will continue to maintain a close working relationship with the One-Stop Centers and partner agencies.

The comprehensive assessment identified concerns with some One-Stop staff who do not demonstrate adequate understanding of disability issues and needs. In an effort to rectify this deficit, IDVR has chosen to invite key members of the One Stop program to attend a VR sponsored management meeting. The purpose of this invitation is to provide guidance and disability awareness to those key DOL staff who are responsible for assisting individuals with disabilities to access the One-Stop System. Opportunities for additional training in a more informal manner will be planned as well.

Attachment 4.11(d)(2)(A), (B) and (C):

EXTENT TO WHICH THESE STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO ADDRESS THE GOALS IDENTIFIED IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT, SUPPORT THE INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES AND OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

Finding qualified applicants for vacant counselor positions presents a challenge in the state. The Agency is actively working to recruit qualified master's level applicants; however, this has proven to be a difficult task. Attachment 4.10 addresses this staffing issue. Quality staff will enhance service delivery and outcomes for Agency clients, add credibility to the mentoring/role, model activities provided to client and ensure that staff is knowledgeable regarding counseling theories and general career guidance expertise. By focusing upon a high standard of professional competency, this emphasis will enhance the Agency's ability to meet or exceed the Federal Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators.