

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.2(c)

SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE

REHABILITATION COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE

UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTION OF INPUT OR

RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Rehabilitation Council's Committee on State Plan and Policy reviewed the State Plan Updates for 2002 and provided the following comments. Highlights of 2002 SRC activities include the extensive time spent by the SRC's Committee on Quality Assurance facilitating and coordinating the Client Satisfaction Study. The SRC also sponsored training for SRC members and ORS staff related to mentoring programs in state colleges that will increase awareness of needs of students with disabilities and in equal employment rights for individuals with disabilities. The SRC is reviewing Hearing Decisions to further advise the ORS in areas that can enhance services for individuals with disabilities. The SRC participated in the Federal 107 review that occurred in 2002 and provided significant input related to transition services and gaps. The SRC continues to be involved in strategic planning with the ORS staff. Currently the SRC is exploring ways to build leadership in the Council as well as to assist the Designated State Unit (DSU) through development of a more autonomous structure.

Comments on the state plan included support of the commitment of the ORS to fill vacant Counselor positions with individuals who hold a Master Degree's in Rehabilitation Counseling as a way to ensure continuous provision of quality services (4.11 b).

SRC support is also given to continue the customer satisfaction studies as a way to assess statewide needs and to train Counselors in self-employment. The SRC recommends that a "resource person" be established to provide on-going assistance to counselors and clients while developing Business Plans (4.12 (a)).

The SRC supports clinical oversight and supervision as the primary strategy to address standards and achievement of employment outcomes. The SRC suggests that corrective action plans be instituted as well.

The SRC also requests that the comment process start sooner in the year in order to have ample time to present recommendations.

Response of the State Agency to the above summary of comments.

We agree that the Client Satisfaction Studies are important mechanisms to assess the responsiveness of the ORS to individuals with disabilities and the quality and understanding of services and outcomes by the clients served. We plan to continue the partnership with the SRC in ensuring that Client Satisfaction Studies continue. We also will continue to recruit individuals who have attained a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling vacancies. The ORS will train staff on Self Employment and provide technical assistance and resource assistance to staff and customers related to achieving Self Employment outcomes. At this time the ORS is planning to hold training early in 2003 related to Self-Employment and develop written guidance materials for staff and customers related to Self-Employment.

Clinical oversight and supervision continues with specific action plans within each region for addressing problem areas.

The ORS will make every effort to provide written material to the SRC within a reasonable time for comments to be provided, yet giving enough time for the ORS to determine, and project, progress toward each update in the Plan.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.9 (C) (4)

**EVIDENCE OF COLLABORATION REGARDING SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT AND EXTENDED SERVICES**

2002 was an active year for increased collaboration related to supported employment. Through a Department of Labor grant through the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives and Improvement Act (TWWIA) four new “Disability Resource Specialists” were hired to work at One-Stop Career Centers. These positions are earmarked to assist individuals with disabilities who come to the One-Stop Center to access services. ORS staff collaborated with One-Stop staff to expand the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) options for individuals with disabilities. The Resource Specialists work with ORS to improve access to OJTs through WIA. ORS staff has provided training to the Disability Resource Specialists so that consumers can make informed career choices, including supported employment options.

ORS participates in a “Supported Employment Advisory Council” convened by the MHRH, Division of Behavioral Health that includes mental health providers, consumers, families, and staff from the Sherlock Center for Disabilities (AKA University Affiliated Program). The purpose of the Supported Employment Advisory Council is to provide the impetus for the community mental health system to move from center-based day program to community-integrated employment. The Sherlock Center has organized Employment Specialist Training modules and ORS participates as trainers and trainees.

The Third Party Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Mental Health Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH) has been renewed in 2002 for a five-year period. The Agreement promotes a coordination of services leading to integrated employment outcomes and provides a focus and coordination opportunity with the Third Party Cooperative Agreement with the RI Department of Education (RIDE). The ORS negotiated with MHRH and RIDE staff during 2002 to come to agreement about the types of services to be provided through the Agreement. The MHRH Agreement defines a special focus on services to youth with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses

including provision of peer support and community opportunities for work experience prior to exiting school. Through the Agreement the Employment Information Network (a group of individuals with disabilities who are a “speaker’s bureau”, will provide a vehicle for peer supports for youth and adults with disabilities to access and make informed choices about vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment.

ORS has initiated training with Community Mental Health Programs that are providing Supported Employment services related to assisting customers to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment. The ORS “Guide to Developing Your IPE” has been shared with Community Mental Health Providers and individual Counselor Liaisons who are assisting with technical assistance related to the Plan development.

Collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP’s) related to implementation of the One-Stop Career System and Employment Networks continues. ORS and CRP linkage is strengthened in implementation of the TWWIA funded grant to the RI Department of Labor and Training, *Work on the Rhode to Independence*. Through the development of Employer Service Network committees that include CRP’s, ORS and the Department of Labor and Training work together to improve employment services and outcomes resulting from the One-Stop System. Individuals with disabilities, through this collaboration, will enjoy the benefits of the One-Stop system, including benefits planning.

The above coordinated approach to problem identification and solving are the beginning steps in initiation of the MOU development process with CRPs related to supported employment services and outcomes.

ORS staff are involved in providing leadership training to youth with disabilities through the new Youth Leadership Forum that brings together partners such as the RI Parent Information Network, Independent Living Centers, Educational Collaboratives, RIDE, and other school personnel to build youth leaders in the community.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.11 (b)

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

2002 continued the dynamic process of achieving CSPD standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. From 10/1/01 to 9/30/02 five Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors vacancies occurred and will be filled by individuals with a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. One VR Counselor with a Master's Degree in Psychology completed her CSPD requirements, and two Senior Rehabilitation Counselors are making progress in meeting CSPD related to their similar degrees by taking core courses. The two RCDs' are both actively completing their CSPD plans. One is in the program held at Assumption College, and one is enrolled in the local Satellite program. Six staff completed the Satellite program through Assumption College and attained a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in May 2002.

In May 2002 the position of Training Coordinator was filled by a Supervisor who has the lead function to implement the Ticket to Work initiative for the VR program. This Supervisor also coordinates a SSA awarded grant for Benefits Planning and Outreach. Ticket to Work and the Benefits Planning and Outreach are a training focus for 2002 and throughout the next several years to enhance the Agency's response strategies to increased inquiries and referrals, and employment services and informed choice for the individuals with the most significant disabilities who receive SSI or SSDI benefits.

An in-house training program for new staff was implemented in 9/01 and continues to offer new staff opportunities to expand learning about specific vocational rehabilitation issues (values, independent living, assistive technology, benefits, medical, ethics, confidentiality, programs, the State Rehabilitation Council, transition, etc.) and to provide options for staff to maintain their CRC.

A focus on employment related training was made through offering staff specific sequential training in Labor Market Information and in using the WWW for job search and placement. Three visually impaired staff participated in WWW training for JAWS

users jointly planned by RI VR and the RCEP. In addition the RI VR agency participated with the RCEP to plan and implement IPE training for direct services staff in June 2002.

In 2002 one staff position has been delegated to Information Services. This individual manages the web page, has developed alternate format expertise, develops information tools and participates with other staff in improving the implementation of informed choice for customers of the VR program. Specific training in information technology processes has been provided to the Information Services Technician.

Three new Supervisors have participated in leadership training offered by the state training office. In all, 63 staff participated in one or more training opportunities to enhance skills or professional growth.

The plan to enhance clinical supervision as the main strategy to increase quality employment outcomes continues. During 2002 Administrators met individually on a quarterly basis with each Regional Supervisor to evaluate regional and individual approaches to achieving outcomes.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12(a)

RESULTS OF STATE WIDE ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

The ORS has made progress in 2002 related to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities as articulated in the five-year plan. Needs remain the same. A customer satisfaction study was completed in March 2002 in partnership with the SRC Quality Assurance Committee. The study indicated many areas of strength in the responsiveness and services by ORS staff and an overall satisfaction level of the customers surveyed. Needs were identified related to enhancing opportunities for choice and providing clearer explanation of services.

Informed Choice and Resource Development: The ORS, however, continues to focus on an area of need related to increasing opportunities for choices in determining services and in achieving employment. ORS and the SRC have focused on informed choice during 2002. Consumer-friendly information that includes Fact Sheets and decision-making guides have been, and continue to be, developed or revised and included on the homepage. Links on the homepage to training resources that have been approved by the DHS and netWORKri system will improve choice. ORS electronic systems have organized vendors according to geographic regions in order for Counselors to assist customers with local resources. The Community Rehabilitation Specialist has developed new resources both in the CRP area, including enhancing the provision of supported employment services to deaf individuals and other individuals with significant disabilities, and with short-term training and ESL programs to improve services to culturally diverse clients. The CRP Specialist and ORS Counseling staff are exploring a pilot program in Supported Education that will provide supports to individuals with significant mental illnesses who are pursuing careers requiring higher education. The agency's Fee Schedule has been revised to be an improved tool for person centered planning and informed choices for customers. The ORS Information Services Technician has installed JAWS software so she can ensure that written material is readable to individuals with visual disabilities.

Resource Expansion for Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired: This continues to be a need area. However in 2002 a new psychologist who provides access for individuals with vision impairments was engaged to provide services to RI clients through Fee for Services. SBVI worked collaboratively with a RI program, In-Sight to develop specific strategies to enhance services for this population.

WIA and One-Stop System: In 2002 the new positions in the netWORKri offices to improve access for individuals with disabilities were hired. These Disability Resource Specialists at the netWORKri Centers work closely with ORS customers and staff in Orientations and in job clubs. ORS staff actively participates in State and Local Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils.

Transition Planning: Transition is a high priority for the ORS and the SRC. Both Third-party cooperative agreements with RI Department of Education (RIDE) and MHRH have been renewed for 5 years and are coordinated together with focus on services for transitioning students. The Transition staff at ORS has developed career guides for students, fact sheets about the partnership, and staff from several agencies coordinate strategies for outreach and transition planning. The Transition Coordinator and ATAP Project Director are involved in the statewide school improvement plan with the RIDE. ORS is represented and actively involved in both Youth Councils, and involved in the RFP and grant review process to ensure access opportunities for youth with disabilities.

ORS provides coordinated technical assistance to school systems by participating in regional Transition Advisory Committees and in Leadership Workshops sponsored by the RIDE. Consultation evaluation and community-based employment planning services are provided to students in coordination with the School districts and the regional Transition Centers. In 2002 the Transition Coordinator at ORS worked with transition staff to develop a uniform message regarding how to access ORS services for students, schools and families, and to develop success stories and examples how ORS services after a student leaves the school system. .

Through the Transition Coordinator and CRP Specialist, pilot programs have been developed in Regional Educational Collaboratives to provide seamless services to students who are exiting the schools systems but still need supports in order to successfully transition to employment.

Employment Options: In order to enhance ORS skills in assisting customers who choose Self Employment as the career goal, specific training is planned in developing business plans and in self-employment. A Self–Employment Fact Sheet and worldwide web links to resources through the ORS Web Site will be implemented later in 2002 and in 2003.

An internal OJT group has been formed to assist counselors with screening potential job-ready individuals for on the job training monies to enhance the opportunity to obtain employment of their choice.

Transportation: ORS and RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) are working closely with other state and local agencies to improve transportation options for individuals with disabilities to employment. A new transportation service was implemented in 2002 in a rural area of the state (Work Link), and a committee continues to work to implement a coordinated approach to travel training. RIPTA and ORS have collaborated on a transportation option fact sheet for customers and staff to assist in career planning.

TANF: The Learning Disabilities Project continues to expand services for eligible Family Independence Program (FIP) recipients who have learning disabilities. DHS reports indicate that 25-40% of individuals who receive TANF have learning disabilities that present significant barriers to employment. Screening for LD has been integrated into the FIP/ORS system, informational brochures and presentations have been developed, training and technical assistance continues, and the LD Project Coordinator has been invited to many other states to present the promising practices for serving this

population developed in RI. The vacancy on the FIP program that served to coordinate services was filled in 2002 and is developing skills to serve this population in conjunction with the ORS Rehabilitation Counselor II.

Cultural Diversity Outreach: The Cultural Diversity Cadre continues to develop and implement action steps to provide services to cultural diverse clientele. Under resource enhancements above the expansion of programs that ORS customers can access is addressed. The Bi-Lingual Health Representative position was filled early in 2002 and helped to develop approaches and linkages to Hispanic individuals with disabilities. The position primarily worked to bridge access to transition services but also assisted with SBVI services, orientations, and outreach efforts in general. The position again became vacant in May 2002, and active recruitment will be initiated to fill this important liaison position.

Mediation Update: After a slow start since implementation of a Mediation program in 2001, Mediation options were used successfully by several customers. In four situations that occurred in the first three quarters of 2002 Mediation outcomes reduced the desire to move to Impartial Hearing. The Mediators have developed their skills in performing these Mediations, and ORS staff are more aware of the benefits of Mediation in Due Process for our clientele.

ORS and the SRC are working together in on-going needs assessment in RI to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are identified and met. To this end, the SRC and the ORS has participated in Public Forums convened by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities. The Forums not only provide the public an opportunity to identify needs, but to offer the opportunity for networking and problem solving among several public agencies.

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.12(b)

ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED

COSTS OF SERVICES (PROJECTIONS FOR FY2003)

(1) Number of Individuals in the State who are Eligible for Services

Under this State Plan:

In FY 2001 80% of the number of applicants were determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. It is projected that this percentage could increase by 5% in 2003. ORS projects a goal of 2000 applicants in FY2003. Projected number of eligible applicants in 2003 is 1700.

(2) Number of individuals who will receive services under Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B, and numbers to be served in each order of selection priority category.

In 2003 projected total number of clients (both Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B) to be served under an IPE is 2481.

Category 1 (Most Significant Disabilities) – 1732

Category 2 (Significant Disabilities) – 749

(3) Costs of services for projected total number of clients to be served, including Service costs under each OOS category.

Average expenditures per client is \$1,267. No significant change is expected in the short run.

Cost of Services for OOS category #1 are estimated at \$2,194,444.00

Cost of Services for OOS category #2 are estimated at \$ 948,983.00

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STATE’S GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The state’s goals and priorities remain the same in all areas. A focus on the implementation of Ticket to Work in 2003 has started in 2002 and will continue.

Strategies to reduce the numbers of individuals closed unsuccessfully have included training for staff, monitoring of all status 28s by supervisors and administration, and increased utilization of support staff for contacts with customers.

The CSPD goals have been fully described in 4.11 (b). Clinical oversight and supervision is the primary strategy to address standards of increasing competitive employment outcomes, and decreasing the ratio of individuals who were closed unsuccessfully to individuals closed successfully in competitive integrated employment. In addition, Program Evaluation staff review all cases projected to be closed unsuccessfully after a plan is written.

The implementation of the first Customer Satisfaction Survey has been addressed previously. The report indicated that customers served by the program were generally satisfied with services and staff. Areas to work on include enhancing and improving options for informed choices.

Strategies that are being implemented in 2002 to improve choices undertaken have been identified in section 4.12 (a). The SRC Quality Assurance Committee continues to work on assisting the agency to improve and enhance choices for customers.

The ORS-FIP program that focuses on FIP beneficiaries with learning disabilities has been identified nationally as a “promising practice” and has been called upon to offer technical assistance to other states considering such projects. The project assisted 20% of the caseload to reach successful employment outcomes in 2001.

Benefits planning have been incorporated more fully in 2002 in employment planning with customers through training all staff, identifying regional liaisons to become resource staff to regions, and in utilizing the services available through the Benefits Planning and Outreach Project.

ORS, as a Transition Council member, is working on the development of a transition academy option, where career development and other transition services would take place in the community.

The development of new and innovative services for students who are deaf should result in more employment outcomes in future years.

The Transition project has expanded employment opportunities for students by continuing its contracts with the Regional Educational Collaboratives. Services are community-based vocational assessments, emphasizing community-based work experience during the summer months and beginning a pilot, fee for service option for job development, job retention and short-term job coaching services available to graduating students.

Staff members are trained, in partnership with netWORKri in accessing current Labor Market Information, use of O*Net and Career Scope to assist consumers analyze their interests and skills and other tools available though the internet to assist consumers to make choices.

Expanding employment services is a priority for ORS and the SRC. The SRC at its Leadership Meeting in May 2002 targeted strategies to build and sustain linkages with Employers through the Employment Committee of the SRC. Each regional field services unit is identifying specific strategies to link with local employers, develop utilization of OJTs, expand referrals that will result in competitive employment outcomes, as well as expand outcomes for all clientele in the region.

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The third Bi-Annual Partnerships to Employment Conference is planned in 2002 and will be held in early 2003. This collaboratively planned and implemented conference brings together CRPs and ORS staff in cross-informational sessions related to employment including supported employment.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12 (c) (2) (A)

ORDER OF SELECTION

Order of Selection will continue throughout 2002 and 2003. In 2003 Ticket to Work will be implemented in Rhode Island. The expectation is that referrals and applications will increase. Vacancies due to retirements and promotions are expected to result in staff vacancies. Without assurance that vacancies can be filled in a timely manner and that resources allotted to the State agency will increase, the Order of Selection needs to be in place in order to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities receive the services they require in order to become employed.

Order of Selection Categories

- 1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities;
- 2) Individuals with significant disabilities;
- 3) All other individuals with disabilities who cannot be classified in a higher category.

Priority to Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

The State Agency assures that its Order of Selection policy gives first priority to individuals with the most significant disabilities within a comprehensive, coordinated program that is designed to assist these individuals to prepare for, and engage in, gainful employment. The Order of Selection does not discriminate by type of disability, economic status, or protected class.

State Definition of Individual with the Most Significant Disability

The term “individual with the most significant disability” means an individual:

- who has a severe physical or mental disability that seriously limits three or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of employment outcome, AND

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- whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time, AND
- who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorder, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disabilities, end-state renal disease or from another disability or combination of disabilities which, based on an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, causes comparable substantial functional limitation.

For the foreseeable future, the Agency anticipates serving customers who meet the first two categories only of the Order of Selection (Category 3 is not expected to be served).

Projections are based on recent past performance of the Agency.

While the DSU seeks additional case service dollars to enable it to serve all eligible applicants, it has developed a method to assure that all persons assigned to the wait list receive information and referral services.

Projections for 2003:

OOS Category 1: 1732

OOS Category 2: 749

OOS Category 3: 39

ANNUAL UPDATE - ATTACHMENT 4.12 (c) (3)

GOALS AND PLANS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION F TITLE VI, PART B, FUNDS

Title VI Part B funds continue to be distributed through the Fee for Service mechanism with the emphasis on individually planned services and outcome based payments. The CRP Specialist has initiated TA sessions with vendors related to providing person-centered services in community integrated employment. Service expectations and definitions have been clarified through the Fee Schedule and through individual meetings and correspondence. The MOU process has been initiated with this clarification to vendors. Formal MOUs are planned in 2003.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12 (d)

**STATE STRATEGIES FOR TITLE 1 FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND
EXPANSION**

In 2002 Innovation and Expansion funds were utilized to fund activities and projects of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Early in 2002 the Staff Person to the SRC left the position. The SRC took the opportunity to evaluate the recruitment language and the outcome of the first year of engaging a staff person in order to determine changes in operational details. For that reason, recruitment for a new assistant will not be implemented until after 7/1/02. It is anticipated that \$20,000 will be earmarked for the position on a yearly basis. Other activities of the SRC that utilized I & E included quarterly meetings in a local hotel, a Leadership Retreat for the SRC, and engaging the Center for Research and Public Policy as the vendor for the Client Satisfaction Study. The initial survey was completed in March 2002. I & E also supported the annual Employer Honor Roll, hosted by the SRC and ORS.

I & E funds were earmarked for the establishment of a new program at the RI School for the Deaf to expand transition services and career options, including career exploration, career development and community-based work experiences, to transitioning students who are deaf. Many of these students are also from culturally diverse populations. This new service option provides quality and timely services to better meet the employment preparation needs of students transitioning from high school, who are deaf.

I& E funds are earmarked for enhancing transportation initiatives. ORS and RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) are working closely with other state and local agencies to improve transportation options for individuals with disabilities to employment. A new transportation service was implemented in 2002 in a rural area of the state (Work Link), and a committee continues to work to implement a coordinated approach to travel training. I&E funds have been earmarked to assist a customer with a Peer Travel Training business (Accessing Community Transportation).

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I & E funds will also be utilized for the ORS sponsored Youth Leadership Forum, a new project in Rhode Island to build leadership skills and potential in youth with disabilities who are transitioning to adult life.

I & E funds are targeted to build the CRP linkage with the One Stop System and with the TWWIA funded grant to the RI Department of Labor and Training (RI DLT), Work on the Rhode to Independence. In particular, the development of an Employer Service Network is a major strategy made up of CRP'S that will enjoy the benefits of the One-Stop system.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12(d) (1)

**TO ADDRESS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT
AND TO ACHIEVE IDENTIFIED GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

Partnership Development with Employers, Community Rehabilitation Programs, One-Stop Career partners, and the SRC: Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funds were earmarked for the enhancement of the SRC partnership, specifically in engaging a staff person to the SRC in 2001. The Staff Person left for full time employment and the SRC is revising the Scope of Work in 2002 for a new recruitment effort through Letter of Interest. The Customer Satisfaction Study was funded through I & E, as well as SRC Leadership development activities. I & E funds are utilized to sponsor the Employer Honor Roll, a celebration of employers to build and sustain employer partnerships.

I & E funds are targeted to build the CRP linkage with the One-Stop System and with the TWWIA funded grant to the RI Department of Labor and Training, Work on the Rhode to Independence. In particular, the development of an Employer Service Network is a major strategy made up of CRP's that will enjoy the benefits of the One-Stop system. This will offer opportunities to individuals with disabilities to access netWORKri's employment services including ORS services and benefits planning.

The FIP-ORS LD Project has built upon the current partnership and case delivery services through the hiring of a Social Caseworker II dedicated to work in the FIP-ORS LD project. Training and technical assistance continues through the development of a coordinated network of ORS and FIP staff to coordinate service delivery. ORS liaisons have energized their liaison responsibilities; new job postings have included specific focus on FIP.

Stronger partnerships have been developed with the public transportation system related to providing a broader array of transportation options to individuals with disabilities throughout the state. A new Work Link program was initiated in 2002 to provide employment transportation through the public transportation system in an

underserved area of the state. The Transportation Committee is now implementing Travel Training system in the state. The Peer Travel Trainer previously initiated through I & E is working closely with RIPTA in this effort.

Assistive technology knowledge and provision is a priority. The ORS works closely with the federally funded Assistive Technology Access Partnership to train staff, and maintain current knowledge about assistive technology. The ORS also works closely with in-house consultants to build knowledge and provide appropriate services that incorporate assistive technology.

Communication tools are continually enhanced to provide greater access to individuals with disabilities. ORS has an Information Specialist to manage the electronic communication system through the WWW about ORS services. Forms and notices have been and continue to be revised to be person centered and understandable. Through the Benefits Planning and Outreach Project information is provided to customers about benefits and ORS staff are being trained in the impact of benefits.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12(d)(2)

**TO CARRY OUT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WHO ARE
MINORITIES**

Expansion of Resources: A new relationship has been developed between the Genesis Center and ORS with the purchasing of a Food Training program. The program focuses on minorities who are in need of ESL supports. As the outcomes are reviewed, ESL classes will be explored. DORCAS Place is another vendor who will provide ESL training and other employment supports for minority customers. The Community College Spanish- English Center for Technology and Language has been added as a resource for ORS customers through fee-for-service arrangements.

The Cultural Diversity Cadre continues to meet monthly with active participation from all regions. Outreach is coordinated and building through this staff effort. ORS hired a Bilingual Health Representative in 2002. This position will be continued with a focus in Transition.

The Bilingual Health Representative visited all the Health Centers with information about ORS services, as well participated in Orientation Sessions focused on reaching Hispanic clientele, and in outreach in school systems with a high number of Hispanic students and families where English is not the primary language.

AT&T lines are available at the front desk to assist in effective communication with customers who speak languages other than English.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4. 12 (d) (3)

**TO OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE
ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

The Update for this section includes the updates in 4.12 (a), 4.12 (c) (1), 4.12 (d), (d) (1), (d) (2). Barriers related to benefits, transportation, informed choice, cultural barriers, employment options, and options for individuals with sensory impairments have been previously addressed.

Qualified ASL interpreters available in state colleges remain a need. In 2002 the State Division of Purchases entered into a Master Price Agreement (MPA) with the Interpreter Referral Service at the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL), for the provision of ASL interpreters for the state. The MPA does not currently affect state colleges, but is the mechanism for ORS to engage interpreter services. The ORS and the OSCIL worked closely together to implement procedures to effect a smooth transition to a new way to engage Interpreters for ORS. In addition, to ensure access, an MPA with Allied CART Reporting Services provided added access for customers and staff who are deaf and hard of hearing.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 4.12(e)

**EVALUATION AND REPORT OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING IDENTIFIED
GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION
AND EXPANSION**

In 2002 Innovation and Expansion funds were utilized to fund activities and projects of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Early in 2002 the Staff Person to the SRC left the position. The SRC took the opportunity to evaluate the recruitment language and the outcome of the first year of engaging a staff person in order to determine changes in operational details. For that reason, recruitment for a new assistant will not be implemented until after 7/1/02. It is anticipated that \$20,000 will be earmarked for the position on a yearly basis. Other activities of the SRC that utilized I & E included quarterly meetings in a local hotel, a Leadership Retreat for the SRC, and engaging the Center for Research and Public Policy as the vendor for the Client Satisfaction Study. The initial survey was completed in March 2002. I & E also supported the annual Employer Honor Roll, hosted by the SRC and ORS.

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training. I&E funds have been earmarked to assist a customer with a Peer Travel Training business (Accessing Community Transportation).

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I & E funds are targeted to build the CRP linkage with the One-Stop System and with the TWWIA funded grant to the RI Department of Labor and Training, *Work on the Rhode to Independence*. In particular the development of an Employer Service Network is a major strategy made up of CRP'S that will enjoy the benefits of the One-Stop system. This will offer opportunities to individuals with disabilities to access netWORKri's employment services including ORS services and benefits planning.

I & E funds were earmarked for the enhancement of the SRC partnership, specifically in engaging a staff person to the SRC. The Staff Person left for full time employment, and the SRC is revising the Scope of Work in 2002 for a new RFP. The Customer Satisfaction Study was funded through I & E, as well as SRC Leadership development activities.

ANNUAL UPDATE – ATTACHMENT 7.3

**QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES**

The fee schedule has been revised in 10/01. The newly rewritten section on Supported Employment is reviewed with SE vendors. All SE providers will be on-board with the new fee schedule by early 2003. The Fee Schedule will be on-line by 2003 in order to assist customers to make informed choices about services and vendors.

The CRP Specialist is an active partner in the Supported Employment Advisory Council. The SE Advisory Council's mission is to improve community-based employment options for individuals with mental illness.